DECONSTRUCTION OF MYTHICAL FEMALE TYPES IN STEPHANIE MEYER'S *TWILIGHT* SERIES

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ABSTRACT

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Grounded on a deconstructive approach, this thesis aims to examine the mythical female types represented by the character Bella Swan in Stephenie Meyer's *Twilight* series. Focusing on the deconstruction of the mythical female types such as Eve, Psyche, Artemis, and Mother Goddess, this study foregrounds the exploration of new feminine identities supported and motivated by postfeminism in the course of Bella Swan's individuation process. The study analyzes Bella Swan as representative of the mentioned mythical female types in each book of the series, and approaches these types within a frame of postfeminist neoliberal politics of identity. Framed with the theory of Deconstruction and ideology of postfeminism, the thesis explores the characterization of Bella Swan as a rewriting of old myths with a new ideology of neoliberal politics that support the individual as a free, autonomous agent acting within autonomous desire mechanism and in accordance with freedom of choice that position woman as an active speaking subject situating man as the object of female sexual desire.

Keywords: Deconstruction, *Twilight* series, mythical female types, postfeminism.

ÖZET

STEPHANIE MEYER'İN *ALACAKARANLIK* SERİSİNDE MİTLERE ÖZGÜ KADIN TİPLERİNİN YAPISÖKÜMÜ

Öteyaka, Işıl
Doktora Tezi
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Yapısökümsel bir yaklaşımla oluşturulan bu tez Stephenie Meyer'in *Alacakaranlık* serisindeki Bella Swan karakteri tarafından temsil edilen mitlere özgü kadın tiplerini incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Eve, Psyche, Artemis ve Ana Tanrıça gibi mitsel kadın karakterlerinin yapısökümü üzerine odaklanan bu çalışma, Bella Swan'ın bireyselleşme sürecinde postfeminist ideloji ile desteklenen yeni kadın kimliklerinin ortaya çıkışını ön planda tutmaktadır. Bu çalışma, Bella Swan'ı serinin her bir kitabında, adı geçen mitsel kadın tiplerinin temsilcisi olarak inceleyip, bu tiplere postfeminist neoliberal kimlik politikaları çerçevesinde yaklaşmaktadır. Yapısöküm teorisi ve postfeminizm ideolojisi çerçevesinde, Bella Swan karakteri, eski mitlerin yeni neoliberal politikalar ideolojisiyle yeniden yazılışı olarak ortaya konulmaktadır. Bu ideoloji ile birey otonom arzu mekanizması içinde hareket eden özgür ve otonom bir varlık olarak desteklenmiş ve kadın seçim özgürlüğü doğrultusunda konuşan bir özne olarak erkeği cinsel arzularının objesi olarak konumlandıran özgür ve otonom bir varlık olarak konumlandırılmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Yapısöküm, alacakaranlık serisi, postfeminizm, mitlere özgü kadın tipleri.

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CHAPTER ONE

1.1 Introduction

The aim of the thesis is to analyze the character formation of Bella Swan in Stephenie Meyer's *Twilight* series as the deconstruction of mythical female types by means of postfeminist politics. For this purpose, it explores how Bella Swan rewrites the female types from various myths such as Biblical Eve, Roman Psyche, Greek Artemis and eventually Mother Goddess. The focus of this exploration is the manifestation of the way in which the old myths are approached with a new perspective and rewritten in a postmodern period with a new ideology. In this general frame, this study focuses upon how Bella becomes the embodiment of the deconstruction of mythical female types by means of her postfeminist politics regarding sexuality, personal agency and freedom of choice. In this regard, theories of Deconstruction and postfeminism are the lens of this study. So, female types that Bella deconstructs are approached with a critical eye under the guidance of Jacques Derrida's theory of Deconstruction which is mainly based on the concepts of iterability and difference exploring the instability in meaning of any given text and its possibility of multiple meanings formed in new contexts. In addition to this, postfeminism, in a similar manner to deconstruction's subversive approach, becomes a means of multi-layered, unstable, and pluralistic characterization of Bella Swan who becomes an embodiment of a postmodern example of mythical female types.

In order for a full understanding of the intersection of deconstruction and postfeminism, their shared aspects that have the same ground in their approach to ideologies are foregrounded in the first chapter of the thesis. Viewed on the same basic lines in terms of standing against the totalizing, dominating discourses, Deconstruction and postfeminsim are examined and explained within their anti-foundational characteristics which promote the importance of the politics of difference and plurality. In this regard, Deconstruction approaches any text skeptically and argues that text is always open to new meanings. It is not enclosed within a single meaning/understanding. It is open to plural meanings which enable plural readings, and always open to new interpretations. In a similar manner, postfeminism displays the rejection of stable discourses of definitions of woman and undermines the construction of

prototype/stereotype of woman through these discourses, and instead celebrates a number of selves in woman within distinct positions. Accordingly, it is both a subversive approach to feminism and a subversive approach of feminism. Rather than foregrounding the discourse of "we" in feminist ideology, postfeminism focuses on the discourse of "I" giving credit to individuality, to the differences among women and to the diversity of their problems. In this regard, individual choices of family life, sexuality and body control have become major debates in the agenda of postfeminism. In this general frame, the aim in this study is to approach mythical female types by undermining their philosophy and to display them as examples to "new femininities" embodied in the character Bella Swan in *Twilight* series.

The second chapter of the study is focused on how women are represented in myths in terms of gender structure. The focus is centered on the meaning of women in prehistoric times, their association with the creative power of nature, fertility, fecundity, death and rebirth, and on the worship of Mother Goddess as a female "creatrix" whose power is not to destroy but to create. The focus is also maintained on the shift in power balance and the transition from a matrilocal society to a patriarchal one with the invasions of Indo-European warlike societies. Erasure of matrilocal/matriarchal society by a patriarchal order by establishing its norms as if eternal is pointed out in this chapter. In this vein, how the construction of myth served the male hegemony and how it placed the women, the role of the goddess, the creatrix in a secondary status, and how it presented woman as subservient to male desire, and as dangerous if she is not in conformity with the norms are examined. Succeeding this part, feminist criticism of myths is taken into consideration. In this section, the endeavors of critiques in righting the wrongs about women and their roles shaped by a hegemonic male discourse in the treatment of myth as a written form are explored. It is stated that the struggle is for the constitution of an awareness of the way myths instill prescribed gender roles and create institutionalized forms of behavior regulating and dictating these roles. In this vein, the stress is put on the aim of feminist criticism of myths, which is a break with the negative portrayal of women, mostly put in the definitions of a dark continent, and an embrace of a revision that enables rewriting of women in myths within positive terms, and within a female perspective, giving what is stolen from them.

The analysis part of the thesis considers each book of the series both within itself and in relation to each other according to Bella's transformation process. The first book *Twilight* is examined within the discourse of Garden of Eden myth of genesis, and Bella is exemplified as an emblem of a postmodern Eve figure who displays postfeminist characteristics in terms of female sexuality and agency. Thus she manifests a new image of Eve who turns out to be "a sexually assertive 'do-me feminist'" (Genz, 2010: 98), a woman who wants to "have it all", and a subject who acts in accordance with her desire. Thus the Fall in Eve myth becomes a means of promotion in her life. Her Fall will eventually cause her lose her humanity, yet she will gain immortality, supreme strength and infinite beauty. This is Bella's conscious choice, which is one of the major hallmarks that put her within a postfeminist frame. In Bella's myth, the forbidden fruit is Edward's vampire nature and its characteristics. In a similar manner to Eve's eating the forbidden fruit of knowledge and gaining a consciousness that leads to knowledge and awakening, Bella "eats" the forbidden fruit, which means that she learns Edward's vampire nature, and begins her new journey in her awakening. Realizing the supernatural powers and wealth that Edward has, Bella, in a very conscious and ambitious state, desires to become a vampire, and for this aim, she uses her love in a manipulative way. When compared to Eve in terms of prescribed roles of feminine identity, Bella draws a postmodern/postfeminist revision of Eve, thus becomes a deconstructed version of Eve. In her act of deconstruction, she forms her own identity in line with the politics of sexual desire and choice culture. Accordingly, mythical figure of Eve who, because of her cause of the Fall, is labelled with negative, demonic features and exposed to witch-hunt politics under the discourse of male authority, becomes a willful woman type, who knows what she wants from life in the character formation of Bella Swan. In this regard, Bella's tale of falling in love with Edward and becoming a vampire at the end of the series rejects the idealized negative meaning loaded on Eve myth, and consequently rewrites it in terms of difference and iterability. Bella creates a new text of Eve which is both a delay and deferral of the old myth. Accordingly, myth of Bella reconceptualizes the myth of Eve within a network of differences, distancing the old myth from its center, destabilizing its origin, and adding, supplying new characteristics. What Bella exemplifies as a new Eve is a supplement to the old Eve. She adds new dimensions to Eve and becomes a postfeminist repetition resulting in alteration of the myth of Eve.

The second book *New Moon* is a continuation of Bella on her way to transformation. In this book Bella rewrites the myth of Cupid and Psyche in her own terms. *New Moon* presents Bella as an emblem of Psyche who is in search of her lover, and who during this process becomes an agent of desire. The tale of Cupid and Psyche is about love and marriage which seems impossible, yet achieved after the efforts of Psyche. Both texts, myth and the book, tales of Psyche and of Bella as a twenty-first century Psyche, are based on the subject /object dichotomy of female as a free agent, yet surrounded with patriarchal intervention such as marriage as a destiny. In this respect, *New Moon* establishes the myth of Cupid and Psyche within an interrelated but new perspective.

Psyche's tale of awakening feminine consciousness through the processes of curiosity, falling in love, abandonment, search for the lost lover and marriage are the basic lines that Bella's tale follows in *New Moon*. Though the marriage theme is the issue of the last book *Breaking Dawn*, it is one of the major issues that shape Bella and Edward's relationship in *New Moon*. Manifestation of Bella as a postfeminist Psyche relies on her deconstruction of Psyche who is considered as both victim and agent on her way to marriage with Cupid. Bella, again in the postfeminist terrain of the celebration of individualism and politics of choice, leads her own destiny with her own decisions, and rewrites Psyche's myth within more consumerist, narcisstic, and masochistic agenda in which her body becomes a vehicle of identity production. Bella's choices are inscribed on her body. In parallel line with the postfeminist approach to female body as a site of individual identity marker, Bella reads her body as a means of transformation and personal achievement. She wants to change it, mold it and use it for her own benefits. She writes her own history of becoming a woman by subscribing various messages in her body. Her body is a site of both physical and psychological transformation and performance. While Psyche's awakening femininity is ruled by patriarchal dominance on her fate relating to sexuality and marriage, Bella displays a freer model of postmodern Psyche who builds up her identity based on the politics of individual choice. Her choice ideology, however scripted in oscillation of physical pleasure and pain, narcisstic pleasure and masochism, becomes a means of power through which she turns into an assertive, decision-maker.

In line with the postfeminist politics of "the achieved self" (Negra, 2009: 119), Bella rewrites Psyche as a self-centered female who acts in accordance with her own benefits rather than being in the service of masculine desire.

The third book, *Eclipse*, presents Bella as a postfeminist Artemis portrayed within a complex and contradictory image. Bella's transformation process is depicted through her association with the moon goddess Artemis. As a postmodern Artemis, Bella becomes a hunter of men and the goddess of wildlife which abounds with werewolves and vampires. *Eclipse* depicts Bella's rewriting of Artemis within a multi-layered aspect that displays the subversion of the principles of the goddess Artemis who is known for her non-commitment to any male existence. In this perspective Bella becomes a flirtatious Artemis who plays the field, yet chooses Edward as a partner in the light of her personal pleasure and profits. Thus she becomes a subversive version of Artemis who consumes relationships according to her individual needs and desires.

The fourth and the last book, *Breaking Dawn*, is the final point in Bella's transformation. Bella is analyzed within the terms of Mother Goddess whose major identity marker is fertility. Reviewed as a reconceptualization of the ancient Great Mother, Bella is scrutinized as a postfeminist Mother Goddess whose fertility is out of the control of patriarchal culture. Her marriage with Edward and her pregnancy create a new myth of Mother Goddess whose ideology supports the discourses of the freedom of choice. This discourse of the freedom of choice leads the argumentation to the construction of female identity around individual gain and profit regarded as a marker of neoliberal, consumerist politics. The myth of the Mother Goddess whose fertility is mainly given a sense in terms of a productive manner serving the patriarchal culture is rewritten highlighting the creativity of female power. Under the guidance of these key points, pregnant body, its abjection and presentation within a youthful transformation is examined within the frame of postfeminist politics of identity.

Bella's transformation process is framed with postfeminist ideology of feminine consciousness throughout the series. This ideology is based on choice culture that allows women define their selves through their conscious choices. In that respect, social and sexual identities of women are determined by themselves rather than being given description by male hegemony and authority. In parallel with this ideology, Bella Swan

recreates her new self by means of choices she makes. In this recreation, her identity construction manifests the deconstruction of the old mythical female types. Bella, within a very postmodern understanding of self with a fluid identity, defers and deconstructs the fixed role models attached to mentioned mythical female types, and instead rewrites new texts that are to be considered as "alteration in repetitions" (Derrida, 1992:63).

1.2 Deconstruction and Postmodernism

Deconstruction is part of postmodern era as stated by Norman K. Denzin: "Deconstructionism is an integral part of the postmodern project. It too aims to clear away the wreckage of a cluttered theoretical past, which clings to preconceptions that are regarded as no longer workable in the contemporary world" (1994: 185). In order to understand deconstruction, postmodernism as a background that prepares the ground of deconstruction has to be mentioned. Postmodernism marks an era of changes in understanding the modern world. Indeed it is both a continuation of and a break with the modern. Modern is the embodiment of the Enlightenment ideology at the heart of which lies the belief in the superiority of science and norms that are to bring society to a more civilized and progressed status. Enlightenment ideology supports the presence of universal knowledge that leads people to ultimate, fundamental, transcendental truth. Thus it empowers the social institutions which aim to put society into regulations and order in the name of social progress under the light of knowledge. Postmodernism, on the other hand, is a reaction against modernism's status-quo approach on the social and cultural issues. As Lyotard puts it, postmodern refers to a change in the "condition of knowledge" which has "altered the game rules for science, literature, and the arts" (1984: xxiii). Lyotrad defines the teachings of Enlightenment as grand narratives or meta-narratives that are "used to legitimate knowledge" (1984: xxiv). After that, he indicates the unreliability of knowledge , and defines postmodern as "incredulity toward meta-narratives" (1984: xxiv). In this regard, postmodernism approaches skeptically to the established norms of society and undermines their universal configurations of norms and rules and instead claims the relativity of these norms. As Chris Barker emphasizes "The postmodern condition involves a loss of faith in the foundational schemes that have justified the rational, scientific, technological and political projects of the modern

world" (2012: 199). So postmodernism is anti-foundational in its essence and approaches skeptically to the construction of truth and knowledge. With regard to the condition of knowledge in postmodern period, Steven Seidman says that "the very meaning of knowledge is changing" (1995: 2). The changing condition of knowledge puts knowledge on a slippery ground where fundamental justifications of norms are approached skeptically, and also challenged with alternative forms of "knowledges". Instead of seeking the justification of universal knowledge that is true, acceptable and indisputable for everyone, postmodernism celebrates the local, plural and that which is open to interpretation. Denzin describes postmodern social theory as the one that "seeks to produce interpretive analyses that illuminate the social through a close-up analysis of social texts" (1994: 187).

Standardization of concepts as regular operations of culture is at the target of postmodern condition. Instead of centralized, standard politics of culture, postmodern condition emphasizes politics of differences that are not in conformity with dominating, hegemonic, universal discourses. Denzin emphasizes that postmodern cultural studies work on the unstable condition of the concepts and meanings, and "how these systems of meaning (personal and public) anticipate, intersect, conflict with, and challenge one another" (1994: 187). Postmodernism's critical approach to institutions in terms of their totalizing discourses which regulate truth seeking and truth imposing policies prepares a common ground with that of Deconstruction: "In this way, Derrida's project separates itself from sociologies that seek final, totalizing answers concerning the origins and causes of persons, structures, and intentions" (Denzin, 1994: 185).

For this respect postmodernism and its discourses are deconstructive in their essence. Jane Flax signifies the deconstructive aspect of postmodernism in its approach to established norms as such: "Postmodern discourses are all "deconstructive" in that they seek to distance us from and make us skeptical about beliefs concerning truth, knowledge, power, the self, and language that are often taken for granted within and serve as legitimation for contemporary Western culture" (1987: 624). Postmodernism's distancing quality disrupts the centrality of grand narratives, thus meanings and knowledges created by authorial discourses become decentered and peripheral.

Developed by Jacques Derrida, Deconstruction manifests the subversion of the ideal and the universal by unsettling the center and hierarchy in meanings. Deconstruction is a way of reading texts, a kind of process of interpretation that de-centers what is established and authoritive by reversing the original meaning of the text, putting it on a slippery ground, thus unsettling the center and hierarchy in meanings. Derrida mainly focuses on the rejection of the ideal meaning. He emphasizes the concept of "différance" and "iterability" in the system of signs during the production of meaning. Derrida derived the word différance from the French verb différer which means both to differ and to defer. He uses the word différance with an “a” instead of “e” as in difference in order to combine these two meanings in one word. Derrida stresses that différance exists and operates within a chain of temporization (1982: 8). He links this course of temporization to the verb différer in French and explains: “Différer in this sense is to temporize, to take recourse, consciously or unconsciously, in the temporal and temporizing mediation of a detour that suspends the accomplishment or fulfillment of "desire" or "will," and equally effects this suspension in a mode that annuls or tempers its own effect” (1982:8). This chain of temporization functions within the terms of “a detour, a delay, a relay, a reserve, a representation” (Derrida, 1982: 8). Derrida marks the role of temporization in the representation of presence as the sign (1982: 8). According to him, sign has always been subjected to delay, which urges one to “question the authority of presence” (1982: 10). In explaining the relation between the sign and difference Derrida states that

> The sign is usually said to be put in the place of the thing itself, the present thing, “thing” here standing equally for meaning and referent. The sign represents the present in its absence. It takes the place of the present. When we cannot grasp or show the thing, state the present, being-present, when the present cannot be presented, we signify, we go through the detour of the sign. We take or give signs. We signal. The sign, in this sense, is deferred presence (Derrida, 1982: 9).

Derrida relates his ideas to Saussure’s principle of arbitrariness and differences in the process of signification within linguistic system. Saussure defines linguistic sign as a link between “a concept and a sound pattern” (1986: 66), and stresses that “the linguistic sign is arbitrary” (1986: 67). He links the arbitrary nature of signs to the concept of differences. Sussure says that “Linguistic signals are not in essence phonetic. They are not physical in any way. They are constituted solely by differences which distinguish one such sound pattern from another” (1986: 117). Derrida is interested in

the concept of differences, and he refers to Saussure's idea of difference as a ground for his point of différance. Saussure says that

> Whether we take the signification or the signal, the language includes neither ideas nor sounds existing prior to the linguistic system, but only conceptual and phonetic differences arising out of that system. In a sign, what matters more than any idea or sound associated with it is what other signs surround it. The proof of this lies in the fact that the value of a sign may change without affecting either meaning or sound, simply because some neighbouring sign has undergone a change (1986:118).

The function of the signifier, the signified and the sign is taken into a consideration through their differential character that erases the origin. Derrida says that: "To say that différance is originary is simultaneously to erase the myth of a present origin. Which is why "originary" must be understood as having been crossed out, without which différance would be derived from an original plenitude. It is a non-origin which is originary" (Derrida, 2001: 255).

The meaning of the sign is always in a flux, always altering and gaining new meanings and structures which will also be altered and formed in new meanings. In this process the emphasis is put on the concept of the other. Presence of the meaning is suspended, delayed and deferred. Within the system of différance, meaning is distanced from its origin. It escapes pre-determined concepts and loses its authoritative function: "Essentially and lawfully, every concept is inscribed in a chain or in a system within which it refers to the other, to other concepts, by means of the systematic play of differences."(Derrida, 1982: 11).

De-centering a text by interpreting it in various ways distances it from its origin. What is signified is not what is signified in fact. It does not have an established, intended, stable meaning. It becomes an outcome of the practice of the differences at work. Deconstruction is a process of producing meanings within "a network of differences" (Derrida, 1988:137). This network of differences constitutes the system of signs in which "The elements of signification function due not to the compact force of their nuclei but rather to the network of oppositions that distinguishes them, and then relates them one to another" (1982: 10). This is an active system that removes the origin and substitutes it with the other, with what it is not: "*Différance* is the nonfull, nonsimple, structured and differentiating origin of differences. Thus, the name *origin* no

longer suits it" (Derrida, 1982: 11). This substitution of the origin with the other reverses the hierarchy of the text by destabilizing the balance among the signifier, the signified and the sign. Derrida approaches the relation among the signifier, the signified and the sign in a manner that digs out their root and eliminates their validity. This process is intertwined with, as Derrida calls it, "supplement". Derrida defines a supplement as such: "The supplement, which seems to be added as a plenitude to a plenitude, is equally that which compensates for a lack (*qui supplée*)" (2001: 266). Referring to the meaning of French verb suppléer, Derrida indicates that supplement functions to add what is missing (2001: 266). In a more detailed explanation Derrida equates supplement with substitution:

> But the supplements. It adds only to replace. It intervenes or insinuates itself in-the-place-of; if it fills, it is as if one fills a void. If it represents and makes an image, it is by the anterior default of a presence. Compensatory [suppléant] and vicarious, the supplement is an adjunct, a subaltern instance which takes-(the)-place [tient-lieu]. As substitute, it is not simply added to the positivity of a presence, it produces no relief, its place is assigned in the structure by the mark of an emptiness. Somewhere, something can be filled up of itself, can accomplish itself, only by allowing itself to be filled through sign and proxy. The sign is always the supplement of the thing itself (1997: 145).

A supplement is a substitution of one thing with another one and its function is to add what the first thing lacks. It works as a completing factor which replaces what is missing. Supplement is also a part of the play of differences producing différance. Derrida stresses that play of differences is also maintained by means of iterability. He denotes that in order for a writing to sustain itself within written communication, it must be iterable, which means that it must be repeatable. Derrida says that

> In order for my "written communication" to retain its function as writing, i.e., its readability, it must remain readable despite the absolute disappearance of any receiver, determined in general. My communication must be repeatable-iterable-in the absolute absence of the receiver or of any empirically determinable collectivity of receivers (1988: 7).

According to Derrida, a text should be iterable in order to exist. It does not matter if there is not any receiver: "To be what it is, all writing must, therefore, be capable of functioning in the radical absence of every empirically determined receiver in general" (1988: 8). An important mark of iterability is its function of altering what it

repeats. Every repetition is a means of alteration. So every meaning remotes itself from its center and becomes exposed to shift:

Iterability alters, contaminating parasitically what it identifies and enables to repeat ‘itself' ; it leaves us no choice but to mean (to say) something that is (already, always, also) other than what we mean (to say), to say something other than what we say and would have wanted to say, to understand something other than . . . etc. (1988: 62).

Therefore, iterability leads to différance, letting the “origin”, the “center” remain distant from the present “thing”, and the origin “lends itself to a certain number of non-synonymous substitutions” (Derrida, 1982: 12).The center is de-centered with supplements, substitutions. The meaning is differentiated and always deferred as Derrida explains:

It is because of differance that the movement of signification is possible only if each so-called "present" element, each element appearing on the scene of presence, is related to something other than itself, thereby keeping within itself the mark of the past element, and already letting itself be vitiated by the mark of its relation to the future element, this trace being related no less to what is called the future than to what is called the past, and constituting what is called the present by means of this very relation to what it is not: what it absolutely is not, not even a past or a future as a modified present (1986: 13).

Each new supplement differentiates what was before it, adds what is missing and itself becomes a new thing to be substituted and differentiated, thus, as a result, “the finiteness of a context is never secured or simple, there is an indefinite opening of every context, an essential nontotalization” (Derrida, 1988: 137). Validity of the center in meaning is always under question:

Henceforth, it became necessary to think both the law which somehow governed the desire for a center in the constitution of structure and the process of signification which orders the displacements and substitutions for this law of central presence- but a central presence which has never been itself, has always already been exiled from itself into its own substitute. The substitute does not substitute itself for anything which has somehow existed before it. Henceforth, it was necessary to begin thinking that there was no center, that the center couldn’t be thought in the form of a present being, that the center has no natural site, that it was not a fixed locus but a function, a sort of nonlocus in which an infinite number of sign-substitutions came into play (Derrida, 2001: 353-354).

Norman K. Denzin explains the deconstructive approach to texts by means of intertextuality. Every text is a combination of texts that include various concepts,

meanings, and understandings. The aim of deconstruction is to deny authorial intention and denude the text of its layers and recombine these layers in a new way and to redress the text with a new "texture". Denzin says that

> Methodologically, deconstructionism is directed to the interrogation of texts. It involves the attempt to take apart and expose the underlying meanings, biases, and preconceptions that structure the way a text conceptualizes its relation to what it describes. This requires that traditional concepts, theory, and understanding surrounding a text be unraveled, including the assumption that an author's intentions and meanings can be easily determined (Denzin, 1994: 185).

Deconstruction does not attach the text to one single, absolute meaning, thus does not limit the interpretation. As Christopher Butler indicates in *Postmodernism: A Very Short Introduction*, "The language and conventions of texts (and pictures and music) became something to play with – they were not committed to delimited arguments or narratives. They were the mere disseminators of 'meanings'" (2002: 23).

Meaning is brought out of a chain of meanings which make the text a plural one rather than a singular one. This plurality prevail the referent and makes the text a combination of many texts. In this respect, Deconstruction has many aspects in common with intertextuality in enabling the thematic and semantic richness of the text. Intertextuality undermines the uniqueness of the text and emphasizes that every text is a combination of prior texts. Legitimation of the author and his or her intended meaning are eliminated by the web of meanings and texts. The voice of the author is silenced by the plurality of the voices of prior texts. Barthes says that "a text is not a line of words releasing a single 'theological' meaning (the message of the Author-God) but a multi-dimensional space in which a variety of writings, none of them original, blend and clash" (1977: 146). Diffusing the origin of the text, both deconstruction and intertextuality celebrate the disorientation. Free from determinant references, text become a ground for various meanings at play. As a consequence text does not have any directed points. It is a process in continuity. As Derrida states text is "...henceforth no longer a finished corpus of writing, some content enclosed in a book or its margins, but a differential network, a fabric of traces referring endlessly something other than itself. To other differential traces" (2004: 69). Similarly, Josh Toth emphasizes never ending play in a text: "the text refuses, while simultaneously and eternally promising, closure." (2010: 41)

Center loses its core statue in the play of supplements where anything can be taken as a sign which later will be substituted with another sign. Center diffuses in this process of iterability where any utterance or text can be put into various different contexts. Derrida explains that

> to say that marks or texts are originally iterable is to say that without a simple origin, and so without a pure originarity, they divide and repeat themselves immediately. They thus become capable of being rooted out at the very place of their roots. Transplantable into a different context, they continue to have meaning and effectiveness (1992:64).

Iterability positions the text's "alteration in repetition" (Derrida, 1992:63). At every attempt of interpretation, the center and its marks dissolve into new contexts. Each level of interpretation is a performative act that alters the structure of every mark. In depicting the iterability of any sign, Derrida says "Every sign, linguistic or non-linguistic, spoken or written (in the current sense of this opposition), in a small or large unit, can be *cited*, put between quotation marks; in so doing it can break with every given context, engendering an infinity of new contexts in a manner which is absolutely illimitable" (1988:12).

1.2 Deconstruction and Feminism

Deconstruction is subversive and transgressive in its approach to texts. It plays with texts and creates many out of a single one. Its critique of true definitions also reveals its approach to language: " [it] invite[s] a further defining move, or 'play', with language. For the deconstructor, the relationship of language to reality is not given, or even reliable, since all language systems are inherently unreliable cultural constructs" (Butler, 2002: 17). In its act of never ending deferral of meaning in texts, deconstruction not only overturns the relationship between signifier and signified, but also subverts its philosophy: "To deconstruct a poem, text, or discourse is to show how it (actually) undermines the philosophy it (seems to) assert, or the hierarchal oppositions on which it overtly relies" (Butler, 2002: 25). It is obvious that ideologies are approached skeptically and mostly in a contemptuous manner by postmodernism and deconstruction. Their openness to variety of ideas and ideologies brings them a transgressive spirit that sweeps the boundaries in thought systems relating to the issues of gender, race, ethnicity, and sexuality. Dominating ideologies which are considered

acceptable and available for everyone are torn apart and put into question. Rather than justification of common values, postmodernist deconstructive discourse sought for differences. Gender relations have its share of postmodern deconstructive discourses. Flax emphasizes the significance of the "transvaluation of values" (1987: 641), that is, rereading and revaluing of the meanings constructed in gender relations in order for a social analysis that avoids imitation:

> Thus, in order for gender relations to be useful as a category of social analysis we must be as socially and self-critical as possible about the meanings usually attributed to those relations and the ways we think about them. Otherwise, we run the risk of replicating the very social relations we are attempting to understand (1987: 634).

In this respect "a valuation of gender differentiation" (Farganis, 1994: 102) becomes the core aspect of feminist analysis of gender relations in postmodern period.

Feminism underlines the discourses of oppression of women by dominant patriarchal regulations that have manipulative power in issues of sexuality, education, work and family life. It is a political act to make women's voices in these areas audible and to question the reasons of the justification of women's subordination. In this respect it is a social and political challenge against patriarchal power that erases women's authorial agency. Feminism as a political criticism benefits the discourse of postmodern in terms of the celebration of differences. In this respect, feminism has a freer space in its criticism of patriarchy the values of which are legitimated and served as ultimate truths by the help of Enlightenment ideology: "Despite the intention of Enlightenment traditions to advance human freedom, its concept of knowledge helped to perpetuate the dominance of men's interests and values. A feminist perspective views scientific knowledge as a social force, not necessarily beneficent to women" (Seidman, 1994: 10). In this respect feminism is a critique of foundational discourses that make male knowledge ubiquitous and legitimate for everyone. Postmodern era with its idea of deconstruction of established values supports the subversive approach of feminism towards the gender constructions. Postmodernism maintains a critical eye mainly on the subjects of identity, sexuality, and subjectivity. It enables new discourses on these issues by reinterpreting and rereading them and creating new perspectives mainly focusing on the deconstruction of the transcendental and the universal, and on the proliferation of the politics of difference.

In *Postmodern Theory: Critical Interrogations*, Steven Best and Douglas Kellner explain postmodern politics as such:

> In the 1980s, the concerns of political movements of the period generated distinctive emphases on the politics of gender, race, ethnicity, and subject positions which have often been understood within the rubric of 'postmodern politics'. Consequently, marginalized groups and individuals have been attracted to postmodern theory to articulate the specificity of their positions and to valorize their differences from other groups and individuals (1991: 205).

Moreover they emphasize the practical use of postmodern politics of difference, otherness and plurality for the interest of feminist criticism in its articulation of women's differences: "The postmodern emphasis on difference and plurality can help prevent the occlusion of significant differences between men and women and therefore can help articulate the specific needs and interests of women" (Best and Kellner, 1991: 210). So postmodern period and its deconstructive politics enabled feminist theory cross its static discourse which was mainly spoken for the challenges of white middle-class women, thus feminist approach to the subject of woman and her struggle took place within a broader sense in terms of race, ethnicity, and sexuality. As a consequence of postmodern politics of self that argues for fluidity and impossibility of a fixed self, feminist theory occupied with the argument of the existence of "no simple 'woman' but rather a number of selves that occupy certain distinct positions" (Farganis, 1994: 107).

In *Feminist Methodology: Challenges and Choices*, Caroline Ramazanoğlu and Holland define the concept of difference and its emphasis in feminist politics as such: "Modern feminist theory uses the idea of difference to mark differences of political interest between women, men and others, and also to identify social and economic divisions between women (and also between men and others) resulting from, for example, capitalism, racism, colonialism, heterosexism, ablebodiedism" (2002: 106). Postmodern approach to identities and deconstruction's emphasis on difference have become useful tools for feminist criticism in its rejection of masculine fait accompli discourse of power over women. Intersection of deconstruction and postfeminism signals a break with grand narratives that underlie previous traditions setting a form of justification and legitimation of authority established by patriarchy. Both of them sharing a skeptical view on any totalizing narratives, seek to destabilize universal truth and aims to maintain a new way of interpretations of old structures. Thus, it enables the

creation of a new woman type which saved itself from the vicious circle of the same old debates, and gives way to reconstituting new point of views in feminist debate. Sondra Farganis explains the intersection of postmodern thought and feminist discourse in their status as a critique of the old forms:

> It [Postmodernism] demystifies theories and grand metanarratives. For those who see themselves as not having had their voice(s) heard in history, the postmodern paradigm makes a theoretical case for inserting the heretofore unarticulated voices of women in new scripts, new texts, and new discourses. It is a way of dethroning the old epistemology and those who held power through it. For feminists who are readers of social theory, it is a way of unseating an exclusively white male Eurocentric voice by exposing its exclusivity (1994: 110).

1.3 Integration Between Deconstruction & Postfeminism

Feminist theory in postmodern period has some layers such as third wave feminism and post-feminism. Shared aspects of postmodern, deconstructionist and postfeminist approach is that they are critique of foundationalist and essentialist thought. In *Postfeminisms: Feminism, Cultural Theory and Cultural Forms*, Ann Brooks notes that postfeminism is not only a critique of grand narratives but also a critique of feminism in terms of the debates on essentialism. Brooks explains the shift in feminist perspective as "not a depoliticisation of feminism, but a political shift in feminism's conceptual and theoretical agenda" (1997: 4). As Brooks maintains that

> Feminsim's intersection with postmodernism (and in particular poststructuralism) has provided feminism with a range of critical frameworks, including 'discourse', 'deconstruction' and 'difference', which have been used to challenge and define traditional assumptions of identity and subjectivity (1997: 21).

In this regard, feminism's target is to be a critique of "gendered domination" (Farganis, 1994: 102), and to claim for a "treatment that respected differences and valued them, either by placing these on an equal level with masculine values or, better yet, by holding feminine values in even higher regard. As a consequence, postfeminist theory gains a "woman-centered approach" (Farganis, 1994: 104) that focuses on the politics of difference foregrounding that the women do have different nature from that of men and this nature frees them out of the conventional approaches that aim to maintain a vision of women as equals of men.

Feminism in postmodernism digs for the claims for equality, for the debates of equality represent women as the figures of the mimesis of men and present a situation in which "in the name of equity, women become like men" (Farganis, 1994: 106). Postmodern feminist theory marks a divergence from previous discourses of second wave feminism of 1960s and 70s which were mainly based on the politics of similarity and equality of sexes. Liberal politics was for the achievement of equality by means of which women claimed to have equal character in their nature with that of men, as a result of which they are to have equal opportunities in all areas of life, from education to work, with those of men. Yet the critical point in liberal feminism of the decade was that women shut their eyes to their differences and ignored the discourses that would foreground and celebrate the varieties of femininity. Instead they argued for the sameness with men and stated that the discourse of difference is a cultural construction and is built up by patriarchal discourses for the justification of gender difference. Later feminists of 1980s and 90s found this discourse of equality problematic, for, they claimed, arguments for sameness caused erasure of femininity as a quality and made women mannish (Genz and Brabon, 2009: 12). Besides, what is also seen problematic in liberal feminist thought is that it was most basically the voice of white middle-class women that does not compound other voices of women from different cultures. So it was argued that liberal feminism not only ignored the potency of difference of women from men as a quality, but also refused to take notice of difference among women. In this respect postfeminism is a reaction to the indifference of second wave feminist theory to the existence of different voices. In this respect it was regarded as a totalizing politics that accepts its theory as operative for every woman disregarding the possibility of different types of oppression or different needs of women. In opposition to this situation, the postmodern feminist thought, "embracing myriad discourses" (Farganis, 1994: 113), directed its debates through the diversity of women and variety of their problems and issues.

Joan Scott maintains that the discourses of sameness cause the loss of "specificity of female diversity and women's experiences". This sameness positions women as a part of ubiquitous and totalizing male discourse, thus creates an identity defined by this hegemonic male discourse, and presents woman as the negative counterpoint of the masculine identity, namely the Other legitimizing the positive

masculine identity (1994: 295). Accordingly, feminism in postmodern era foregrounds the difference hand in hand with the concept of diversity resting on not only female sexual difference from a male one but also differences among women. Scott says that "It is not sameness or identity between women and men that we want to claim but a more complicated historically variable diversity than is permitted by the opposition male/female, a diversity that is also differently expressed for different purposes in different contexts" (Scott, 1994:295). Scott rejects the universal and essentialist thought in the construction of masculine and feminine identities and urges contextual interpretations of identities rather than absolutist approaches that claim the ready-made examinations that are counted as the same for everyone in any period. She claims that "'Man's story' was supposed to be everyone's story" (1994: 295), and in this context women are made "the negative counterpoint, the 'Other,' for the construction of positive masculine identity" (1994: 295). From this point of view, Scott emphasizes the politics of difference, and conceptualizes differences as such: "differences as the condition of individual and collective identities, differences as the constant challenge to the fixing of those identities, history as the repeated illustration of the play of differences, differences as the very meaning of equality itself" (1994: 296).

Judith Evans discusses that the issue of difference must be conceptualized in accordance with the issues of different types of subordination in different cultures. She maintains that, in the name of feminist struggle, it should be taken into consideration that who is speaking on behalf of whom. Evans stresses that "there is a lesson feminists have been slow to learn: that there are variations between groups and categories of women and that at the very minimum, one group does not speak for all" (1995: 6). Even if it is a woman speaking for another woman, could it be possible to understand and express what the other feels and lives? Could the proper name "we" encompass all the women? Evans notes that "An understanding of difference in the sense of a proper appreciation that 'woman' or 'women' or 'we' were not terms that could be used without caution; that subordination was not uniform; and that it was not for one group of women to speak for another, came later, insofar as it has come at all" (1995: 17).

Ramazanoglu links the emergence of the discourse of difference in relation to binary oppositions that lie as the ground of Western thought:

The binary thinking that characterizes western attributions of superiority and inferiority both differentiates between the 'self' (the same) and its 'other' (the different) and actively constitutes a social relationship privileging the 'same' who has the power to name, subordinate, exclude or silence the 'other' (2002: 107).

Ramazanoglu, referring to Simone De Beauvoir's conceptualization of the Other in feminist writing, says that " 'Otherness' came into western feminism as a way of seeing how 'woman'/ 'feminine' has been socially constituted as what 'man' / 'masculine' (the norm, humanity) is not" (2002: 107). Similarly, Zillah Eisenstein points to the duality in the construction of woman by means of her relativity with men:

The problem is not the relational meaning of difference but the hierarchical notion of difference that defines woman by what she is not, representing her as lacking. Difference in this instance is set up as a duality: woman is different from man, and this difference is seen as deficiency because she is not man (1988:8).

Eisenstein rejects this simple dualistic vision that only represents the division as man/ woman, rather she insists that "Difference must mean diversity, not homogeneous duality, if we are going to rethink the meaning of sex and gender" (1988: 8). Structuralism emphasized the dependence of negative and positive terms on each other in order for the construction of meaning in binary oppositions. Positive meaning is understood as positive as long as there is a negative one that will negate it. So meaning is produced through the interplay of the contrasts and oppositions. Western philosophy is constructed upon the interplay of binary oppositions such as presence/absence, positive/ negative, sameness/difference, masculine/feminine, universal/local, etc. Deconstruction aims to subvert and transgress the power relations between meanings in binary oppositions. In defining the structure of binary oppositions, Derrida calls for a reversal of the hierarchy in binary oppositions in order for its deconstruction. With this regard, he states the requirement of a "double writing" which is "in and of itself multiple" for a "general strategy of deconstruction" (1981:41). With regard to the deconstruction of binary oppositions in terms of a double writing as a strategy, Derrida says that

In a classical philosophical opposition we are not dealing with the peaceful coexistence of a vis-à-vis, but rather with violent hierarchy. One of the two terms governs the other (axiologically, logically, etc.), or has the upper hand. To deconstruct the opposition, first of all, is to overturn the hierarchy at a given moment (1981:41).

Thus, subversive strategy of deconstruction becomes a helpful tool for feminism in postmodern period in transgressing the binary oppositions in terms of masculine/feminine positions. It helps to rewrite, reconceptualize and rename the power relations of the meanings in binary oppositions. Discourse of binary opposition has always placed woman on the negative side as the negative counterpart of man. So, woman has been defined with a 'pre-given' subjectivity that has already placed her within the terms of the otherness as if she is the other of man. Using deconstruction's major discourses of difference and iterability, feminist approach aims to destroy oppositional structures and rewrite, rename the difference not as a lack or as a feature that naturally disqualifies and names as Other, but as a distinctive feature: "In the case of feminists of difference, however, difference is not seen as difference *from* a pre-given norm, but as pure *difference*, difference in itself, difference with no identity" (Grosz, 1990: 339). It enables women to cross the boundaries of definitions that have been made on behalf of them. It brings a new perspective in which "A politics of difference implies the right to define oneself, others, and the World according to one's own interests" (Grosz, 1990: 340). This was also a major theme in Luce Irigaray's arguments on the stuggles for definition of womanhood and femininity. Irigaray, refusing both the masculine definitions of feminine and also rejecting even any certain definition within certain cooncepts: "To claim that the feminine can be expressed in the form of a concept is to allow oneself to be caught up again in a system of 'masculine' representations, in which women are trapped in a system or meaning which serves the auto-affection of the (masculine) subject" (1985:122-123). In this respect deconstructive attitude strikes back the restrictive approaches and ideologies. This also gives way to a more embracing manner in postfeminist theory which puts more emphasis on individual discourses on the issues of oppression, rather than creating a voice for all women that is ready-made and collective.

1.4 Postfeminism and Its Politics

Postfeminism makes a difference from previous feminist discourses with its emphasis on personal choices on identity politics including the issues of work and family life, sexual power and body control. Postfeminism creates a new perspective in feminism. Emergence of postfeminism has been regarded as a shift in feminist approaches to gender discourses. Postfeminism is not an easy concept to define for it

lacks a specific, static approach. Its unorthodox manner in its approaches to womanhood and its subjects puts postfeminism in a broader and all welcoming space. In *Postfeminism: Cultural Texts and Theories*, Stephanie Genz and Benjamin Brabon point out the proliferation of postfeminism as a critique of old feminist theories, and say that "In this context, postfeminism signals the 'pastness' of feminism – or, at any rate the end of a particular stage in feminist histories – and a generational shift in understanding the relationships between men and women and, for that matter, between women themselves" (2009: 10)

Postfeminism displays an easy manner in its approach to the issues such as sexuality, pornography, agency and domesticity. For this reason it has been exposed to criticism by many feminists who reproach postfeminism for its undermining of feminist challenge. Emergence of Postfeminism as a cultural phenomenon in 1980s and 1990s marked an "upbeat, rejuvenated and "popular" version of feminism" (Genz, 2009: 82) which did not conform to the restrictive politics of the second wave. Postfeminism is mostly a critique of feminism for various reasons. Genz examines the shift brought by postfeminism as such: "Postfeminism is both retro- and neo- in its outlook and hence irrevocably post-. It is neither a simple rebirth of feminism nor a straightforward abortion (excuse the imagery) but a complex innovation." (2009: 8). In *What's Your Flava? Race and Postfeminism in Media Culture*, Sarah Banet-Weiser points to the prefix post- as a label of shift in feminist discourse. She says that

> The danger, of course, in labeling any kind of shift in discourse or practice 'post' is that this prefix implies that whatever it modifies is somehow *over* – postfeminism, for instance, suggests (and at times insists) not only that feminism is passé but also, more obliquely, that whatever goals feminism sought have been accomplished (2007: 214).

Likewise Angela Mc Robbie views postfeminism as an act of "undoing of feminism" or as a "response to feminism" claiming that "feminism is decisively aged and made to seem redundant." (2007: 27).

Postfeminism approaches to feminism critically that it undermines the seriousness of feminism and its forceful discourses. Postfeminism offers a new understanding of feminism. Instead of building up its argument by means of the discourses of male/female, active/passive, submissive, yielding/ruling, dominating

binary oppositions, postfeminism opens up new ways of discussion that enable women empowerment through the celebration of their femininity and sexuality. In this way, postfeminism "involves an 'othering' of feminism (even as women are more centralized)" (Tasker and Negra, 2007: 3). Banet-Weiser mentions the changing nature of feminism in postfeminist ideology in relation to the shifts in cultural and political context of the late twentieth century and emphasizes that in a flux of cultural happenings it is "impossible to combine contemporary manifestations of feminism into a singular 'movement'; rather, feminisms exist in the present context as a politics of contradiction and ambivalence" (2007: 210). This means that Postfeminism is a multi-layered theory that consists various understandings of woman and femininity welcoming a freer approach. In accordance with this, what Banet-Weiser points out is postfeminism's critical approach to feminist discourses of "we" concept. She critically approaches to the all-encompassing discourse of feminism that uses the term "we" and that claims for a common struggle of all women for the same purpose. Banet-Weiser stresses that the politics of " we" is actually found problematic because of its totalizing, universalist approach to women. Accordingly, postfeminism leaves the discourse of "we" which mostly represents 1960s and 70s struggle for equal pay, equal opportunities for work and education, and for a claim of power of body control such as right to abortion. As Mc Robbie suggests, postfeminism sees feminism as "taken into account", that is "to suggest that equality is achieved, in order to install a whole repertoire of new meanings which emphasize that is it is no longer needed, it is a spent force" (2007: 28). In this respect postfeminism is mostly seen as a period after feminism which "seek[s] to supplant or supplement" feminism (Tasker and Negra, 2007: 19). In terms of supplanting feminism, postfeminism offers a discourse of individual politics on identity, race and sexuality, which is more a politics of individual choice and freedom. It supplements feminism's discourse on women's rights and equality and "redefines them in terms of liberal individualist politics that centers on lifestyle choices and personal consumer pleasures" (Genz and Brabon, 2009: 16).A more consumerism-centered political context plays a significant role in determining mainstream politics of postfeminism. Consumption-based femininity is foregrounded with a special emphasis on beauty and youthfulness. Mediating consumerism as its force, postfeminism has started to create new models of subjectivities fashioned with luxury that various markets offer for women. As Tasker and Negra state "The construction of women as both subjects and consumers, or perhaps as subjects only to the extent that we are able and

willing to consume, is one of the contradictions at the core of postfeminist culture" (2007: 8). Consumption becomes a dynamic in postfeminist culture, which creates a feminine subject empowered with her capacity to consume and to keep up with the fashion. This opens up a new feminist dimension that celebrates femininity polished with vitality. As stated by Tasker and Negra "the postfeminist heroine is vital, youthful, and playful" (2007: 9), that keeping her agenda on the issues of girlhood. Tasker and Negra go on explaining the central idea of girlhood as such:

> Moreover the 'girling' of femininity itself is evident in both the celebration of young woman as a marker of postfeminist liberation and the continuing tendency to either explicitly term or simply treat women of a variety of ages as girls. To some extent, girlhood is imagined within postfeminist culture as being for everyone; that is, girlhood offers a fantasy of transcendence and evasion, a respite from other areas of experience. The fantasy character of girlhood in so many postfeminist fictions is suggested by its recurrent association with magic, including the enchantments of consumption (2007: 18).

Likewise Genz and Brabon notice the celebration of femininity, girlhood and Girl Power as cornerstones of postfeminism, which has ended up with the rhetoric of beauty culture and its products: "an emphasis on feminine fun and female friendship with a celebration of (mostly pink-coloured) commodities and the creation of a market demographic of 'Girlies' and 'chicks'"(Genz and Brabon, 2009: 5). In this regard, postfeminism has been mostly seen and articulated as a movement of "backlash" (Faludi, 1991), a kind of reaction to the previous feminist movement that has drawn its politics especially on the denigration of femininity. From this point of view, postfeminism has been criticized for its ignorance of the efforts of women for women's right. In *Backlash: The Undeclared War Against American Women*, Susan Faludi, in her critique of feminist movement between 1980s and 1990s, states that "The truth is that the last decade has seen a powerful counterassault on women's rights, a backlash, an attempt to retract the handful of small and hard-won victories that the feminist movement did manage to win for women" (1991: 9-10). Faludi indicates that backlash works within anti-feminist agenda, yet claiming women's rights which, actually enforces domesticity. Remarking means of backlash propaganda such as movies, advertisements, and journals, Faludi stresses that the image created by these means is an image of women in predicament as a result of feminist ideals. Faludi exemplifies this situation as such:

This bulletin of despair is posted everywhere—at the newsstand, on the T V set, at the movies, in advertisements and doctors' offices and academic journals. Professional women are suffering 'burnout' and succumbing to an 'infertility epidemic.' Single women are grieving from a 'man shortage.' The New York Times reports: Childless women are 'depressed and confused' and their ranks are swelling. Newsweek says: Unwed women are 'hysterical' and crumbling under a 'profound crisis of confidence.' The health advice manuals inform: High-powered career women are stricken with unprecedented outbreaks of 'stress induced disorders,' hair loss, bad nerves, alcoholism, and even heart attacks. The psychology books advise: Independent women's loneliness represents 'a major mental health problem today' (1991: 2).

According to Faludi, backlash contribute to the idea that "The women's movement, as we are told time and again, has proved women's own worst enemy" (1991: 2). Regarded as a counter act to feminism and its ideals, postfeminism is viewed within the politics of backlash that is at the core of the negative representation of feminism.

Referring to the event of "bra-burning" in 1960s (2009: 12), as a protest of objectification of femininity by male discourse, Genz and Brabon point out the second wave feminism's attempt to create a dichotomous discourse on femininity and feminism. They emphasize that femininity was disregarded because of the assumption that feminine features are the major causes of oppression and state that "the figure of the unattractive bra-burner also cemented into the public's mind the perception of feminism as anti-feminine" (2009:22). Susan Douglas, as well, mentions the unattractive, distasteful extremist attitude of feminism that only plays with the issues of sexism: "they are shrill, overly aggressive, man-hating, ball-busting, selfish, hairy, extremist, deliberately unattractive women with absolutely no sense of humor who see sexism at every turn" (1995: 7). A commitment to denial of feminine quality produced a politics in favor of masculine attributes, and, thus, a critique of femininity meant "an opposition between 'bad' feminine identities and 'good'feminist identities" (Hollows, 2000: 9).

Joanna Hollows emphasizes the tendency of postfeminism as "a tendency to create a new opposition which allows the new femininities (not feminist, but informed by feminism) to be privileged over 'traditional femininity' which operates as a homogeneous, non-contradictory 'other'" (Hollows, 2000: 196). Hollows' positioning of women as 'other' has a positive side that privileges women by celebrating femininity and womanhood. In this respect, postfeminism as a reaction to the rigid politics of

second wave politics, has been recognized "as 'girl power' – which puts femininity back into women's sense of identity and aspiration" (Barrett, 2000: 46), it is "about reinstating femininity" and "about a feminine presentation of self" (Barrett, 2000: 48). Barrett, drawing her argumentation on the emergence of a "successful combination of traditional feminine good looks with a new exercise of women's power" (2000:48), signifies the presence of femininity in descriptions of self and identity. In her critique of self as a male based conception with the principles of centrality, rationality and self-awareness, Barrett marks the emergence of a new understanding of the self that is not static, essentialist and male based. She suggests that identities are in a flux that keeps them out of centrality making the sense of "who we are" indefinite and unstable (Barrett, 2000: 51). Thus it is not male descriptions of woman and femininity that determine the nature of womanhood, rather it is a female understanding of what it is like to be a woman, a mother, a wife, a girl, a lover or a beloved. Accordingly, it is a matter of choices made by women themselves regarding the issues of social and sexual identity that brings an end to masculine hegemony in descriptions and determinations of preferences on behalf of women.

Rosalind Gill marks the "focus on autonomous choices" (Gill, 2008: 436) in the images of women especially in advertisements, and notices the shift in images of women in media. She says that there is an emergence of a "new woman" type which derives its discourse from the subjects of subjectivity, agency, and mainly sexuality. The figures of this new woman type celebrate the powerful sexual femininity that helps women to position themselves as subjects, not objects, of desire, power and agency. Their empowerment lies in the freedom of choice. It is not male desire and manipulation that define and position female sexuality, rather she is "a 'sexy' and playful *subject*, who uses her knowledge of the power her appearance may give her over male viewers to tease them, with humour.

A crucial aspect of the shift from objectification to sexual subjectification is that this is framed in advertising through "a discourse of playfulness, freedom and, above all, choice" (Gill, 2008: 437). What Gill elaborates is the presentation of self with a more sexiness and beauty-centered agenda. She states that rules of femininity are a new one characterized by possession of a sexy body and a powerful subjectivity conscious of her attractiveness. It is mainly a politics of the power of choice that enables women

agency. Women do have the control of their body in terms of determining how they would like to be or what they would like to become. They create a "more 'successful' version of themselves" (Gill, 2008: 442) via the cosmetic products or cosmetic surgery. Gill states that "In this modernized neoliberal version of femininity, it is imperative that all one's practices (however painful or harmful they may be) be presented as freely chosen – perhaps even as pampering or indulgence" (2008: 441).

Women have the power to transform their body into what they would like to be. Gill indicates this situation as "a discourse of 'can-do' girl power" (Gill, 2008: 442), yet also she indicates the dichotomous aspect of this presentation of woman as a sexual subject/agent. A sexualized version of woman as a subject may easily result in woman's objectification by male discourse. Nevertheless it is a personal choice made with a full freedom. Emphasis on femininity in postfeminist discourse is mostly criticized because of its reestablishment of feminine values in conjunction with a sexualized imagery, which is suggested to present women as sexual objects that helps to reinscribe the discourse of commodification of female body. Stephanie Genz explains this contradictory situation as such:

> This new woman is both feminine and feminist at the same time, merging notions of personal agency with the visual display of sexuality. She inhabits a contradictory postfeminist terrain that unites patriarchal notions of feminine beauty with feminist expressions of female emancipation (2010: 106).

Genz names postfeminist woman as a "sexually assertive do-me/ Girlie" feminist who has the agency of displaying her desire and her sexuality and as one who uses her physical appearance for personal success. Yet, Genz acknowledges that this situation "places women's desires firmly within a phallocentric matrix of feminine achievement and heterosexual attractiveness" and "unites patriarchal notions of feminine beauty with feminist expressions of female emancipation" (2010: 106). The notion of choice plays an important role in self-construction of woman in postfeminist agenda. Postfeminist woman does not draw her line only around the choice of free sexual play. She has the choice of becoming what she wants, be it a successful business woman or a housewife. This new type of woman as an agent in her choices has been conceptualized within the ideology of "new traditionalism" (Probyn, 1990: 152). Rhetoric of choice makes it right if a woman wants to be a housewife. In terms of the rhetoric of choice, Elspeth Probyn

gives examples to the images from TV serials that are considered as symbols of postfeminist women: “In television terms, this means that you can be a top corporate lawyer and be pregnant (LA Law); a hot shot current affairs anchor and consider single parenthood (Murphy Brown) you can just choose to stay home, and indeed be home (thirty something)” (1990: 151). Revaluation of home and family life and women’s free choice of staying at home have been the issues that are considered with respect within postfeminist agenda. Tasker and Negra mention the same points in their view of postfeminist culture: “Assuming full economic freedom for women, postfeminist culture also (even insistently) enacts the possibility that women might choose to retreat from the public world of work” (2007: 2). From this point of view, it is clear that postfeminism crosses the borders of strict definitions of what or how a woman should be in her place in society. Women do have their own choices in determining their predilections in terms of work and family life, and sexuality. Freedom of choice is not an option that they “have to” resort in their feminine struggle in a male dominated world. They have it “to pursue their ambitions actively and take up the opportunities that a postfeminist *choiceoisie* puts at their disposal” (Genz and Brabon, 2009: 37).

Essentially, postfeminism is a reflection of the cultural politics of postmodern era of the late twentieth and early twenty first century. Politics of difference and plurality, temporality, end of grand narratives, and lack of centrality in meanings and politics in postmodern period construct the characteristics of postfeminism as a many layered politics of gender issues. Indeed, postfeminism is mostly approached critically because of the fact that it conceives an ambiguous and ambivalent nature in its relation to feminism. Its voice is the voice of contemporary woman, yet perceived in a discordant manner conflicting with previous feminist struggle. For this reason, on the one hand, it has been labelled with an anti-feminist agenda, yet on the other hand inscribed with a fresh soul of newness by the critics as well. Postfeminism degrades feminism into a personal, individual struggle rather than promoting it to the social struggle of larger groups of women. In a broader sense, individualism has become a pivotal pinpoint of postfeminist politics which acts as “embracing a singular, self centred form of agency that undermines the communal aspects of feminism and its distinct social and political goals” (Genz and Brabon, 2009: 168). Counting that the targets of feminism have been achieved, postfeminism diverts its discourse from collective social struggle of women to the individual demands and politics of personal

choices that mainly create a discourse around the politics of free choice and agency by deconstructing stereotypical reference points of gender debates.

CHAPTER TWO

2.1 Deconstructing the Misogynist Approach: Reevaluation of the Roles of the Female in Myths

Rewriting and reinterpretation of myths is an act of a rereading the texts in order for a creation of new meanings out of old ones. This new creation is a performance of deconstruction and, at the same time a reconstruction in a subversive way. In this respect, deconstruction of mythical female types involves an act of reinterpretation of the meaning that is dark, negative, evil, submissive and aggressive loaded on the female types in myths. Female types, having been given meaning by a male culture, have been deprived of an authentic authority and a voice that are original and permanent, and have been represented by the words from the mouth of a male poet. Patriarchal descriptions of women and of Goddesses determined the roles that any female should be in conformity with. In this respect, rewriting myths within a deconstructive approach aims to subvert the misogynist attitudes "by changing the focus of the narrative from a male character to a female character, or by shifting the terms of the myth so that what was a 'negative' female role-model becomes a positive one" (Purkiss,1992:442). In this manner, feminist rewriting of myths seeks to revalue cosmic maternal and matriarchal power, which is originally positive, that is lost as a result of the displacement of the Goddess with the paternal authoritative God. Susan Sellers indicates the significance of revaluation of mythic images in terms of understanding the deep meanings which are altered by patriarchal culture. She maintains that

> Rewriting myth is not only a matter of weaving in new images and situations but also involves the task of excavation, sifting through the layerings of adverse patriarchal renderings from which women were excluded, marginalized or depicted negatively to salvage and reinterpret as well as discard (2001:21-22).

Thus, rewriting myth is deconstructive in its essence. It removes myth from its central meaning and reinvigorates a new meaning that is a subverted version of the old one functioning as a supplement. This act of rewriting achieves the act of differing. It deconstructs the ultimate, totalizing meaning that is coded with role models for women and men in myths, and instead opens up new ways for alternative modes of interpretation "encompassing different possibilities and other points of view" (Sellers, 2001: 29). Accordingly, "It would enable us to envisage rewritings not only as

pleasurable reversals or ingenious tinkerings but as new embroideries, adding fresh images and colors to radically alter the picture" (Sellers, 2001: 29).

The feminist scholarship of rereading and rewriting of myths, as indicated by Sellers, aims to alter the picture the patterns of which are designed by patriarchal power. Major goal of this scholarship is to scrutinize the construction of gender structure in myths. In order to achieve this, it targets the examination of the process of transition from matriarchal power to patriarchal one in myths, and the deconstruction of gender structure as a creation of patriarchal power in terms of identity politics. In this regard, how women are represented in myths and the major changes in the role of female types as a result of transition from matriarchal to patriarchal social structure are foregrounded in feminist criticism of myths.

2.1.1 Goddess in Prehistory

In *Goddesses and the Divine Feminine*, Rosemary Radford Ruether investigates the cultural structure of prehistoric times of Europe and Near East. She defines prehistoric time as a period before the invention of writing and indicates the existence of different eras in this period such as late Paleolithic (c. 30,000–9000 bce), proto-Neolithic and Neolithic (c. 9000–5600 bce), and Calcolithic (5600–3500 bce). Ruether explains the differences and key markers of these eras as such:

> In the European late Paleolithic, we begin to have some evidence of human creative consciousness in the form of cave paintings, figurines, and tools decorated with designs or with figures of animals or humans. The Neolithic is divided from the Paleolithic by the movement from food gathering (hunting and collecting fruits, nuts, and plants) to food growing and domestication of animals. The Calcolithic describes a time of more developed agriculture (including the use of the plow and irrigation) as well as trade and early urbanization (2005: 13).

Scholars such as Rosemary Radford Ruether, Marija Gimbutas, Riane Eisler and Lotte Motz indicate the overwhelming presence of Goddess figurines in these eras. They point to the presence of female-centered cultures and their worship of Goddess as an indication of a "matrilocal society in which women held high social status" (Motz, 1997: 25). Mother Goddess cult was central in the cultures of both Paleolithic and Neolithic period and Mother Goddess is associated with mysteries of both life and death and fecundity, as well. Riane Eisler, giving an example to symbolism of the association of female with both life and death in Paleolithic burials, indicates the skeletal remains

with cowrie shells around found in a rock shelter in Les Eyzies, France. She says that

> The main emphasis seems to have been on the association of woman with the giving and sustaining of life. But at the same time, death-or, more specifically, resurrection-also appears to have been a central religious theme. Both the ritualized placement of the vagina shaped cowrie shells around and on the dead and the practice of coating these shells and/or the dead with red ocher pigment (symbolizing the vitalizing power of blood) appear to have been part of funerary rites intended to bring the deceased back through rebirth (1995: 2).

Likewise, Rosemary Radford Ruether expresses the identification of earth with womb as an indicator of the power of creation and recreation. Fertile earth and woman's womb were significantly associated to each other in representing the cycle of life, death and rebirth. Ruether states that

> The earth as the place of burial was identified with the mother's womb. In descending into the earth for burial in womb-shaped underground temples, one was at the same time affirming a faith in the rebirth of nature from death. These ancient people thus had no fear of death, understanding it as an integral part of the life process (2005: 24).

Not only was womb's creative power linked to fertile earth, but also the status of women as active agents in food gathering contributed to the worship of the Goddess as provider of life and rebirth. This also added a significant role to women as participants of forming both social and economic life. Women were not passive receivers of what life had served them. They were active participants in tool making and food gathering, and working in accordance with men. Ruether mentions the significant role of women in shaping and directing social life as such:

> Women invented tools for chopping and grinding gathered foods and containers for cooking and storage. Women in their work as gatherers and food processors were the primary creators of the technology that turned the raw into the cooked, plant and animal matter into clothes and containers. In their role as plant gatherers, they were probably the first to learn to scatter seeds to grow new plants (2005: 18).

The most prominent area of Mother Goddess culture and worship is Çatal Höyük discovered and excavated by British archeologist James Mellaart. Çatal Höyük is a Neolithic era settlement in the central Anatolia dating between 6500 and 5600 BCE . Mellaart examines the shrines of Çatalhöyük and indicates the abundance of Goddess figurines found in the area. Investigating the Goddess worship and its effect in social structure, Mellaart mentions the observed effects of Upper Paleolithic era upon the

Neolithic settlement of Çatal Höyük and states the common features that foreground the worship of a female deity:

> Upper Paleolithic art centered round the theme of complex and female symbolism (in the form of symbols and animals) shows strong similarities to the religious imagery of Çatal Hüyük; to such an extend indeed the ancestral Upper Paleolithic influences may still be lingering at Çatal Hüyük, as they so obviously are in numerous cult-practices of which the red-ochre burials, red-stained floors, collections of stalactites, fossils, shells, are but a few examples (1967: 24).

What is significant in these settlements is the existence of a matrilineal society in which the major role and status are given to female which results in a Goddess worship. She is the patroness in many areas of life and social order. Mellaart examines the significant emphasis on the Goddess in Çatal Höyük by detecting the symbolism in figurines and sculptures dedicated to the Goddess. Representation of the Goddess with large breasts and buttock in these figurines is associated with female fertility resulted in a pregnant body. Thus she is the symbol of birth and fecundity as well as the provider of food. Her power is also associated with wild animals as stated by Mellaart: "The frequency with which the goddess is shown associated with wild animals probably reflects her ancient role as the provider of game for a hunting population, and as patroness of the hunt" (1967: 182). Thus, Goddess has a role of organizing social order and of sustaining food, accordingly as a patroness of social order, she rules for the maintenance of the continuity of life and fertility, the ideology of which serves to increase social peace and welfare. Riane Eisler points to the peaceful social order in matrilineal societies in which co-work of women and men contributes to the good of society. The aim is not to destroy but to cultivate:

> But with all of this, the many images of the Goddess in her dual aspect of life and death seem to express a view of the world in which the primary purpose of art, and of life, was not to conquer, pillage, and loot but to cultivate the earth and provide the material and spiritual wherewithal for a satisfying life. And on the whole, Neolithic art, and even more so the more developed Minoan art, seems to express a view in which the primary function of the mysterious powers governing the universe is not to exact obedience, punish, and destroy but rather to give (1995: 20).

2.1.2 Transition from Matrilineal Structure to Patriarchal Hegemony

It is mostly noted that social order in these matrilineal societies is based upon egalitarian system where there is not any evidence of oppression between sexes. Though

female as a “creatrix” (Sjoo and Mor, 1991: 49) worshipped and respected under the name of mother goddess, it is “strikingly devoid of the ruler- ruled, master- subject imagery so characteristic of dominator societies” (Eisler, 1995: 18). Transition of positive power of female creatrix to the oppressive power of male dominator has its roots in various changes regarding social events that took place in these periods. Ruether links this change to the shifts in social condition with the coming and expanding of agriculture. Ruether stresses that “when hunting begins to disappear as a male occupation, men turn to larger-scale agriculture, using as a labor force the cattle they have come to control” (2005:39). So men begin to control earth and grain by their exercise of power over agriculture and its tools. Ruether says that women still have their major roles in textile production and food processing, yet “male plow agriculture reshapes land ownership in a way that decisively moves societies in the direction of both class hierarchy and male domination over women” (2005: 39). A notable example that presents the shift of power from female to male is Minoan civilization of Crete island which maintained its women-centered culture until the invasions of warlike people. In *In Search of the Lost Feminine: Decoding the Myths That Radically Reshaped Civilization*, Craig S. Barnes examines the process of change from a women-centered culture of Minoan civilization to a patriarchal one in ancient times around the dates of 1500 B.C (2006: 68). He points to the erasure of previous matriarchal culture with the invasion of a military patriarchal one showing how the patriarchal culture positioned itself as one and the ultimate by establishing its norms as if it is eternal. Barnes looks at the changes in symbolic meaning of women in Minoan culture and, examining the figures of women in clay and frescos both in Minoan and Greek culture, indicates the shifts from symbolic meaning of woman as a representative of fertility to a meaning that is associated with death in a negative way. With the invasions of different cultures which were military, warlike, woman-centered Minoan culture had started to vanish and was replaced with a male-centered, patriarchal one:

> All the local goddesses of the old earth religions were tamed after the invasions of 1600 BCE, and for the next thousand years the tales about their taming became the stuff of the myths that tried to imprint a stamp of inevitability. These invasions, therefore, accompanied by brutality and the forced subordination of earlier goddess figures (representations of the divine feminine), were among the first pressures that would eventually destroy the Minoan legacy (Barnes, 2006: 70).

In a similar manner, in *The Faces of The Goddess*, Lotte Motz emphasizes the impact of invasions in cultural shifts. He stresses that "The regions of southeastern Europe and the Middle East in which her cult had flourished were attacked and invaded by Indo-European and Semitic tribes, respectively, and these pastoralists, who raised horses or goats and camels, introduced their warlike ethos and they brought their warrior gods" (1997: 26).

2.1.3 The Impact of Myth as a Written Form and the Creation of Gender Roles

Craig Barnes indicates the shift in consciousness with a change from Minoan matriarchal culture to a Greek patriarchal one and says that, with the coming of myth as a written form, there had been significant changes in portrayals of women and nature. Barnes states that

> Before the myths women had been portrayed benignly, after the myths they were portrayed as dangerous. Whereas before the myths battles had not been glorified, after the myths battles and heroes came to center stage. Whereas before the myths nature was represented hopefully and expectantly through flowers and bees and snakes and monkeys, after the myths nature was given the shape of angry, erratic, and vengeful gods represented by thunderbolts and earthquakes, while symbolic snakes were turned vengeful and demonic. These changes were ushered in by a massive storytelling campaign that provided the intellectual and psychological climate for a patriarchal property system. Within that system, as a result, women and their sexuality had to be suppressed, the view of nature and war had to be changed, and man's relation to time had to be reoriented (2006: 7).

Similarly, in *Sexual Politics*, Kate Millet emphasizes the shift from foregrounded fertility cults dedicated to Goddess to a patriarchal structure that establishes itself as the ultimate ruler which dominates by "displacing and downgrading female function in procreation and attributing the power of life to the phallus alone" (2000: 28). Myth as a written form had great impact on forming role models for men and women. Considering the fact that the writers of myths were men and seeking glorification of male power and honour in their works narrating heroic deeds, women were described and given an identity by male point of view. So it was men naming and determining the role of women in these narrations. Accordingly, it is clear that myths contribute to the establishment of patriarchal authority and, thus, become an institutional legitimizer of male power, and a tool of "patriarchal propoganda" (Barnes, 2006: 99). Barnes

mentions the coded patriarchy in ancient myths and asserts that there are three major names among the "propagandists of the patriarchal order" (2006: 102) which are Homer "whose glorification of war and marriage laid down the basic template" (2006:102); the author of Genesis "who wrapped the sacred fruit in evil and sent the sacred snake into exile and the sacred woman into a subordinate world" (2006:102); and Hesiod "who wrote that the first woman, Pandora, had been 'the ruin of mankind'" (2006:102).

In *The Myth of the Goddess*, Anne Baring and Jules Cashford remark the distribution of certain characteristics and skills to gods and goddesses as a new patriarchal system has started to rule over the old one. Baring and Cashford mark the decrease in centrality of the Goddess, and an increase in male authority with various indications of power. Accordingly, new skills has emerged and they are distributed to gods and goddesses, which becomes a particular way of standardizing the roles for gods and goddesses that depends on the relationship of submission/authority dichotomy. Baring and Cashford state that:

> Each aspect of human activity comes to be under the governance of a particular goddess or god; their help is invoked as new activities re added to old ones. 'Mother' and 'Father' goddesses and gods engender 'sons' and 'daughters', and an elaborate system of divine relationship and intermarriage connects the new discoveries in the human realm with the original deities of the source of life, ultimately with the Mother Goddess. However, new creation myths, in which the Father God plays the central role, now begin to overshadow the old ones (1993: 152).

Though latter goddesses, like Athena, Artemis, Aphrodite, etc. each with a specific value, skill, and task, could be seen as an assimilated version of Mother Goddess that is the symbol of fecundity and regenerating power, they lose their centrality and "the core and heart of their being is not in the dominion over death, birth, and fecundity" (Motz, 1997: 13). Thus, female power has started to become subordinate to male power. Women as active participants and agents of social order and nature have become secondary and oppressed. Woman is associated with nature and nature was perceived "as something 'other' to be conquered" (Baring and Cashford, 1993: 157-158) by new warlike rulers of old system. Joseph Campbell links this shift with "a negative moral judgment" that damages the quality of the association of nature with the Mother Goddess:

> In the older mother myths and rites the light and darker aspects of the mixed thing that is life had been honored equally and together, whereas in the later, male-oriented, patriarchal myths, all that is good and noble was attributed to the new, heroic master gods, leaving to the native nature powers the character only of darkness—to which, also, a negative moral judgment now was added (Campbell, 1965: 21).

In this respect, nature and women associated with it have been exposed to blackening that aims to establish male power as supreme and all ruling. Thus, "female principle is devalued" (Campbell, 1965: 86), and disabled and even attributed negative and evil qualities: "[…] the power of this goddess-mother of the world, whom we here seen defamed, abused, insulted, and overthrown by her sons, is to remain as an ever-present threat to their castle of reason, which is founded upon a soil that they consider to be dead but is actually alive, breathing, and threatening to shift it" (Campbell, 1965: 86).

Riane Eisler, in mentioning the change in power relations, points out the significance in the change in ideology, as well. Regarding the change in ideology, Eisler indicates that "from the very beginning warfare was an essential instrument for replacing the partnership model with the dominator model. And war and other forms of social violence continued to play a central role in diverting our cultural evolution from a partnership to a dominator direction" (1995: 47). Thus, a hierarchal structure of binary oppositions started to get form in the model of dominator, ruler, controller/ dominated, ruled, controlled. Eisler states that, in a similar manner, there were major shifts in the context of social and economic condition due to the shift in priorities. Life sustained and maintained by agriculture and food production becomes more related to the matter of power which forces societies to fight and conquer in order to exist: "The power to dominate and destroy through the sharp blade gradually supplants the view of power as the capacity to support and nurture life" (Eisler, 1995: 53). So, importance of planting and supplying food gained a secondary status and the shift in social priorities accelerated "toward more effective technologies of destruction" (1995: 53). This social and ideological transformation affected women's status in society. Women began to be regarded and given a social condition in their reference to their husbands, and the Goddess as a creative and life sustaining force "becomes merely the wife or consort of male deities, who with their new symbolizations of power as destructive weapons or thunderbolts are now supreme" (Eisler, 1995: 53). In standardizing the roles of women and dictating it as a causal reality, myths had the major role. Accordingly, myth became

a way of presenting female and male roles and 'duties' as a fact of life, which even goes too far as to present rape as a natural event: "When a male god rules the world and when a male divinity pursues and rapes a nymph, myth merely records the facts of life on earth: that realms are usually governed by kings, and that men rape women" (Motz, 1997: 36). Women were intentionally depicted as either submissive or as a threat to order, or as "either victims or monsters" (Lewis, 2011: 445) in order for the presentation of the supremacy of male power as a symbol of the ultimate truth. In "Women and Myth", Sian Lewis summarizes this ideology by giving examples:

> Stories interpreted as encapsulating gender hostility include the wives and mothers in tragedy who kill their husbands (Klytaimestra, Deianeira) or their children (Medea, Prokne), the female monsters combated by heroes (the Gorgons, Harpies, and Amazons), the many accounts of young women or nymphs abducted by gods (Korone, Semele, Oreithyia, and Persephone), and the tale of the first woman of all, Pandora. Construed in this way, the myths do indeed seem to have a single message to impart about the roles suitable for women, and the consequences for society should that order be overthrown. (2011: 445).

Lewis goes on to explain the major role of women in myth is to be in an appropriate female behavior, which consequently brings her marriage. As indicated by Lewis, myths do mention women by placing them in a so called social status at the center of which lies marriage, and "marriageability"(2011: 450). Presentation of married women has always been foregrounded on the quality of being docile and obedient. Otherwise, when woman is active, she is considered as trouble. John J. Winkler indicates this situation as "the first unwritten rule" of the sex-gender system in which "men are important agents" and if they do not "want to invite trouble, it is prudent for him and other men to assume, until forced to do otherwise, that the women of his household are invisible, obedient, and industrious" (1990: 8). In this way sex, as stated by Winkler, becomes a tool of social order in preparing what is best for women and men, and as a result becomes "a way for men to establish their social identities in the intensely competitive, zero-sum formats of public culture" (1990: 11).

Marriage has been a forceful determinant in detecting the social acceptability of women, and goddesses, as well, in Greek pantheon: "females may be parthenoi (maidens) or gynaikes (matrons), but not unmarried women" (Dowden, 1995: 46). Thus unmarried woman was regarded as out of norms, or as wild and troublous who "needs to be 'caught' by her suitor and tamed into marriage" (Lewis, 2011: 451). Marriage is

equated with taming. Craig S. Barnes mentions the equation of marriage with taming as such:

> For the Greeks marriage and female suppression went hand in hand. They used the same word for taming a horse as to tame a woman by marrying her. A Greek word for "wife," damar, apparently meant the "tamed, domesticated one." … The verb "to tame" … [was] used of animals, young women, and conquered people. Livestock, heifers, goats, and horses were tamed, and so were women. One verb served for them all (2006: 162).

Subjection to male control was both for mortal women and for goddesses. Marriage was the easiest way to supreme control of women by men on the one hand. On the other hand, goddesses, though they are immortal and more powerful when compared to mortal women, were also held in control by male authority. In her article titled "Women in Greek Myth", Mary Lefkowitz states the dependence of women on male dominance, no matter how powerful and free they can be as goddesses. They are always defined and given a character by Zeus, the god of all gods and goddesses. Lefkowitz says that even the virgin goddesses like Athena and Artemis, who are not married, thus who are free, are dependent on Zeus in terms of a guaranteed protection and honor. Besides, Lefkowitz argues that these goddesses "acted only within limits defined by Zeus and with his approval, or with the cooperation of another god" (1985: 210). Defined as either wives or lovers of gods, other goddesses "could gain power temporarily by withdrawing from the males and by withholding something essential to men or to the gods" (Lefkowitz, 1995: 210).

Riane Eisler points to the continuation of goddess image in Christian iconography. Eisler states that virgin Mary images in Christian belief do have the reminiscence of the manifestations of the Goddess figures in Neolithic period. Eisler says that: "Just as the Neolithic pregnant Goddess was a direct descendant of the full-bellied Paleolithic "Venuses," this same image survives in the pregnant Mary of medieval Christian iconography. The Neolithic image of the young Goddess or Maiden is also still venerated in the aspect of Mary as the Holy Virgin" (1995: 22). Continuation of the goddess image in Christian order is also a manifestation of the continuation of the submissive role of women. Now "Mary, the only woman in this religious facsimile of patriarchal family organization, is merely mortal- clearly, like her earthly counterparts, of an inferior order" (Eisler:1995: 24).

The position of women in myths displays a transition from a powerful governance as a Mother Goddess to a submissive woman type whose power is dependent on gods. Associated with earth in terms of fertility and life sustaining powers, Mother Goddess was worshipped as creatrix who sustained an equalitarian social structure. With the invasions of war-like societies in the areas of matrilocal societies, the concept of Mother Goddess was manipulated and remodeled by masculine authorities in the name of Gods. With this manipulation a new social structure began to appear which foregrounded masculine power and the ideals of war society. Conditioned by shifts in power, Goddess, once characterized as a creatrix, turned into "a consort of male deities" (Eisler, 1995: 53). Emergence of a new ideology which maintains an authoritarian hierarchy settled women in a polar position, and paved way for negative and misogynistic representations of the women in myths. In this regard, deconstruction of mythical female types is needed in order for a restoration of a positive image denuded from negative meanings.

2.2 Feminist Criticism of Myths

In recent years, myths are approached in terms of feminist criticism that enables crossing the borders of stereotypical women types, and opens up new spaces for claims of new and various female types. In doing so, misogynistic definitions and characterizations of mythical female types are deconstructed by means of subversion that decomposes the central, totalizing meanings in these definitions, and instead new, positive are meanings created out of old ones. From this point of view, feminist criticism of myths or, in other words, feminist myth criticism targets deconstruction of male-defined female character in myths that is given a certain, restricted role defined by her dependence on males, her domestic duties and by her submissive, yielding 'nature' approved for her.

Women in myths have been valued in terms of their relation to men as their wives, daughters, slaves or mothers. The power of myth has had a great impact in forming Western thought of gender roles that position women on the negative part of male/female dichotomy. It is an ongoing presence of myths that does continue to shape the lives of women according to their prescribed gender norms. Mary Lefkowitz indicates this situation and says that

> The old myths continue to haunt us, not just in the form of nymphs and shepherds on vases or garden statuary, but in many common assumptions about the shape of human experience. The notions – now presumably obsolete – that a man should be active and aggressive, a woman passive and subject to control by the men in her family, are expressed in virtually every Greek myth, even the ones in which the women seek to gain control of their own lives (1985: 207).

In a similar manner, in *Je, Tu, Nous*, Luce Irigaray expresses the impact of myth in forming and affecting the traditions and lives of people, as well: “We are all imbued with the many Greek, Latin, Oriental, Jewish, and Christian traditions, at least, particularly through the art, philosophy, and myths we live by, exchange, and perpetuate, often without realizing” (1993: 23). Coded role models are dictated through myths, and in the same manner, myths contributed to the continuation of traditions taken and accepted as unchangeable and unquestionably regulatory. Thus myths have become an institutionalized form of behavior regulating and dictating gender roles. Considering the fact that myths have been written down and given a last word by male writers, it is obvious that they undeniably serve patriarchy in order for the construction and justification of male supremacy and female inferiority. Fear of female urged the male writer define female as a dark continent (Purkiss, 1992: 444) that is to be avoided, repressed and controlled. In her essay entitled "Women's Rewriting of Myth" (1992), Diane Purkiss states that “This discourse of mythography defined the Great Mother as a figure in male writing by insisting that such female figures were the dark, repressed underside of civilization” (1992: 444). Accordingly, as argued by Purkiss, this dark continent is unknowable, and uncivilized. In this respect, Purkiss notices the urgency of “a dramatic break with the myths as told by the fathers” so as to “be recovering the dark, secret, always unconscious truths which the fathers have struggled to repress” (1992: 444). In alliance with this act of recovering the dark ‘truths’, feminist rewriting of myths improves this “dark continent” by reclaiming what is taken from women: self-expression without male interruption and male perspective. This is a counter-act against the complete control and signification of female mythical types by authoritarian male perspective. This act has very much in common with the female writing of female experience, which has passionately been debated by Helene Cixous in her article “The Laugh of Medusa” (1976). Cixous says that “Woman must put herself into the text-as into the world and into history-by her own movement” (1976: 875). Rewriting myths from a female point of view is an act of “putting herself into text” that challenges the

patriarchal ideology in myths enabling “the new breaks away from the old, and, more precisely, the (feminine) new from the old (la nouvelle de l'ancien)” (Cixous, 1976: 875), which seeks an “an arid millennial ground to break” and aims “to breakup, to destroy; and to foresee the unforeseeable, to project.” (1976: 875). In her persistent demand for women’s writing of their own experiences through their bodies, Cixous also demands for a reclaim for what is taken from women: a voice for women’s sexuality that is silenced, repressed or altered by patriarchy, and insists on a necessity of a “feminine practice of writing” (1976: 883) that focuses writing on female body and its experiences which have always been defined, and given a character by male authors. So, rewriting myths from a feminist point of view has very much common with Cixous’ ideology in “The Laugh of Medusa”. It liberates all these myths from autocratic male intervention. Regarding the male intervention in the creation of myths, Carolyn Larrington, in her introduction to *The Feminist Companion to Mythology*, stresses that “myths about women are not necessarily women’s myths” (1992: xii), because “historically women have been disbarred from the means to fix their myths in literary form, to give them a distinctively female perspective” (1992: xii). What feminist myth criticism achieves, as suggested by Larrington, is to fix these myths within a distinctive female perspective. This creates a new way to show that “You only have to look at the Medusa straight on to see her. And she's not deadly. She's beautiful and she's laughing” (Cixous, 1976: 885).

A restoration of female beauty in myths in terms of mental, moral and psychological way enables to give the power back to women that they had lost as a result of the development of a male dominated, God-centered world. This is a reversal of roles for women prescribed by a male authority, and a return to a “*gynocentric*” structure which Adrienne Rich uses in her definition of women-centered cultures of prehistoric period (1986:93). In “gynocentric” culture Goddess worship was primary in social organization and “female as primal power” (1986: 93) had asserted herself over the control of life, death and rebirth. Patriarchal authority altered this power structure and instead established its own regulations of power that conditions female within a secondary status. In *Of Woman Born*, Rich explains this power regulation by patriarchy as a “revenge for – his [paternal figure’s] previous condition as son-of-the-mother” (1986: 119). Likewise, Sjöö and Mor indicate the inversion of power politics as soon as the God becomes the dominator. Power of Goddess has been manipulated and projected

onto the male God by means of "secular male usurpation of social, political, and economic power as well as a rewriting of all the old mythologies" (1991: 217). Namely, as stated by Sjöö and Mor "The relation of son to Mother becomes misconstrued as that of a lover to a bride, then a dominating lord to a servant" (1991: 217). In respect to shift in roles, Goddess as female divinity has only been valued with her maternal aspect that reduces her to only a productive manner in the eyes of the male. Her ability to give birth, which is her life-giving power as a "creatrix" (Sjöö and Mor, 1991: 49) merely converged to simple ideology that fixes women on only child bearing and domestic duties.

Sjöö and Mor signify the presence of Great Mother as a source of life sustaining nature, earth and a life-giving spirit that is "raped, ravaged, and polluted" by "life-denying and anti-evolutionary patriarchal cultures" (1991: xviii). Examining archeological evidences from the ancient times of various cultures, Sjöö and Mor indicate the existence of Great Mother worship in the form of a Mother Goddess which generates life and cosmic energy. Body parts of woman are linked with certain aspects of nature. Especially womb is the marker of fertile earth that gives birth. Womb is also the receiver of death, which will turn into rebirth. They mark the association of female body and its cyclic changes with nature and its life forces:

> This concept of a female earth as the source of cyclic birth, life, death, and rebirth underlies all mythological and religious symbology; it is the source of all religious belief. It is important to grasp the time dimension involved: *God was female for at least the first 200,000 years of human life on earth*" (1991: 48-49). (italics original)

Thus the body of the Goddess becomes the emblem of phases and spaces of life generated in and by nature. Sjöö and Mor link the mysteries of life with the mysteries of woman body and its cyclic experiences such as "in bleeding, in growing a child, in nursing, in working with fire, in making a pot, in planting a seed"(1991: 50). Moreover they indicate not only the creative power of women, but also women's transformative power, which can be considered as a quality that saves them from status-quo, a patriarchal aspect. They say that: "Women's mysteries are blood transformation mysteries: The experience of female bodily transformations magically fused with her conscious and willed transformations of matter. Matter: the mud: the Mother. She transforms herself" (1991: 51).

With the pervasion of male domination in cultures, Goddess began to hold a secondary status in which the transformative power of her body was regarded within the service of patriarchal husband-father. In her depiction of the relationship between female divinity and male authority, Adrienne Rich states that:

> Patriarchal monotheism did not simply change the sex of the divine presence; it stripped the universe of female divinity, and permitted woman to be sanctified, as if by an unholy irony, only and exclusively as mother (without the extended mana that she possessed prepatriarchally) – or as the daughter of a divine father. She becomes the property of the husband-father, and must come to him virgo intacta, not as 'second-hand goods'; or she must be ritually deflorated (1986: 119).

Patriarchal monotheism does not erase the existence of female. It changes the power relations in which female power becomes a subordinated one. A return to female power enables righting wrongs created by patriarchal ideology which sought the institutionalization of female domesticity and silence. In this vein, it aims to restore "stolen mythic power" (Daly, 1990: 47) which is a result of "the subjugation of the local goddess religion" (Gimbutas, 1999: 154) and it also stands against the internalization of patriarchal gender hierarchies by women. In *Gyn/Ecology*, Mary Daly links the reversal of patriarchal myths with a more conscious creation of powerful women selves. For her, reversals are not just "simplistic […]'opposites' of male myths" (1990:46). Significance lies in the construction of a powerful self-centering woman type who will find "in finding our Background, is our own strength, which we give back to our Selves" (1990: 49), and this reversal will further these selves "from a merely chronological analysis to a Crone-logical analysis" (Daly, 1990: 47).

Rewriting of myths is a deconstruction of established identities for women in myths. Myths have always been tools coded with messages in forming social and sexual identities. It helps to strengthen the either/or dichotomies in gender issues, especially regarding women and their character as either mothers or slaves ,either wives or maidens, either virgins or whores, etc. As Alicia Ostriker states:

> There we find the conquering gods and heroes, the deities of pure thought and spirituality so superior to Mother Nature; there we find the sexually wicked Venus, Circe, Pandora, Helen, Medea, Eve, and the virtuously passive Iphigenia, Alcestis, Mary, Cinderella. It is thanks to myth we believe that woman must be either "angel" or "monster" (1982: 71).

Obviously, myth has always been dictating "how we have been led to imagine ourselves" (Rich, 1972: 18), and it has to be rewritten "not to pass on a tradition but to break its hold over us" (Rich, 1972: 19). This tradition is a social construction by men that shapes female morality, behavior and sexuality. It draws a picture of women imagined to be in accordance with the desires of men. So it is a picture of women colored and given a frame by men. Accordingly, what women see and read in these pictures and stories about themselves are actually male fantasies and characterizations. In *The Second Sex*, Simone de Beauvoir deals with the problem of identification of woman by man as the "other of man", or in other words institutionalization of woman as "the other" in society, which is also supported and led to internalization by women via the vehicles such as books, tales and myths. So, a world of deception, in which woman is dictated and led to internalization of her "duties", is created. In this way, as stated by Daly, myth becomes a major tool by which "patriarchy perpetuates its deception" (1990: 44). This deception is created by "patriarchal myth-makers/ legitimators" (Daly, 1990: 46) who intentionally contribute to negative imagery of women. In mentioning the intentions of the patriarchs, Daly stresses that "the Female Self is the Otherworld to the patriarchs, their intent is to close us off from our own Selves, deceiving us into believing that these are the only doorways to our depths and that the fathers hold the keys" (1990: 46).

De Beauvoir states that "Children's books, mythology, stories, tales, all reflect the myths born of the pride and the desires of men; thus it is that through the eyes of men the little girl discovers the world and reads therein her destiny" (1953: 292). Moreover this contributes to the internalization of submission and passivity that recommends and advises acquiring a docile manner. De Beauvoir says that

> The delights of passivity are made to seem desirable to the young girl by parents and teachers, books and myths, women and men; she is taught to enjoy them from earliest childhood; the temptation becomes more and more insidious; and she is the more fatally bound to yield to those delights as the flight of her transcendence is dashed against harsher obstacles (1953: 301).

In addition to this, docile manner is presented as an initiator of a morality rewarded with a man's love. Woman, from the early stages of their lives, should give up her own desires and dreams, and, mentally and physically, be in accordance with male desire. In order for this, she must yield to passivity that will bring them "happiness" in the form of love. Regarding this, "everything invites her to abandon herself in daydreams to men's arms in order to be transported into a heaven of glory. She learns that to be happy she must be loved; to be loved she must await love's coming" (De Beauvoir, 1953: 294). She has to wait and let herself being acted on by male desire. Otherwise she is the witch, the hag, the female monster or the evil. Woman who seeks her agency socially and sexually is regarded as an obstacle to the order of patriarchal society. So this type of woman is considered as witch. As noted by Barbette Stanley Spaeth:

> The lustful actions of these witches are a form of inversion of the 'natural' order, for according to ancient conceptions, it was the male who supposed to be the active sexual partner. In assuming the active role, witches call into question the normative sexual roles of men and women in classical culture, threatening the culturally constructed boundaries of male and female (2014: 45).

Remarking the culturally constructed link between witchcraft and non-conformist behavior, Naomi Goldenberg indicates how witchcraft is directly associated with "psychological and social forces" (2004:205) that are considered as threat to male hierarchy:

> The word witch can conjure female carnality, deep emotion, imaginings that border on madness, the playfulness and vulnerability of infancy and old age, the perpetual birth and decay of the natural world. Witches thus are well-positioned to make institutions nervous by calling attention to that which a dominant patriarchal order must occlude (2004: 205).

Similarly, Adrienne Rich, in her discussion of misogynist approach to motherhood, deals with the role of male anxiety and fear of female power in terms of its creative aspect. Referring to Karen Horney's discussion of women, Rich states that "woman as elemental force, and as sexual temptress and consumer of his sexual energies, thus becomes, for man, a figure generating anxiety" (1986:114).

In revising the constructions of female and male identity through myths, feminist criticism of myths crosses the borders of patriarchal imagery. Mary Daly states that this is an act of breaking the code of phallic image and says that "For in fact feminists breaking the code of distorted phallic myth are breaking the routine, the vanity, the illusions, the adaptive behavior of the death marchers caught on the wheel of their 'paradigms'" (1990: 48). This break enables women to get back what is stolen from them: female agency. Daly indicates that this regain is regarded as a profane act, yet she stresses that it liberates women from patriarchal oppression. Daly notes that "The term *profane* is derived from the Latin *pro* (before) and *fanum* (temple). Feminist profanity is the wild realm of the sacred as it was/is before being caged into the temple of Father Time" (1990:48). Breaking the chains from the temple of Father Time is a way to return to self-created identity which both activates and also is activated by self-conscious, self-knowing psyche. Adrienne Rich emphasizes the significance of revision in order for a survival of female identity defined and given a character by female autonomy:

> Re-vision-the act of looking back, of seeing with fresh eyes, of entering an old text from a new critical direction-is for us more than a chapter in cultural history: it is an act of survival. Until we can understand the assumptions in which we are drenched we cannot know ourselves. And this drive to self-knowledge, for woman, is more than a search for identity: it is part of her refusal of the self-destructiveness of male-dominated society (1972: 18).

Female as an entity whose identity has undergone negative connotations by means of patriarchal definitions is targeted for in feminist myth criticism. Possession of female sexuality by male authority is one of the central problems to be dealt with. On the one hand, this includes the degradation of female creative power, which was once worshipped in the maternal aspect of Mother Goddess as a life giver creatrix, to a mere "means of reproduction" (Rich, 1986:119). As stated by Rich "Patriarchal man impregnates 'his' wife and expects her to deliver 'his' child; her elemental power is perceived more and more as a service she renders, a function she performs" (1986: 120). On the other hand, degradation of female sexuality to a servant of male god, which he could rape whenever he wants, is another problematic. In *The Living Goddesses*, Marija Gimbutas discusses the change in roles of women with the change of power from maternal to paternal hierarchy as a result of invasions that ended the period of Mycenean civilization, who were descendants of Indo-European invaders, and who started the rise of archaic Greece. With this change "the feminine role eroded to yield

the familiar religion presented by Homer, where goddesses were subordinate to gods." (1999: 154). Gimbutas does not deny the ongoing significance of the goddess figure in Greek civilization of 1st BCE and in later periods. She marks the change in roles as such:

> The most important Old European goddesses – who became Artemis, Hera, Athena, and Demeter – found their way into the Olympic male pantheon. The Greeks built magnificent temples for these goddesses, as they did for the Indo-European gods. However, the independent, parthenogenetic (creating life without male participation) goddesses gradually became the brides, wives, and daughters of the Indo-European gods, albeit not always successfully or consensually. In Greek mythology, Zeus rapes hundreds of goddesses and nymphs, Poseidon rapes Demeter, and Hades rapes Persephone. These rapes in the divine sphere may have reflected the brutal treatment of Old European mortal women during the transition from prepatriarchy to patriarchy (1999: 164).

Similarly, Bettina Knapp points to the enforced situation of subordination for women. She states that women may have critical significance in some cases, yet they are under subjugation. Knapp says that "Women will be seen as activators and catalysts, but also as victims of ignominious situations into which societies and religions forced them" (1997: xix). These enforced situations lead to the standardization of female behavior. Driven as role models and dictated as 'natural' and 'as expected', behaviors of women are designed and fashioned within certain frames so as not to make them autonomous and authoritative. Thus, submissiveness, yielding behavior, silence, absence, and weakness are considered as qualities that are to describe female morality and good behavior. Those who do not conform to these regulations have been considered as deviated and need to be punished.

In addition to ancient male hegemony on the creation of the image of women in myths, Christianity, as well, contributed to the construction of submissive woman type and authoritative ruling god with a male characterization. In Christianity and its customs, persistence of the paternal figure as the ultimate power continued. All ruling gods have been replaced by the God, the Father. Characterization of God with male aspects solidified itself. Feminist critics such as Mary Daly, Carol Christ, Naomi Goldenberg focus their attention on the critique of the equation of God with a male character that automatically ranks women at the second place. In *She Who Changes* Carol P. Christ points to this situation and says that

> This God is known through the images of Lord, King, and Father. Each of these images is exclusively masculine, and feminists argue that this creates the impression that the highest power in the universe is male. The masculinity of God makes it difficult for women to see ourselves as being "in the image of God" and to affirm our own power (2003: 25-26).

Later on in her work, Christ mentions the two natures of human being that are rational and bodily natures. She calls attention to the attribution of the rational nature to men, which enables them to rule over bodily needs and desires, whereas bodily nature is attached to women which is unruly, changing and full of temptations. Christ values this concept of change and links it with the development of a creative freedom. Carol Christ's another effective work on the criticism of patriarchal God had the same significant points in rejecting the concept of making women subordinate to the paternal authority, and their exclusion from the naming of the ruler. In her article "Why Women, Men and Other Living Things Still Need the Goddess: Remembering and Reflecting 35 Years Later" (2012), Christ revises her article titled "Why Women Need the Goddess" that was presented in a seminar in 1977. She insists on the need for a Goddess because

> Religions centered on the worship of a male God create 'moods' and 'motivations' that keep women in a state of psychological dependence on men and male authority, while at the same time legitimating the political and social authority of fathers and sons in the institutions of society (2012: 246).

Christ is against the engendered presentation of God framed with masculine attributes. This, as Christ persists, contributes to the presentation of female as "inferior and dangerous" (2012: 248).

In *Creation of Patriarchy*, Gerda Lerner investigates the process of the emergence and institutionalization of patriarchy as the ultimate truth. Lerner examines the ancient Near East culture and its place in the formation of gender norms. In a similar vein to the discussions of Diane Purkiss and Helene Cixous on the male writing of female experience, Lerner associates the dominant power of patriarchy with the invention of writing in Mesopotamia in 3100 B.C. as a symbol system. Lerner discusses that the control of the symbol system held in men's power in which women were excluded in their share of this system. So, it was only men's job to explain the world and its affairs in symbols and scripts. In this respect, Lerner argues that systematic

exclusion of women from access to symbols also "kept [them] from contributing to History-making" (1986: 5) because "historians have been men, and what they have recorded is what men have done and experienced and found significant. They have called this History and claimed universality for it" (1986: 4). So, women had no history but what is recorded on their behalf by men. This, Lerner suggests, contributed to acceptance of patriarchy by women presenting them "as marginal to civilization and as the victim of historical process" (1986: 223). Indicating this, Lerner says that "The exclusion of women from the creation of symbol systems became fully institutionalized only with the development of monotheism" (1986: 200). Lerner, in discussing the monotheistic structure, argues that Genesis is a contributor to that structure in which "It is Yaweh who is the sole creator of the universe and all that exists in it" (1986: 180). Absence of maternal source in the creation process, as suggested by Lerner, supports the monotheistic structure that praises patriarchy. Moreover, creation of woman in this monotheism is another way of the confirmation of male supremacy. In this creation, Adam is granted with many priorities, especially that of naming. Examining the Genesis 2: 23 ("And the man said: 'This is now bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman because she was taken out of Man"), Lerner states that man assumes the role of a mother in the creation of female: "The Man here defines himself as 'the mother' of the Woman; through the miracle of divine creativity a human being was created out of his body the way the human mother brings forth life out of her body" (1986 :181). With this transition from the creatrix to the creator, there have been some changes in symbols, too. Lerner makes a short list of these changes as such: "(1) from the vulva of the goddess to the seed of man; (2) from the tree of life to the tree of knowledge; (3) from the celebration of the Sacred Marriage to the Biblical covenants" (1986: 146).

In *Lethal Love*, Mieke Bal examines the Biblical account of Adam and Eve as a sexist myth which he considers as an outcome of man's dissatisfaction of himself. Bal remarks that narration of Adam and Eve myth conveys man's reflection of his dissatisfaction upon women in terms of the issue of "the split of body and soul" (1987: 112). Bal summarizes this situation by linking it to the myth of origin as such:

> Man, dissatisfied with himself, frightened of his drives and disgusted by his demanding body, found a way out by assuming that this body was very different from himself. But he knew very well that this would not work. The power of the body just would not make sense in such a structure. Therefore the perception, external and hence monolithic, of the woman who in her otherness could seem more whole, posed a problem of envy. Envying her apparent wholeness, blaming her otherness, he decided she was entirely corrupt. Thus, the myth of origin was corrupted. The split between body and soul was retrospectively projected upon Eve as character as it became available after the working of the retrospective fallacy: so attractive in body, so corrupt in soul, and hence dialectically dangerous because of her very attractiveness (1987: 112).

In a similar manner to Gerda Lerner and Mieke Bal, Mary Daly examines the Biblical image of God as a great patriarch and the image of women as a cause of original sin. She declares that the image of God "rewarding and punishing according to his mysterious and seemingly arbitrary will, has dominated the imagination of millions over the ten thousands of years […] making its mechanisms for the oppression of women appear right and fitting" (1985: 13). Daly investigates the myth of the Fall and states that it is "both a symptom and instrument of further contagion" (1985: 46). Daly says that myth serves for the justification of women's inferior place and victimization by means of the concept of "'original sin' that is, internalization of blame and guilt" (1985: 49). Daly remarks that the conception of original sin as an inherited sin is actualized "through socialization process" (1985: 49). Daly goes on to suggest that "It is the inherited burden of being condemned to live out the role of 'the Other.' The fault should not be seen as existing primarily in victimized individuals, but rather in demonic power structures which induce individuals to internalize false identities" (1985: 49).

In *Sexual Politics in The Biblical Narrative: Reading the Hebrew Bible as a Woman*, Esther Fuchs, as well, stresses the male ideology in Bible in terms of its monolithic center structured around male authority and presence:

> The Bible does not merely project a male consciousness, but that it promotes a male supremacist social and cognitive system. According to this system, man is a more 'authentic' representative of God because God is male, and God is male because the Bible reflects a masculine construction of the divine. The imaging of God as male redefined roles previously assigned to female Goddesses in the ancient Near East (2003: 12).

Fuchs expresses the ultimate power of male narrator in determining both the roles and the status of women. She argues that male narrators project their fears in the form of patriarchal ideology on women. Fuchs says that

More often than not biblical female characters reflect male fears and desires rather than historical women. The male narrator wields rhetorical control, he has the power of discourse. He also has the power to omit or close off alternatives, options and narrative possibilities that may interfere with or challenge this politics. He has the ability to 'prove' women's moral inferiority or to valorize women's reproductive abilities as suits his purpose (2003: 15).

Fuchs argues that this is a projection of the justification of female subordination:

Female sexuality needs to be controlled, female procreativity is to be used, female political power needs to be contained and female spiritual/religious potential suppressed. When all is said and done, the biblical narrative justifies the domination of women and children—by male heads of households, and male national and religious leaders (2003: 32).

Fuchs indicates that women "have become the male-authored texts" (2003: 17). In this respect, women's rewriting of myth makes it necessary to look at established models of behavior from a revolutionary point of view. It defends that it is urgent to save the female character from the manipulation of male definitions and furnish her with a new soul that is hers, and defined and given a voice by herself. In this respect, feminist rewriting of myths strives to tear off the patriarchal oppressive operations of women in terms of social, psychological and sexual restrictions and characterizations. Daly calls it an "exorcism of the internalized patriarchal presence, which carries with it feelings of guilt, inferiority, and self-hatred that extends itself to other women" (1985: 50). This helps women to find out that "'female is beautiful,' not in the sense of accepting patriarchy's models and imposed standards for evaluating females, but in the sense that women are discovering and defining ourselves" (Daly, 1985: 50). It creates a path leading to a revolutionary change which pops up as a result of the female values that springs out after a long-term subjugation by patriarchy. As Ostriker points that "it is typical of women's rewriting of myth that, when meanings already latent in a given story are recovered and foregrounded by a woman's perspective, the entire story appears to change. Perhaps we should not say the story changes. Perhaps we should say that it grows" (1993:29). Similarly, Lerner associates the rewriting/rereading process with "overcoming the deep-seated resistance within ourselves toward accepting ourselves and our knowledge as valid" (1985: 228). She insists that it necessitates " being skeptical toward every known system of thought" and "getting rid of the great men in our heads and substituting for them ourselves, our sisters, our anonymous foremothers" (1985: 228). Regarding women poets' rewriting of myths, Rachel

Duplessis marks this act of rewriting as critique of culture and ideology within a radical and feminist point of view “revealing the cultural norms that uphold traditional consciousness of women” (1979: 281). Thus they create new myths which “are critical of prior mythic thought” and which “replace archetypes by prototypes” (1979: 281). This replacement enables the creation of a “new symbolic system that did not objectify her self as ‘other’, a system that involved her in a revision of patriarchal assumptions embodied in traditional myths.” (Lauter, 1984: 11). This is an act of “peeling off layers of indoctrination and false consciousness that we are carrying as parts of our own self-definitions” (Fuchs, 2003: 23). Therefore “traditional definitions should be dismissed” (Daly, 1990: 46) by enabling a rewriting that is a return to female power defined and authorized by female agency.

CHAPTER THREE

3.1 *Twilight*: A Postfeminist Rewriting Of Adam And Eve Myth

The first book of the *Twilight* series, *Twilight,* presents Bella and Edward's relationship within a deconstructed framework of the Garden of Eden Myth of Genesis. Bella as an emblem of a postmodern Eve, creates her own story of Fall within the woods of Forks, her own Garden, yet her Fall stands for her transformation. Bella's transformation is a culmination of the creation of a new woman type who challenges social restrictions on female sexual desire and female agency. Bella, in creating the image of Eve, follows postfeminist politics of identity which constructs her basic tenet in her transformation. In this regard, she transforms herself, both physically (from a human to vampire) and mentally (from a timid girl to an active agent on her destiny), and at the same time, she transforms and deconstructs the mythical female types in accordance with the major focal points of postfeminism: agency, sexuality, and politics of choice. Postfeminist agenda "urge[s] women to leave behind their 'old' self and change into the 'new woman' (Genz, 2010: 97). Bella is perfectly in line with the concept of changing into the "new woman" whose politics of identity portrays the issues of subjectivity and agency culminated with the politics of feminine body. In that respect, Bella becomes a new text of Eve that depicts a postfeminist Eve who is "a sexually assertive 'do-me feminist'" (Genz, 2010: 98), a woman who wants to "have it all", and a subject who acts in accordance with her desire.

The tale of the Fall in Adam and Eve myth is a tale of rising up in Bella's myth of postmodern woman. Bella rewrites Eve in a deconstructive manner through which she becomes a supplement to Eve by embodying an "alteration in repetition" (Derrida, 1992: 63). In her rewriting of Eve myth, Bella adds new dimensions in accordance with postfeminist politics to the issues of female curiosity and sexuality which are considered as central concerns of myth of Fall. In this regard, Eve's temptation by the snake, her taste of the forbidden fruit, having Adam taste it, and their consequent Fall from heaven are considered as basic concerns in *Twilight* and approached within postfeminist point of view which presents Bella as a postmodern Eve living with neo-liberal politics of identity. In accordance with the neo-liberal politics of identity, transformation of Bella

into a postfeminist Eve is articulated through the means of consumer culture in which consumption is seen "as an active practice through which people construct meanings and create a sense of identity" (Hollows, 2000:129). In this creation of a sense of identity "consumer culture is the site for tension around the concept of individual" (Banet-Weiser, 2007:207) where consumption is seen "as a 'heroic' activity which opens up new frontiers" (Hollows, 2000: 129). In this sense, Bella as a postmodern Eve turns out to be a site of the manifestation of the individual embracing empowerment through consumerism, and through the notions of choice and agency in her relationship with Edward Cullen.

Twilight, as the first book of the series, begins with a reference to Genesis 2:17 before the preface:

> "But of the tree of knowledge of good and evil,
> Thou shall not eat of it:
> For in the day that thou east thereof
> Thou shall surely die."
> Genesis 2:17

This reference can be taken into consideration as an overall survey of the whole series including the four books *Twilight*, *New Moon*, *Eclipse* and *Breaking Dawn.* Considering Bella as a representative of Eve, her journey of becoming a sexually awakening, conscious individual is a rewriting of Eve's awakening and gaining wisdom. The forbidden fruit in Genesis becomes the mysterious nature of Edward that Bella strives to learn, discover and consume. Her discovery of Edward's vampire nature is her act of gaining wisdom that is based on the ground of will-to knowledge and will-to-desire. In this respect, Bella's role as a new version of Eve is determined within the discourses of knowledge, sexuality, desire and death which are the mirror reflections of the

> "three equivalent consequences of eating the forbidden fruit: death, knowledge, and sexual self-consciousness. Desire (for fruit, for sex) and libido (the drive for knowledge and the ambition to eat and to mate) manifest as both death wish ("you will die") and pleasure principle ("the fruit is beautiful and delicious")" (Lefkovitz, 2010: 27).

What is “beautiful and delicious” for Bella is the power that Edward has in his nature. She desires to have that power which will also bring her immortality even if it costs her life and her humanity. Although Bella is depicted in later parts of the *Twilight* as “a bird locked in the eyes of a snake” (Meyer, 2005: 232), she is not tempted by a snake as Eve is in the Genesis. What is a rewriting or a revision of Garden of Eden story in *Twilight* is that Bella does not need to be tempted by the snake to discover, rather she is eager to find the truth about Edward, and after learning it, she is ambitious to become like him. Eve’s temptation by snake is depicted as follows in Genesis:

1.And the two were naked, both Adam and his wife, and they were not ashamed. Now the snake was the wisest of all the wild animals on the earth, which Lord God made; and the snake said to the woman, “Why is it that God said, ‘Do not eat from every tree in the garden’?” 2. And the woman said to the snake, “From every tree of the garden we may eat, 3. but from the fruit of the tree that is in the middle of the garden, God said, ‘Do not eat from it nor shall you even touch it, so that you not die.’” 4. And the snake said to the woman, “You will not die a death; 5. for God knew that on whatever day you would eat from it, your eyes would be opened, and you would be like gods, knowing good and evil.” 6. And the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasing for the eyes to see and was ripe for understanding, and taking its fruit, she ate; and she also gave to her man with her, and they ate. (Genesis 3: 1-6)

Eve is tempted by snake and ate the forbidden fruit. In Bella’s case, it is Bella, though seems like “a bird locked in the eyes of a snake”, who enables her self-awareness all by herself. She is after that forbidden fruit and insistently desires to taste it although she is warned of the possible danger by Edward. Her will-to-knowledge leads her to will-to-power which is supported with her will-to-desire and sexual passion. Bella’s acquisition of a more powerful sexual desire for Edward after learning that Edward is a vampire is reminiscent of Adam and Eve’s acquisition of the awareness of their sexuality after eating the forbidden fruit of the tree of knowledge. Knowledge is associated with sexuality, thus the more Bella acquires knowledge about and from Edward, the more she is inclined to express her adamant sexual desire for Edward. Knowledge and experience bring her an assertive nature in stating her sexual desire and passion.

Eve’s taste of forbidden fruit and her enticement of Adam has always been a vital point in criticism of female sexuality as a threat to status-quo and social order. It has been considered as the central issue in the construction of female sexuality labelled with a transgressive and sinful nature that is to be controlled, tamed, suppressed and

silenced in order for a continuation of stability in society. In terms of disobedience, Bella's resistance to Edward's demands regarding their relationship can be regarded as her independent nature that resists patriarchal authority over female sexuality. Her resistance is maintained by means of her curiosity for knowledge and by her desire mechanism. Bella constructs her character as a postmodern Eve by creating her tale around the issues of curiosity and sexuality. She is a curious character and instead of restraining her curiosity, she uses it, plays with it, and leads her life with it. Although she seems to be in a trance situation under the effect of the perfect outlook of Edward with his "devastatingly inhumanly beautiful" (Meyer, 2005: 17) and 'dazzling face' (2005:37) and his "quiet, musical voice" (2005: 37) or his "soft enchanting laugh" (2005: 37), Bella is always conscious of her emotions, her psychological state, and also aware of the impact of Edward's beauty and strength on her feelings. Bella is not in the same line with those heroines who have been acted on and placed in the center of male desire. She exemplifies an active woman who is aware of her desires and who leads her life in accordance with what she desires. Accordingly, this makes her an active agent in her life who has the word on her destiny.

Twilight, draws Bella and her initiation process that is guided and directed through the politics of sexuality that creates a new version of Adam and Eve myth. In this initiation process, Bella's curiosity positions her as an equivalent of Eve, yet scripted within postfeminist politics of choice and desire. Her curious nature directs her to the "knowledge" about Edward's real nature. She does not hesitate to investigate the background of Edward and his family, though she has been warned about their dangerous nature. She constantly questions the nature of Edward and his difference from other people. She is conscious and aware of Edward's unlikeness:

> In fact I was sure there was something different. I vividly remembered the flat black color of his eyes the last time he'd glared at me – the color was striking against the background of his pale skin and his auburn hair. Today, his eyes were a completely different color: a strange ocher, darker than butter-scotch, but with the same golden tone. I didn't understand how that could be, be, unless he was lying for some reason about the contacts. Or maybe Forks was making me crazy in the literal sense of the word (Meyer, 2005: 39-40)

Despite the fact that Edward has warned Bella about his dangerous nature and insisted she should stay away from him repeatedly, Bella does not conform to the

warnings, rather she become more curious and intense on the subject of Edward's dangerous nature. She actually plays with him in a flirty manner. Instead of being afraid in the presence of unnatural, unidentifiable, dangerous "thing" Edward, Bella becomes the courageous one trying to erase the mystery of Edward under the guidance of her curiosity. This situation conditions Edward as the figure of distress under the pressure of the possible consequences of his dangerous nature. Bella and Edward seem to switch the roles and Bella becomes a warning and leading character disregardful of Edward's conditioning of her and of his aim to determine what is proper behavior for Bella. No matter how hard Edward aims to explain the seriousness of the situation, Bella is headstrong:

'You are not supposed to laugh, remember?'
He struggled to compose his face.
'I'll figure it out eventually,' I warned him.
'I wish you wouldn't try.' He was serious again.
'Because…?'
'What if I'm not a superhero? What if I'm the bad guy?' He smiled playfully, but his eyes were impenetrable.
'Oh,' I said, as several things he'd hinted fell suddenly into place. 'I see.' (Meyer, 2005:79)

What is significant is that Bella is conscious in her actions. Though she is mostly depicted in a manner of a "damsel in distress" figure, she is in an unlike behavior of that of a damsel who is devoid of courage to have agency on occurrences. Bella, contrary to the "damsel in distress" model, uses her curiosity as her mentor. As Natalie Robinson emphasizes "In contemporary literature, curiosity in a heroine signals an intelligent bravery and a willingness to explore the unknown" (2011: 227).

In *Off With Their Heads* Maria Tatar indicates that women who do not fit into the subservient role models are presented as "daughters of Eve" (1992: 96) who are "playing with fire" (1992:96) and always put into danger or disaster. Moreover, Tatar indicates that "the standard interpretations have identified Eve as the principle agent of transgression and have infused her act of disobedience with strong sexual overtones" (Tatar, 1992: 96). Bella in *Twilight* series draws the image of the "daughter of Eve", yet she should be conditioned within different circumstances. Rather than portraying a character to be tamed and exposed to enforced subordination and obedience as a consequence of the Fall, Bella challenges these restrictions and uses her curiosity and

courage leading herself to a self-sufficient state. Moreover, she herself becomes the figure of Eve, the willful woman who has been furnished with will-to-knowledge and will-to-desire. Her curiosity has been ornamented with her seductive power that helps her to manipulate her environment on her way to wish fulfillment. Her initiation process is not a story of her objectification under the reign of male desire, rather it is a story of her conscious individuation as a subject who is aware of her desires, and who does not abstain them. Although she is mostly attracted by Edward's facial and bodily beauty, his voice, and his smell, Bella acts according to her own desire. She is not forced to act in conformity with male desire or is not being acted on. She freely expresses her emotions which, in later books of the series, will become an open declaration of carnal desire. In this vein, she is in contrast with the rigid notions of sexuality. Considered within her individual freedom and her free choice, Bella maintains her transformation in a frame of postfeminist politics. Rosalind Gill indicates that individualism and free choice are the focal points of postfeminist identity politics. Gill marks that "Notions of choice, of 'being oneself', and 'pleasing oneself' are central to the postfeminist sensibility that suffuses contemporary Western media culture" (Gill, 2007:153). *Twilight*, as the title of the book indicates, presents a new start in Bella's life which is directed by the politics of choice. Twilight literally means the end of the day and the beginning of evening. It is the end of a period in Bella's life and a beginning of a new one in which she maintains the power of self-expression.

Sexually naïve, seventeen years old Bella begins to discover her world of desire as she progressively knows and loves vampire Edward. Hers is a conscious and self-made progress in which she actively asserts what she wants. Her process reflects her maturation and individuation both sexually and psychologically. As Fleur Diamond states "Meyer's heroine is seeking a frank ownership of desire and sexual agency that is conventionally reserved for men and which, when present in women, is regarded with suspicion" (Diamond, 2011: 42). Interpreted within Bildungsroman criteria, Bella's quest for an identity, her choices on what she wants to be and how she wants to live, her encounter with sexual passion and desire are in conformity with "female quest narrative" as depicted by Stephen Benson: in "female quest narrative" there are "three dominant motifs: the curiosity of the heroine, which is the pivot of the prohibition-violation motif; the subsequent series of ordeals which function as the quest element; and the resulting marriage of the original protagonists, which serves as the heroine's

reward and the end point of the narrative" (Benson quoted in Robinson, 2011: 223-224).

In her willingness to explore the unknown, Bella uses her sexuality in getting information about Edward's nature. Though clumsily, she puts in charge her flirtatious manners when she tries to acquire information about the Cullens from Jacob, the werewolf lover, when they first met:

I was still turning over the brief comment on the Cullens, and I had a sudden inspiration. It was a stupid plan, but I didn't have any better ideas. I hoped that young Jacob was as yet inexperienced around girls, so that he wouldn't see through my sure-to-be-pitiful attempts at flirting. 'Do you want to walk down the beach with me?' I asked, trying to imitate that way Edward had of looking up from underneath his eyelashes. It couldn't have nearly the same effect, I was sure, but Jacob jumped up willingly enough (Meyer, 2005:105).

She seems naïve, plain and ordinary, yet she acts in an artful manner. Bella manipulates Jacob with her attraction. She uses her sexuality to manipulate him. It does not matter that she does not know how to put a sexually charming expression on her face and she imitates Edward's gaze, it is her act of manipulation.. She uses Jacob, plays with him and thus situates him as her toy and her object in order to get information she wants:

'Is that your boyfriend?' Jacob asked, alerted by the jealous edge in Mike's voice. I was surprised it was so obvious. 'No, definitely not,' I whispered. I was tremendously grateful to Jacob, and eager to make him as happy as possible. I winked at him, carefully turning away from Mike to do so. He smiled, elated by my inept flirting. 'So when I get my license…' he began.'You should come see me in Forks. We could hang out sometime.' I felt guilty as I said this, knowing that I'd used him. But I really did like Jacob. He was someone I could easily be friends with (Meyer, 2005: 109-110).

She freely expresses her emotions which, in later books of the series, will become an open declaration of carnal desire. She has the power of self-expression. When she understands that Edward is a vampire, she has already made her choice:

And I knew in that I had my answer. I didn't know if there ever was a choice, really. I was already in too deep. Now that I knew — if I knew — I could do nothing about my frightening secret. Because when I thought of him, of his voice, his hypnotic eyes, the magnetic force of his personality, I wanted nothing more than to be with him right now (Meyer, 2005: 121).

Bella owns her agency and assertiveness. She makes her decisions herself. The options are up to her: to stay away from Edward, or to go her way with him. Although she seems to be under the spell "of him, of his voice, his hypnotic eyes, the magnetic force of his personality", Bella is using her agency and overtly declares her desire to be with him more than anything even if she knows how dangerous it may be:

> Making decisions was the painful part for me, the part I agonized over. But once the decision was made, I simply followed through — usually with relief that the choice was made. Sometimes the relief was tainted by despair, like my decision to come to Forks. But it was still better than wrestling with the alternatives. This decision was ridiculously easy to live with. Dangerously easy (Meyer, 2005:121, 122).

Her politics of choice situates her within a postfeminist frame in which "*female individualization*" (McRobbie, 2007:34) is shaped around the choices which welcome a "greater capacity on the part of individuals to plan 'a life of one's own'" (McRobbie, 2007: 34). Bella, drawing her life plan embedded in "self-monitoring practices", maps out her construction of identity in line with individual empowerment through choices. McRobbie indicates this practice of individualization through agency of choice in postmodern period as such:

> Individuals must now choose the kind of life they want to live. Girls must have a life plan. They must become more reflexive in regard to every aspect of their lives, from making the right choice in marriage to taking responsibility for their own working lives and not being dependent on a job for life or on the stable and reliable operations of a large-scale bureaucracy, which in the past would have allocated its employees specific, and possibly unchanging, roles (2007: 36).

As a postfeminist version of Eve, Bella symbolizes the conscious temptress who acts in terms of her profits, and chooses the kind of life she wants to live.

Edward and his supreme nature are the manifestations of the forbidden fruit in the series. Once ate it, Bella will surely die, yet this death will bring her immortality. She will die as a human and be reborn as vampire who has special talents, super powers and an immortal life. Thereby, she will "not die a death" (Genesis3:4) but "would be like gods" (Genesis 3: 5). Being aware of the consequences of becoming a vampire, Bella already knows good and evil. Accordingly she acts in terms of her own desires and this makes her a conscious temptress who knows how to get profit. She sees Edward as a source of wealth and aims to get the most of him. She mostly gazes

Edward's body and perfectly follows the contours of his body both by touch and gaze. In her study of the pleasure by gaze, Laura Mulvey stresses the existing imbalance in female and male roles in terms of visual pleasure. Mulvey indicates that

> In a world ordered by sexual imbalance, pleasure in looking has been split between active/male and passive/female. The determining male gaze projects its phantasy on to the female figure which is styled accordingly. In their traditional exhibitionist role women are simultaneously looked at and displayed, with their appearance coded for strong visual and erotic impact so that they can be said to connote *to-be-looked-at-ness*. Women displayed as sexual object is the *leitmotif* of erotic spectacle: from pin-ups to strip-tease, from Ziegfeld to Busby Berkley, she holds the look, plays to and signifies male desire (1999: 837).

Bella's voyeuristic pleasure rewrites the power balance in plesaure in looking and positions Edward as an object of her desire. Although she is also gazed by Edward, especially in her room at nights, she is not at the center of the erotic desire. Bella places Edward at the center of her erotic desire, and presents herself as the active performer of the gaze rather than the passive receiver of it. Morover she materializes Edward's body in her gazes:

> "Edward in the sunlight was shocking. I couldn't get used to it, though I'd been staring at him all afternoon. His skin, white despite the faint flush from yesterday's hunting trip, literally sparkled, like thousands of tiny diamonds were embedded in the surface. He lay perfectly still in the grass, his shirt open over his sculpted, incandescent chest, his scintillating arms bare. His glistening, pale lavender lids were shut, though of course he didn't sleep. A perfect statue, carved in some unknown stone, smooth like marble, glittering like crystal" (Meyer: 2005:228).

In her description of Edward's body, Bella materializes him with the examples of diamonds and crystals. She especially states that she is mesmerized with his golden eyes (2005: 230). Bella objectifies Edward with her examples. He is the forbidden fruit that will bring her various advantages that she will never obtain in her human life. Edward is the source whose "Sweet, delicious, the scent made my [her] mouth water" (Meyer: 2005:230). In that respect, Bella, rather than becoming the object of male desire, acts as a subject who objectifies male body. In a very postfeminist manner, she acts within a manner of consumer culture that foregrounds the success of women as 'subjects and consumers' (Tasker and Negra, 2007: 8). She wants to 'have it all' that Edward can afford for her. Thus she wants to 'consume' Edward, which is a situation that sets her as "no mute object but a 'sexy' and playful subject" (Gill, 2008: 437).

Indicating the role of consuming and consumer culture in the construction of subjectivitiy, Hannah E. Sanders refers to Sarah Projansky's ideas and says that

As Projansky discusses, postfeminist discourse in advertising and the popular press encourages and valorizes women's ability to consume as a signifier of feminism's success, enabling women to take control of their lives through consumption practices and the 'freedom of choice this implies (2007: 94).

Although Bella has not been regarded as an active shopping girl, she has to be regarded within consumerist politics considering the fact that she is mesmerized with the wealth that Edward possesses and symbolizes. She craves for Edward's body and the power he represents:

'You're *too* good. Far, far too good.'
'Do you feel sick?' he asked; he'd seen me like this before.
'No — that wasn't the same kind of fainting at all. I don't know what happened.' I shook my head apologeticallv, 'I think I forgot to breathe'(Meyer, 2005:279).

Edward's status of being "far, far too good" is a source of admiration of him that urges her to 'consume' him and become a super woman:

'I can't always be Lois Lane,' I insisted. 'I want to be Superman, too.'
'You don't know what you're asking.' His voice was soft; he stared intently at the edge of the pillowcase.
'I think I do.' (2005:413).

Politics of choice, agency and individualism are centered around the discourse of power in *Twilight* series. This discourse unfolds gender formations on various levels which, at the same time, present self-contradictory features in character formation. Edward, in his physical and mental descriptions, is presented as powerful, strong, skillful male who has the control of his instinct, whereas Bella is framed within always fragile, clumsy, self-despising, passion-ridden girl type, and presented as an example to a damsel in distress figure. Bella is mostly disdainful of herself when she compares herself with Edward:

His white shirt was sleeveless, and he wore it unbuttoned, so that the smooth white skin of his throat flowed uninterrupted over the marble contours of his chest, his perfect musculature no longer merely hinted at behind concealing clothes. He was too perfect, I realized with a piercing stab of despair. There was no way this godlike creature could be

meant for me (Meyer, 2005: 224).

Bella manifests herself on the two opposite poles which builds up an ambiguous and ambivalent image, now a decision-maker, now a girl under the effect of 'hypnotic, deadly' eyes. That Bella inscribes herself on various and contradictory situations tallies with the postfeminist politics of femininity regarding the issue of fluidity, that is 'a dramatic 'unfixing' of young women'. (McRobbie, 1994: 152). Bella is not easy to be put into certain frames of rigid role patterns. She displays contradictory behaviors from a traditional standpoint to a postmodern, postfeminist individual agent. In her discussion of the 'changing modes of femininity' (1994:152) in postfeminist culture, McRobbie emphasizes the dynamic nature of femininity that rejects and resists the stereotypical role models. She stresses that 'There is now a greater degree of fluidity about what femininity means and how exactly it is anchored in social reality' (1994: 152). Mentioning the double-edged relationship between femininity and feminism, Mc Robbie focuses on the contents of the mass media elements such as soap operas, sitcoms and series. She remarks the existence of ambiguous images that signify both traditional, conventional femininity and a femininity that is strong in her feminist agenda (1994: 152). This fluidity in the context of femaleness stirs up the resistance to stereotypical definitions of femininity and creates 'an approach to identity where both meanings and identities are fluid, not fixed' (Brooks, 1997: 189). In that respect, Bella is in accordance with the idea of fluid identities. She is a terrain of contradictions, yet she knows how to use her manners according to her advantages. Bella is an agent of her life and a decision-maker. She is a mixture of a fearless woman who aspires for ultimate power, which is, in her case, immortality, stunning beauty and economic power, and exerts her best to acquire them; and a damsel in distress who is under the spell of the prince, as if hypnotized, unable to move and mesmerized by the golden eyes (Meyer, 2005: 230). Her status as a damsel in distress seems pretentious and masks her tricky, playful nature which is obvious especially in her relations with Edward and Jacob. Although Bella as a female character is mostly criticized by scholars in terms of her adherence to domesticity and dependence on men through power and guidance, it should be noted that she is not under the heel of neither Edward nor Jacob. She acts as a performer of her desires, a constructor of her identity. She is not a speechless, silent character. Basically, she is the narrator of events, a situation which gives her a voice from the beginning of the series.

Although Bella is presented in a manner of damsel in distress figure who is devoid of any physical power, she has great impact on Edward. Bella, more like in a manner of a witch, "casts spell" on Edward which make him always in need of her. Edward, however seems patronizing, is under the spell of Bella and in need of her existence for sustaining a happy life. Moreover, the thought of losing her or her absence tortures him. Bella is his addiction:

'So what you're saying is, I'm your brand of heroin?' I teased, trying to lighten the mood. He smiled swiftly, seeming to appreciate my effort. 'Yes, you are exactly my brand of heroin' (Meyer, 2005: 234).

However Edward seems powerful male protector, he is not able to protect himself from Bella's powerful impact. He is carried away by Bella's fragrance and this puts him in a more difficult situation in which he has to cope with his dilemmas: he loves Bella's fragrance and craves to taste her, yet he has to control himself in order not to give any harm to Bella. Edward explains this as such:

'If I was too hasty… if for one second I wasn't paying enough attention, I could reach out, meaning to touch your face, and crush your skull by mistake. You don't realize how incredibly *breakable* you are. I can never, never afford to lose any kind of control when I'm with you' (2005:271).

This restraint creates a paradoxical situation: Edward has a supreme strength in all aspects, yet he is the one who suffers because of not obtaining what he desires most. This situation makes Bella, the postmodern Eve, a mental and psychological torturer, even if not in a physical sense. Edward is in conflict with his desires and his logic most of the time, nevertheless he has to restrain himself:

'To me, it was like you were some kind of demon, summoned straight from my own personal hell to ruin me. The fragrance coming off your skin… I thought it would make me deranged that first day. In that one hour, I thought of a hundred different ways to lure you from the room with me, to get you alone. And I fought them each back, thinking of my family, what I could do to them. I had to run out, to get away before I could speak the words that would make you follow' (2005:236)

Unlike Edward the sufferer, Bella never circumscribes her feelings and her desire for Edward. While Edward consciously and forcefully urges himself to control his desires, Bella, on the other hand, freely unchains her feelings and goes far so as to

push Edward to his limits. She is the temptress:

No one could be still like Edward. He closed his eyes and became as immobile as stone, a carving under my hand. I moved even more slowly than he had, careful not to make one unexpected move. I caressed his cheek, delicately stroked his eyelid, the purple shadow in the hollow under his eye. I traced the shape of his perfect nose, and then, so carefully, his flawless lips. His lips parted under my hand, and I could feel his cool breath on my fingertips. I wanted to lean in, to inhale the scent of him. So I dropped my hand and leaned away, not wanting to push him too far.
He opened his eyes, and they were hungry. Not in a way to make me fear, but rather to tighten the muscles in the pit of my stomach and send my pulse hammering through my veins again.
'I wish,' he whispered, 'I wish you could feel the… complexity… the confusion… I feel. That you could understand.'
He raised his hand to my hair, then carefully brushed it across my face.
'Tell me,' I breathed.
'I don't think I can. I've told you, on the one hand, the hunger — the thirst — that, deplorable creature that I am, I feel for you. And I think you can understand that, to an extent. Though' — he half-smiled — 'as you are not addicted to any illegal substances, you probably can't empathize completely.
'But…' His fingers touched my lips lightly, making me shiver again. 'There are other hungers. Hungers I don't even understand, that are foreign to me.' (2005:242-243).

Bella becomes a source of self-awakening for Edward. She leads him to the awareness of "hungers" that are foreign to him. Thanks to Bella, Edward discerns his secret pleasures. As a forceful and conscious temptress, Bella displays politics of liberation in terms of sexuality, and she leads her politics of choice in accordance with her own desires. She is determined to have her own way of life: "Renée has always made the choices that work for her — she'd want me to do the same. And Charlie's resilient, he's used to being on his own. I can't take care of them forever. I have my own life to live" (2005:414). On the way to her destiny, she chooses the road she will take, and her road to individuation is constructed with the politics of choice, sexual agency and a youthful femininity.

The idea of getting old and dying leads her to a search for immortality: "'I may not die now… but I'm going to die sometime. Every minute of the day, I get closer. And I'm going to get old.' He frowned as what I was saying sunk" (2005:414). Bella's search for immortality becomes her quest of identity, and on her way she becomes a postfeminist "sexual entrepreneur, who works on herself and body to maintain an 'up for it' sexual agentic identity" (Evans and Riley, 2015: 6).

Bella's character construction through her seductiveness is supported with natural landscape as a contributor to her identity formation. Woods and forests are major places where Bella's initiation process is formed. Natural landscape provides her with an understanding of her personality and her psyche. She is more apt to feel freedom, unleashed from the bound of time and space, her social and physical conditions. Nature supplies her liberation and relief. Representing the girl in the woods, Bella enters into the realm of her inner wisdom that helps her visit the deepest parts of her psyche and find the wild woman in it. Woods and forests are means of her self-discovery in the first book *Twilight*. From this point of view, they constitute a garden image that forms a basis for the connotations of Garden of Eden image. Garden image is drawn in two opposite poles in the series. Regarding the forests and woods as reminiscent of garden image, it must be noted that the depiction of the image is made both in a romanticized point of view and in a gothic manner. As a romanticized place, garden becomes a place of love, tranquility, peacefulness and a source of personal integrity. On the other side, when it is depicted in a gothic quality, garden becomes a place of horror and fear that directs the character to wilderness and unconsciousness. In biblical texts, garden is the source of awakening and sexual sin. Garden image and prohibition of eating from the tree of knowledge take place in Genesis 2. As in the case of Eve's 'individuation' in the Garden of Eden which occupies as a place of awakening, woods and forests are places where Bella feels free out of social constructions:

> Here in the trees it was much easier to believe the absurdities that embarrassed me indoors. Nothing had changed in this forest for thousands of years, and all the myths and legends of a hundred different lands seemed much more likely in this green haze than they had in my clear-cut bedroom (Meyer, 2005: 119).

Woods and forests provide her a fantasy world remote from her contemporary time and place, thus enabling her to activate her inner world without any restriction. Her activation of her inner world through the natural landscape is mostly through her dreams in which she is always in forests, trying to find her path, which could be taken her quest for her sexuality and personal transformation. David Carr, in *The Erotic Word: Sexuality, Spirituality, and the Bible*, examines the garden texts in the Bible and notes that garden images provides a "way to look at sexuality and spirituality" (2003: 13). He states that

In the world of the Bible, gardens (and vineyards) are places where lovers meet to make love. At the same time, gardens and vineyards often symbolize women and female sexuality. Because of women's childbearing and nursing roles, Biblical texts often use female imagery to evoke sexuality and reproduction. Thus, gardens (and vineyards) symbolize both the female lover and the place of lovemaking. The two shade into one another (2003: 13).

In *Twilight*, nature as a connotation of garden image helps Bella to evoke her desire, and it is the place where Bella physically stays in close to Edward. Though they do not make love in the forest, they are most intimate in forests where Bella watches, gazes and touches the perfect contours of Edward's body. Annis Pratt, commenting on the "green world fiction" and the function of nature in its relation to woman hero in her work *Archetypal Patterns in Women's Fiction*, states that: "Visions of her [woman hero's] own world within the natural world, or naturistic epiphanies, channel the young girl's protests into a fantasy where her imprisoned energies can be released" (Pratt, 1981: 17). In this respect, nature holds the role of a place where "her imprisoned energies can be released", which will be more obvious in the other books of the series.

As a postmodern Eve, Bella's falling in love with Edward becomes her own Fall, since she will leave her human world and step into the vampire world where there will be only living deads. Nevertheless, this Fall is not a falling down in her life, rather it is an outcome of her postfeminist attitude that direct her to the "up for it" identity. Thus Bella's quest becomes a terrain of multiple politics that position her as a girl who is liberate in defining what she wants to be, as well as, indicating what she does not want to be. She is adamant in her wish to be with Edward and become a vampire. The first book *Twilight* indicates the beginning of her transformation as she states : "'So ready for this to be the end,' he murmured, almost to himself, 'for this to be the twilight of your life, though your life has barely started. You're ready to give up everything.' 'It's not the end, it's the beginning,' I disagreed under my breath." (Meyer, 2005:432). As a postfeminist Eve, Bella plays her game according to her rules, and she is a free agent to make choices and determine her destiny.

3.2 *New Moon* as a Rewriting of the Myth of Cupid and Psyche

The second book of the *Twilight* series, *New Moon*, displays the relationship between Bella and Edward in a similar line with the love affair of mythical figures

Cupid and Psyche. The story of Cupid and Psyche is narrated by Apuleius in the Books IV – VI of his work *The Golden Ass*, which he also calls *Metamorphoses,* in the 2nd century. *New Moon* is relevant to the story of Cupid and Psyche in some specific ways as to convey the issues of feminine consciousness in awakening. Circulating around the issues of curiosity, abandonment of the beloved, courage, self-discovering and self-sacrificing, New Moon presents Bella as an emblem of Psyche who is in search of her lover, and who, during this process, becomes an agent of desire.

The story of Cupid and Psyche is about the love and marriage of Cupid and Psyche which seems impossible, yet achieved after the efforts of Psyche. The story is as such: there is a king who had three daughters the youngest of whom has been admired and adored for her beauty. She is so beautiful that there are a lot of admirers who present her various gifts from different cities. Psyche's beauty becomes so famous and so central to the interests of people that they ignore to praise Venus, the goddess of love and beauty. Venus becomes jealous and gets angry for being neglected, and decides to take revenge from Psyche and prove her own majesty. With this aim, Venus charges her son Cupid to punish Psyche. Cupid is a winged god of love whose arrows, when wound any person, causes to fall in love. Venus demands Cupid to make Psyche fall in love with the most miserable and vile creature. Cupid pricks himself with one of his arrows that he meant to use for Psyche and falls in love with Psyche.

Meanwhile although Psyche is praised and wooed by many princes and kings, no one marries her. Her father consults the oracle of Apollo and is told that her daughter will marry a serpent creature who has wings. Preparations for marriage have been made and it is accompanied with black rivers and darkness where "black torches were lighted, the pleasant songs were turned into pittifull cries" (Apuleius, 2008:8). After the ceremony Psyche is left alone on the top of the rock and the west wind Zephyrus comes and takes her to a valley where she sees the most fragrant and sweetest flowers. She falls asleep there and when she wakes up she sees a house full of treasure and richness. She is accompanied with invisible servants and served a full meal of meats and wines. At night she is led to the bedroom, and though she is inexperienced and feared, she went to the bed where she is visited by her husband, Cupid. Every night Cupid comes to her bed and leaves her in the morning. Though Psyche never sees him, she welcomes him every night. Psyche lives in great luxury and comfort, yet her parents are in sorrow, for

they do not know Psyche's comfortable condition and think she is in trouble. For this reason Psyche's sisters, who are already married, want to visit her. In the meantime, Cupid, knowing the intention of the sisters, warns Psyche not to be fooled by them. Cupid insists that Psyche should not see him, and she should resist her curiosity to see him which could be triggered by her sisters' counsel. Cupid says that it would be wise to ignore their words for the benefit of their child that Psyche carries. He warns that the child is a divine one and will be immortal if Psyche conforms to his advice, otherwise the child will be a mortal creature. After his advice Cupid leaves in the morning, and the sisters are brought to house by the west wind Zephyrus. The sisters seeing the luxury and comfort in Psyche's house become jealous, and ask what her husband is. They incite Psyche in discovering true identity of her husband, and remind her that she was prophesied to marry a serpent and be swallowed by him. Under the impact of her sisters, Psyche puts her sisters' plan into charge: one night she takes a lamp and a sharp razor to kill her husband while he is sleeping. When she approaches the bedside and holds the lamp to the face of Cupid, she sees that her husband is the most beautiful of the creatures with a glorious body, divine visage and hairs of gold. She pricks herself with one of Cupid's arrows and her love for Cupid turns into a passion. She begins to kiss Cupid, yet meanwhile an oil drop falls on Cupid's shoulder. Upon this, Cupid wakes up and flees away without saying any word. Psyche follows him but cannot reach and falls down. Cupid, seeing her, takes her to a riverside and abandons her as a punishment.

Later, Psyche starts to wander from city to city to search her husband. She visits temples of Ceres and Juno, but she is not aided by these divine beings because of Venus' prohibition. Psyche understands that she should serve Venus in order to find Cupid and be forgiven. Conscious of the danger and risks she takes, Psyche goes to Venus. She is unwelcomed there and behaved ill. Venus sets various tasks for Psyche to accomplish. She throws a mix of wheat, barley, poppy seed, lentil, and beans and wants her to sort them into each kind, and put them into order in their quantity before night. Psyche is aided by an ant, and the task is achieved. Venus understands that Psyche got help and she puts another task. Psyche should bring the golden wool of the fleece of the sheep on the other side of the river. A green reed helps her and she gathers the golden fleece from the sheep. She takes the fleece to Venus, but Venus, not being satisfied, sets a third trial for Psyche. Psyche has to pass the black river that nourishes Stix and fill the crystal vessel that Venus gave her. Psyche goes to the mountain and sees that the river is

horrible and guarded by dragons. Divine Eagle of Jupiter helps her and fills the vessel with the water of the river. Psyche presents it to Venus, but Venus sets a more dangerous task for her: she is to go to underworld and bring some amount of Proserpina's beauty in a box that Venus gives her. Upon her helpless situation, Psyche goes to a tower to commit suicide but the tower speaks to her and instructs her about what to do to accomplish her task. He warns that after getting beauty of Proserpina, she should not look into the box to see that beauty.

Psyche accomplishes all the tasks, and on her way to return, she is overwhelmed by curiosity and opens the box. Immediately she fell down and sleep captures her. Meanwhile, Cupid has recovered his wound and secretly flees from the chamber in which he is kept by Venus. Cupid finds sleeping Psyche and takes sleep from her face. He takes Psyche and the box to Venus. Cupid goes to Jupiter to ask his advice. Jupiter gathers a council of gods and asks approval of the love affair between Cupid and his beloved. Jupiter warns Venus not to interfere in their marriage and then he brings a pot of immortality and gives it to Psyche to make their spousal relationship everlasting. There happens wedding banquet and later they have a daughter named Pleasure.

Bella and Edward's relationship as a love affair between a human and a vampire has similarities with the love between Psyche as a human and Cupid as a god of love in Roman mythology. The issues of passion, abandonment, search for the lost lover, taking risks to regain the lover in the story of Cupid and Psyche prepares the intertextual background for *New Moon*. In their relationship, Bella becomes a twenty first century Psyche and Edward a twenty-first century Cupid. *New Moon* both deconstructs and then reconstructs the story of Cupid and Psyche within many twenty-first century cultural contexts such as female development, female agency, female courage, sexuality and beauty. Both tales are precisely based on the subject /object dichotomy of female as a free agent, yet surrounded with patriarchal intervention such as marriage as a destiny. In this regard, *New Moon* establishes the myth of Cupid and Psyche within an interrelated but new perspective.

Cupid and Psyche's story draws its line basically around the issues of maturation of a young girl in terms of marriage and becoming a mother. In the frame of marriage and motherhood, female agency and its effectiveness are taken into consideration, and

put into question from several points of views. As a second century A.D. story, Cupid and Psyche myth reveals various aspects of gender relations, majorly including social expectations from women. Susan Haskins points out the clear lines of the myth that infuses the idea of marriage, especially of a young woman, through the trials of Psyche. Haskins, mentioning the second century norms of marriage, indicates the expectations from a young woman such as: "she should be married, namely to a man of high status and hopefully wealth which at least matched that of the family she was coming from. Marriage in the ancient Roman world was a means of connecting two families where the wife acted as the link" (2014: 250). Haskins indicates the social sanctions related to marriage and family life established by Augustan legislation that stresses "a belief that marriage and children were the primary purposes of a woman's life by penalising woman who did not marry and rewarding those with several children (D.C.54.16.1-2).14)" (2014: 250). The myth of Cupid and Psyche reflect these basic lines, and in general, can be considered as a terrain of justification of Roman norms of marriage. Marriage in ancient Roman world was regarded either as a reward or as a punishment according to the situation. Judith Evans Grubbs explains this situation such as:

> All male citizens between the ages of twenty-five and sixty and all female citizens between twenty and fifty were to be married. Widows were to marry within two years of their husband's death, divorcées within eighteen months. Those who had not married by that time were penalized financially (2002:83).

Moreover, for a woman, marrying a man of lower rank would also mean to "lower her considerably from her current high rank, as well as break the law laid down by Augustus" (Haskins, 2014:251). Within this general background of the concept of marriage in Roman world, Cupid and Psyche myth can be considered, as pointed out by Haskins, as a reflection of social norms that shape marriage either as a reward or as a punishment. This situation, as told by Haskins, is seen in Venus' plea from her son Cupid to punish Psyche with a miserable love, which has been regarded as a way of punishment: "I pray thee, that without delay she may fall in love with the most miserablest creature living, the most poor, the most crooked, and the most vile, that there may bee none found in all the world of like wretchedness" (Adlington, 2008: 6). Psyche's destiny is organized around the theme of marriage which could be obvious both in Venus' wrath for punishment of Psyche and also in Psyche's father's demand for a divine counsel for her daughter's marriage. Considered within the center of a web

of issues such as marriage, becoming a woman and becoming a mother, Psyche becomes a figure of varying values from a traditional woman who ends up with marriage to a young female challenging patriarchal authority for her own benefits.

Psyche displays the characteristics of both the victim and the agent in her path to marriage with Cupid. Her destiny leading to marriage and motherhood is conditioned by divine intervention which is seen both in Venus' interference in the concerns of Psyche's beauty and her admiration by suitors from different places, and in her father's pray of Apollo for a husband suitable for her daughter. Encircled both with patriarchal authority of her father and of Apollo's foresight, and with Cupid's divine power over her body and future, Psyche can be considered as an entrapped woman who struggles to gain agency on her decisions and destiny. The foresight of Apollo declaring Psyche's marriage not to a human but to a monster accompanied with darkness and death already positions Psyche as a victim. In her marriage

> she not only has to cope with the unknown in terms of a husband, she is also forced to face the loss of her virginity in circumstances that are even more frightening and uncertain than those usually experienced by a new bride, especially one in an arranged marriage (Haskins, 2014: 252).

She does not have a word on her body. Even she is not conscious of losing her virginity and conceiving a baby from Cupid. It is questionable to interpret Psyche's loss of virginity as a rape or not, for there is no description of physical violence and unwilling sexual act. Nevertheless, it is obvious that Psyche does not have control over her sexuality, she is rather owned by Cupid and his sexual aims. Psyche's body seems obedient to Cupid, 'visited' by Cupid every night and impregnated by him. Eric Neumann explains Psyche's defloration and losing her virginity as "a truly mysterious bond between end and beginning, between ceasing to be and entering upon real life" (1999: 64). Thus, Neumann indicates the beginning of a new phase in Psyche's life. Reviewed within both positive and negative aspects, Psyche reveals contradictory traits that position her both as a victim and as an agent. Despite her subservient body, Psyche is out of traditional expectations in terms of docility. Psyche easily transgress the commands of her husband Cupid and decides to find out who her husband is even if she is ordered by Cupid not to look at and see his face. In contrast to what has been demanded from her, she assumes a subversive role. Her curiosity leads her on her way

to the ‘discovery’ of the nature of her husband, as a result of which she becomes a more passionate lover whose consciousness is awaken and who transcends into the realm of knowledge of love. As Neumann stresses

> It is the awakening of Psyche as the psyche, the fateful moment in the life of the feminine, in which for the first time woman emerges from the darkness of her unconscious and the harshness of her matriarchal captivity and, in individual encounter with the masculine, loves, that is, recognizes, Eros (1999:77).

Likewise Barbara Weir Huber indicates the fateful moments of Psyche as indicators of the beginnings and ends in her development. Huber states that “In the structure of her story there is a concurrence of end and new beginnings, death with fertility, absence and renewed desire” (1999: 110). Her separation from family is an end with the order regulated by the father and a beginning of a new order regulated by the husband. She streams from one patriarchal order to another one. Yet, within this stream she is able to come to feminine consciousness thanks to her own desire mechanism that leads her to psychological development. Her desire to know what or who her husband is leads her to a conscious and self-determinant state in which “she ‘sees Eros,’” and “there comes into being within her an Eros who is no longer identical with the sleeping Eros outside her” (Neumann, 1999: 80). Her curiosity which has been restricted by Cupid becomes a torch illuminating her in her darkness and helps her “breaking the taboo” (Neumann, 1999:73), and initiating the development of a feminine consciousness that resists the patriarchal oppression. Cupid, as a representative of that oppression,

> may be sexuality, a beastly aspect of sex, a projection of sexual anxiety or of repressed sexual curiosity, a father-image or father-substitute, the hallucinatory wishfulfillment of a psychotic, the son of a goddess, the male ego, a *daimon* which unites humans and the gods, the creative principle in the mind, the animus (or personification of a woman’s unconscious) the *pueraeternus* archetype or an aspect of the self archetype (Gollnick, 1992: 116-117)

Psyche’s awakening supports her with a resistance to what Cupid means above. Instead of going on her existence as a receiving and yielding entity, she turns into a woman resisting and rejecting. In this vein, her curiosity is a driving mechanism in her process of becoming a conscious woman. Nevertheless, it is her curiosity that causes her to be punished by the absence of Cupid. Subversive female behavior is punished and left to be tamed by a series of trials and tasks. Her trials are the basic elements that draw her destiny throughout transformation. As stressed by Huber, “each task, too, is of a

different order, and each completion indicates change, a process of growth and maturation" (1999: 111). In this process Psyche exhibits an adventurous character which could be attributed a masculine soul, yet she maintains her feminine quality, and "renews her bond with her feminine center, her self" (Neumann, 1999: 123).

Neumann, in explaining the significance of the tasks, indicates their lead to the formation of feminine agency. Evaluating the task of bringing water from Styx, Neumann, likening Psyche to a vessel holding that water, expresses Psyche's equation with the power of life energy. Neumann stresses that

> Psyche then, as feminine vessel, is ordered to contain the stream, to give form and rest to what is formless and flowing; a vessel of individuation, a mandala-urn, she is ordered to mark off a configured unity from flowing energy of life, to give form to life (1999: 103).

That Psyche is pregnant during her performance of tasks also indicates her power of giving form to life. The foresight of her marriage with death and darkness ends up with rebirth in two ways: rebirth of her soul as a new psyche and the birth of her daughter Joy. Though the last task of descending into Hades and bringing the beauty of Proserpina leads her to a deathlike sleep, she comes back to life and becomes a symbol of rebirth. In addition to her symbolism of rebirth and life force, she turns out to be a marker of feminine agency. Her opening up the jar in which she carries Proserpina's beauty is considered within the terms of agency by which she acts on behalf of her own benefits. Neumann equates this agency with a Promethean quality and states that

> Psyche has taken what she received from Persephone into her own possession;it belongs to her lawfully. Instead of giving up what she has acquired to Aphrodite, she makes it her own; like a feminine Prometheus she, the human Psyche, takes Persephone's treasure for herself" (1999: 127)

Acquiring divine beauty, Psyche self-consciously elevates her status. Although she has already been known as the most beautiful daughter of the king and been regarded as a new Venus, her desire to be irresistible, to be in mastery of beauty guides her. This acquisition is a way of "reunit[ing] herself, rather, with the feminine in her nature" (Neumann, 1999: 123), a transition in which "her 'old' femininity enters into a new phase" (1999: 123). Knowing that "no Eros will be able to resist a Psyche anointed with divine beauty" (1999:122), Psyche, acts in accordance with her personal interests

and consciously enters into a realm of seductive femininity. Huber explains Psyche's act of opening the jar getting divine beauty which is restored for Venus by linking it to the terms of agency of choice that completes her developmental process. Huber says that "this choice itself, the action of choosing, acknowledges her initiation and acceptance of profound values and her own life responsibilities" (1999: 112). Psyche is in full consciousness of what she is doing, and she breaks another taboo (1999: 112), another prohibition.

Psyche's death-like sleep is linked to the connection between death and rebirth circulation, which is prominent in the culture of Mother Goddess rituals that emphasize the continuation of life and fertility in the figure of female. Huber, indicating this situation in Psyche myth, argues that "Metaphorically speaking, death resides in the jar, and the jar is a womb symbol intimates the knowledge that shadows maternity" (1999: 113). The idea of "death-as-process rather than death-as-end" (Huber, 1999: 114) permeates Psyche's tale and Psyche becomes a combination of divine beauty and immortality.

Beauty concept has been a frame for the myth of Cupid and Psyche. The myth begins with the expression of the stunning beauty of Psyche who deserves to be renamed as a new Venus, and ends with Psyche's acquisition of divine beauty and immortality as a result. Put in comparison with the myth of Cupid and Psyche, Bella and Edward's postmodern myth reveals a similar frame in terms of the issues of beauty and its connotations regarding female agency on female body and female agency on transformation. Though Bella follows the same path with that of Psyche in her becoming a conscious woman, she inscribes a new Psyche in her development. There are several divergent points that lead Bella's myth as a deconstructed version of Psyche's myth. Though the core points are the same such as female agency and politics of individual choice culture, Bella rewrites these politics with a more self-centered agenda that seeks "postfeminist rhetorical codes and tropes" (Negra, 2009: 123)

New Moon foregrounds the issues of youth and beauty politics which are effective agents in the formation of Bella's politics of agency. It starts with Bella's dream in which she sees her grandmother who is dead for six years. Her description of her grandmother is heavily loaded with physical traits that reflect the old age of her

grandmother:

Gran hadn't changed much; her face looked just the same as I remembered it. The skin was soft and withered, bent into a thousand tiny creases that clung gently to the bone underneath. Like a dried apricot, but with a puff of thick white hair standing out in a cloud around it (Meyer, 2006:3).

Bella in observing her grandmother's image, understands that the image is mimicking what she is doing and realizes that the image is actually her own image in old ages in the mirror: "With a dizzying jolt, my dream abruptly became a nightmare. There was no Gran. That was me. Me in a mirror. Me—ancient, creased, and withered. Edward stood beside me, casting no reflection, excruciatingly lovely and forever seventeen" (2006:5). In a manner of "self-surveilling postfeminist subject" (Negra, 2009: 119), Bella carefully watches and observes her image in the mirror. She rejects her grandmother's old image which is symbolically her old self. In her rejection, Bella also denies the traditional values the grandmother represents. Bella is after a youthful, dynamic identity which celebrates the "reinforcement of the body forms associated with postfeminist perfectionism" (Negra, 2009: 121). Concept of beauty and its politics constructs a basis in Bella's development of agency. Beauty exists as one of the effective means in Psyche's initiation process. Psyche is already the most beautiful daughter of the king, the female of admiration, which is the reason of Venus' jealousy. Although Psyche, as well, is ambitious for her own beauty, she seeks beauty mostly for Cupid's admiration. In this regard, Bella reconstructs Psyche on a different level so as to add her a narcissist pleasure and aspiration in having a perfect face and body just for her own pleasure of seeing herself in a perfect body. What brings Psyche and Bella to an intersection point is the politics of beauty, which is polished with issues of body and youth culture of postfeminist agenda in Bella's case.

Bella's virginity and her status both as a naïve young girl and a human being construct a common ground with the characteristics of Psyche. On this common ground, Bella spins her tale around the subjects of feminine agency regarding female sexuality. Unlike Psyche, who is in a conscious avowal of her desire only after her defloration, Bella is in active participation of expressing her sexual desire for Edward, in an act by means of which she identifies herself with "a new, liberated, contemporary sexuality for women" (Atwood quoted in Evans and Riley, 2010: 115) in which "sex is stylish, a source of physical pleasure, a means of creating identity, a form of body work, self-

expression, a quest for individual fulfilment" (2010: 115). Bella guides her sexuality with politics of beauty and body. In this regard she resembles to Psyche in her demand for infinite beauty, yet with a difference: Psyche seeks divine beauty for a masculine admiration whereas Bella is self-centered and in pursuit of a more narcissist pleasure. She is not in a forceful manner of becoming a magnet for the attention of Edward. She already knows that she is an essential part of Edward's life. Bella's imperative demands are channels of becoming a "female sexual entrepreneur, who works on herself and body to maintain an 'up for it' sexual agentic identity (Evans and Riley, 2015: 6).

Regarded in this context, Bella reconstructs Psyche by means of postfeminist youth culture ideology which articulates the idea that "the question of age and aging does appear to be proliferating in popular culture" (Wearing, 2007: 277). In her discourse of aging, Bella asserts it adamantly that she is in the pursuit of infinite youth and beauty as well as immortality that will drive her to a new and transformed self. Similar to Psyche's endowment with the portion of immortality after her great efforts to find Cupid, Bella, in a very postfeminist manner, ambitiously aims to attain infinite youth and immortality. She differs from Psyche in her intense passion for her conscious aim. Psyche is rewarded with immortality whereas Bella, as a twenty first century Psyche, audaciously asks for it and attains it by means of her manipulative approach to Edward. Within the terrain of this ideology, she travels around many cultural contexts including body, desire, and feminine agency. From a postfeminist perspective, Bella conforms to the ideological discourses of the politics of body and "beauty myth" in accordance with a postfeminist "formulation of an expressive personal lifestyle and the ability to select the right commodities to attain it" (Negra, 2009: 4). In this vein, Edward, in a parallel manner to that of Cupid, becomes a provider of wealth and infinite beauty, which characterizes him as "the right commodity" to be attained by Bella for her personal benefits.

Contemporary culture creates, as McRobbie states, "forms of identity which were not constructed around work, class and community but instead around other constellations of strong cultural meaning: the body, sexuality, or ethnicity, for example; nationality, style, image, even subculture" (1994: 6). Bella's character formation circles around these cultural meanings of body, sexuality, ethnicity, style, and image. In *New Moon*, she places the politics of body as a "focal point for struggles over the shape of

power" (Johnson quoted in Bordo, 2003:17). This struggle is not only observed in Bella's personal assessment of her appearance in terms of deficiency and aging, but also highlighted in her choices of opportunities which are offered by Edward and Jacob. New Moon presents the ongoing initiation process of Bella which started in *Twilight*, and directs this process through the awakening desire mechanism. In a very similar manner to Psyche's awakening within the terrain of desire, Bella's awakening is drifted through a desire mechanism engaged in both the "beautification discourses [that] place strong stress on the achieved self" (Negra, 2009: 119), and personal empowerment in terms of the politics of choice.

Rosalind Gill points out the way culture exercises power over individuals in terms of the production of autonomous subjectivities who claim exerting agency by means of freedom of choice. She indicates the mutual effect between neoliberal politics and postfeminism by arguing that both "see individuals as entrepreneurial actors who are rational, calculating and self-regulating" (Gill, 2008: 436), thus "requir[ing] individuals to narrate their life story as if it were the outcome of deliberative choices" (2008: 436). Bella's choices are inscribed on her body. In parallel line with the postfeminist approach to female body as a site of individual identity marker, Bella reads her body as a means of transformation and personal achievement. She wants to change it, mold it and use it for her own benefits. She writes her own history of becoming a woman by subscribing various messages in her body. Maria Pini explores the way body becomes a site of coded messages of race, gender and agency. Pini argues that the process of giving a meaning to the body changes body from a blank surface to a written text, which indicates that "different messages are inscribed on different bodies according to society's wider system of classification, and hence different selves are produced" (2004: 161). In this regard, body becomes a vehicle of identity production in accordance with individual choices and agency politics. Pini refers to Michele Foucault's terminology of the "technologies of self" which, as Foucault argues, "permit individuals to effect by their own means or with the help of others a certain number of operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct, and way of being, so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection, or immortality" (1988:18).

Pini terms “technologies of self” as “‘modes of enselfment’ (ways of becoming a self)” which “include all the different ways in which we ‘work upon’ our bodies so as to become a self and achieve a sense of fulfilment” (2004: 164).

Examining the way in which individuals are considered as entrepreneurial actors, Gill focuses on the effects of advertisements that create a perception of “buying a product, style or idea one is purchasing a sign of one’s own individuality and empowerment” (2008: 437). Gill focuses on how women construct themselves as entrepreneurial actors under the guidance of the advertisements addressing female sexuality, and indicates the prominent concept of woman as an active, desiring and playful subject. Gill states that

> This woman is no mute object but a ‘‘sexy’’ and playful subject, who uses her knowledge of the power her appearance may give her over male viewers to tease them, with humor. A crucial aspect of the shift from objectification to sexual subjectification is that this is framed in advertising through a discourse of playfulness, freedom and, above all, choice. Women are presented as not seeking men’s approval but as pleasing themselves, and, in so doing, they just happen to win men’s admiration (2008: 437).

This new woman as a sexual subject is in the autonomy of the management of her image for her own pleasure of physical appearance. In that vein, she challenges old conceptions of women as passive objects manipulated by male desire and gaze, and instead creates a new femininity which “is powerful, playful and narcissistic – less desiring of a sexual partner than empowered by the knowledge of her own sexual attractiveness” (2008:438). As a knowing and conscious subject, woman within this postfeminist, neoliberal frame becomes an embodiment of “new femininity” (Gill, 2008: 438) which is composed of “compulsory (sexual) agency, as a required feature of contemporary postfeminist, neoliberal subjectivity” (Gill, 2008: 440). This sexual agency is accompanied with a feeling of self-pleasure of one’s appearance which empowers and helps it to flourish the practices of self-surveillance leading to bodily transformations “through discourses of ‘pleasing oneself’ or ‘feeling good about oneself’” (Gill, 2008: 441). Thus her transformation process and desire are in alignment with the ideology of consumer culture of late capitalism. By choosing to become a vampire, culminated in the last book *Breaking Dawn,* Bella creates her own self, her body and her life-style centered around consumerism which is also one of the cornerstones of postfeminist politics of identity.

Regarding the alignment between transformation and consumerism, Mike Featherstone indicates that

> The concept of transformation is still central to consumer culture, with magazines, advertising and television presenting an endless range of material on the transformation of lifestyle, living space, relationships, identities and of course, bodies (2007: 75).

Body as a major vehicle of transformation becomes an emblem of identity marker for Bella. She uses it as a means of achieving her new life-style, in the same manner as Featherstone's going on argument:

> The body is presented as the central vehicle to the consumer culture good life: the source of pleasurable sensations which must be 'looked after' (maintained, repaired and improved). Yet the body is also understood in terms of its image, as the visible indicator of the self, hence the attention given to 'the look' (presentation, grooming, style) (2007: xxi).

In attaining that "look", and in turning into a beautiful swan, Bella follows the path to the narcissist pleasure which helps her to become a " performing self" (Featherstone, 1991:187). Her body is a site of both physical and psychological transformation and performance.

Similar to Psyche's abandonment as a punishment by Cupid after her discovery of the true nature of Cupid, Bella is abandoned by Edward. In her case it is not a punishment but a precaution taken by Edward in order for sustaining the safety of Bella. In her loneliness and depression, Bella displays inclinations for suicidal acts, mostly observed as plunged in psychological numbness, and always ready to risk her life for attaining her lover back. What creates difference Between Psyche and Bella is that Bella, however lonely and depressive, is accompanied with Jacob and his love for her. Thus Bella turns into a flirtatious Psyche in her depression and builds up a deconstructed Psyche in her passionate manner for Jacob, the werewolf. She draws a double edge in terms of displaying lamentation for the lost lover and passion for a new one. Regarded within these manners, Bella becomes a postmodern Psyche playing mostly within the terrains of excessive desire and seductive femininity. In *Amor and Psyche*, Eric Neumann examines the feminine development of Psyche and her transformation from naivety to a knowing, conscious state.

Neumann indicates the psychological development of Psyche through her discovery of desire and passion and says that:

> The knowing Psyche, who sees Eros in the full light and has broken the taboo of his invisibility, is no longer naïve and infantile in her attitude toward the masculine; she is no longer merely captivating and captivated, but is so completely changed in her new womanhood that she loses and indeed must lose her lover (1999: 79).

Similarly, Bella after becoming the knowing Psyche when she gains the knowledge of the true nature of Edward, takes a road to her "new womanhood". Her road is highlighted by her choices. By means of her choices, she removes herself from the discourse of female victim and creates an image that is expressive of female desire. Though Bella is virgin and always rejected by Edward in terms of sexual relation, she constructs herself as a sexual subject in her expression of desire. Deborah Tolman gives the definition of a sexual subject as such:

> By sexual subjectivity, I mean a person's *experience of herself* as a sexual being, who *feels entitled* to sexual pleasure and sexual safety, who [*can*] make … *active* sexual choices, and who has *an identity as a sexual being*. Sexual desire is at the heart of sexual subjectivity (2012: 749-750) (italics original).

Starting to weave her new self within the discourse of sexual subjectivity, Bella becomes a new Psyche "inaugurating new constructions of the self, no longer caught in the mythology of the unified subject, embracing of multiplicity" (Bordo, 2003:260). She displays various tendencies that include a large scale of emotions from depression to passion, from sadness to jouissance and sadistic pleasure. Constructing her character around an expressive sexual subjectivity, Bella creates her own discourse of desire which replaces the "missing discourse of desire" (Fine, 1988) in adolescent female voice. In her article entitled "Sexuality, Schooling, and Adolescent Females: The Missing Discourse of Desire", Michelle Fine examines the construction of adolescent discourse on sexuality. Fine indicates the impact of cultural and social authorities that put an enforcement of silence on adolescent expressions of sexuality and desire. Developing her argument on the conscious process silencing the female voice, Fine says that

Educated primarily as the potential victim of male sexuality, she represents no subject in her own right. Young women continue to be taught to fear and defend in isolation from exploring desire, and in this context there is little possibility of their developing a critique of gender or sexual arrangements" (1988: 30-31).

In this vein, young adolescent female is denied her voice of sexual subjectivity, which pushes her to silence which she thinks be maintained in order not to be victimized or be labeled as immoral. Viewed from this point, Bella's expression of her passion for Edward can be counted as a counteract to this "missing discourse".

Bella's subjectivity as a response to the missing discourse of desire inscribes itself under the guidance of politics of choice which is one of the major key elements of postfeminism. Marriage and maternity are taken into consideration within these choice politics, which explores them as a woman's freely chosen willpower rather than a patriarchal imperative that position womanhood within a condition of enslavement. Psyche and Bella's tale intersect on the subject of marriage, albeit based on different point of views. Psyche is prophesied to be married a serpent monster whose marriage would bring death and darkness. Her marriage is described within the terms of misfortune which she yieldingly accepts. Marriage is a circumstance on which Psyche is left no choice but the words of her father, of the oracle of Apollo, and of Cupid the husband. As to Bella's situation regarding marriage, it is a condition put forward by Edward if he is to turn Bella into a vampire. Marriage is conditioned as a male demand on female. Bella, taking her parents' marriage as a model, considers it as a "sort of kiss of death" for their relationship. It is seen that the idea of marriage as a kiss of death do exist in *New Moon* as it is in the myth of Cupid and Psyche. Although Bella, like Psyche, seems to be under constraints of male dominance in terms of marriage, she, contrary to Psyche, plays around choice politics and knows how to use marriage for her advantages. Thus marriage becomes a vehicle for her in attaining whatever she wants. It is not a target but a means of objective. She chooses to marry Edward for her individual targets. In choosing marriage offered by Edward, Bella displays postfeminist politics which considers marriage within choice politics that gives power to women in deciding what or who they would like to be or would not like to be. However marriage with its focus on family and home is critically treated as a mode of "new traditionalism" (Probyn, 1990: 150), it is taken into consideration within the frame of choice politics of postfeminism. The issues of marriage and fertility are to be examined in the last book of

the series *Breaking Dawn* which manifests the culmination of Bella and her transformation.

Contrary to remaining in silence, Bella freely expresses her "addiction" to Edward, and moreover, displays her passion for Jacob, too. Bella's passion for Edward is mostly like an addiction to a substance. She needs Edward's existence in order to go on her life (in a "healthy" way). This dependence is not unilateral. In a very similar manner, Edward is 'addicted' to Bella for his happiness, too. This mutual passion for each other takes their discourse of love and desire on different levels for each one of them. In examining the relationship between Cupid and Psyche, Edward John Kenney points out the nature of love and its discourse between Cupid and Psyche by signifying their unstable position. What Kenney indicates in the myth of Cupid and Psyche is common to Edward and Bella: "[…] two symbolic figures, identified as Eros and the Soul are represented in a variety of situations, sometimes in harmony, sometimes in discord: now embracing (sometimes with nuptial concomitants), now one tormenting or being tormented by the other" (1990: 21). Bella and Edward's relationship parallels the ups and downs in the relationship of Cupid and Psyche. Each one of them both torments and becomes tormented. Bella's excessive/obsessive and insistent love for Edward creates a pressure on Edward in order for maintaining his control. He has to keep his instincts under control and hamper his wild nature in order not to give harm to Bella. In this point Bella becomes a tormenting female because she does not put a line in her demanding love and desire mechanism.

Although there is no sexual relationship between them, Bella knows that she pushes Edward to the limit in her close physical contact with him, and she does not stop her seditious approach. It is always Edward who has to control his feelings and who is always under constraint. Considering his existence as a dangerous threat to Bella, Edward leaves her for her safety. His leave is not for punishment, like in the case of Cupid, but out of necessity due to the fact that he may not resist Bella's provocative love and lose his control which may easily end up with her death. In that respect Bella is both a physical and an emotional pressure on Edward that torments him in terms of his excessive desire to have her and his maintenance of his compulsory bodily control that restrains his intimate physical contact with Bella. Regarded within this oscillating position, both Bella and Edward assume a position which renders them as a source of

both torment and pleasure of each other. Viewed within this perspective they can be considered in terms of sadistic and masochistic behavior. In his work entitled *Innocence, Heterosexuality, and the Queerness of Children's Literature* Tison Pugh examines the complex love relation based on masochism between Bella and Edward in the seventh chapter under the title of "Masochistic Abstinence, Bug Chasing, and the Erotic Death Drive in Stephenie Meyer's *Twilight* Series". Pugh introduces the mutual torment between Bella and Edward by indicating the fine lines among pleasure, pain and desire. Regarding the existence of both physical and emotional masochism in the characters, Pugh asserts the impact of pain as a clear dynamic in their love for maintenance. Pugh says that "Within the *Twilight* novels, pain functions through such a double valence: Bella and Edward continually force upon each other the truth of their love through their shared suffering, as if pain were the only reliable evidence of their affection" (Pugh, 142). Pain becomes a language of love in order for a proof of their intimacy toward each other. Their affair is mostly based on emotional pain which is accompanied by physical pain that mainly contains a desire for death. Compared to the myth of Cupid and Psyche in terms of torment, Edward and Bella draw a parallel line in their performance of pleasure and pain. In a similar manner to Psyche displaying emotional pain in the absence of Cupid, Bella shows evident depression that turns her into a 'zombie' in the absence of Edward. She needs him in order for a meaningful life, and she resorts dangerous situations in order to make Edward feel her situation and be present in her mind with his voice warning her for possible consequences of the danger she exposes herself to. Danger becomes a means of sensing her existence which will wake her up from her numbness. She self-willingly puts herself in dangerous situations and takes pleasure in feeling the excitement in it. Mingling danger and pleasure becomes a core point in her construction as a masochistic female. Nevertheless, this masochism does not position her as a victim, rather she uses it to manipulate people, especially Edward, around her. In that point she differs from Psyche who mostly exposes herself to danger and show suicidal inclinations due to her despair and hopelessness in her search of Cupid. In Bella's case it is a conscious choice of throwing herself into the danger for a proof of her existence. Bella explains what she felt when she met a group of men on a dark street with her friend Jessica:

My body remembered it better than my mind did; the tension in my legs as I tried to decide whether to run or to stand my ground, the dryness in my throat as I struggled to

build a decent scream, the tight stretch of skin across my knuckles as I clenched my hands into fists, the chills on the back of my neck when the dark-haired man called me 'sugar.' (Meyer, 2006: 97).

She goes on explaining her interest in danger which she sees as a means of 'life pulse: "I didn't understand why, but the nebulous threat the men presented drew me toward them. It was a senseless impulse, but I hadn't felt *any* kind of impulse in so long… I followed it." (2006:97). She realizes that she feels Edward's existence in her mind when she is in dangerous situations, which makes her wake up from her numbness:

In the instant that I heard his voice, everything was very clear. Like my head had suddenly surfaced out of some dark pool. I was more aware of everything—sight, sound, the feel of the cold air that I hadn't noticed was blowing sharply against my face, the smells coming from the open bar door (2006: 99).

Bella oscillates between numbness and pain, and uses danger/pain/ pleasure combination in order for a mental contact with Edward through his hallucinated voice. She acts self-consciously in plunging herself into pain and uses this situation as a means of communication both with Edward and with her social world. Contrary to the persecuted heroine type who is not aware of what has been done to her, Bella is conscious of her situation, her suffering psyche, and what she is doing to herself:

I waited for the pain now. I was not numb—my senses felt unusually intense after so many months of the haze—but the normal pain held off. The only ache was the disappointment that his voice was fading. There was a second of choice. The wise thing would be to run away from this potentially destructive—and certainly mentally unstable—development. It would be stupid to encourage hallucinations (2006:100).

She uses her suffering for pleasure, which later becomes an addiction:

I waited for the numbness to return, or the pain. Because the pain must be coming. I'd broken my personal rules. Instead of shying away from the memories, I'd walked forward and greeted them. I'd heard his voice, so clearly, in my head. That was going to cost me, I was sure of it. Especially if I couldn't reclaim the haze to protect myself. I felt too alert, and that frightened me (2006: 103)

Bella is aware of her psychological condition:
Had I turned masochistic—developed a taste for torture? I should have gone straight down to La Push I felt much, much healthier around Jacob This was not a healthy thing to do" (2006:140).

> The truth was that I wanted to hear his voice again, like I had in the strange delusion Friday night […] those precious moments when I could hear him again were an irresistible lure. I had to find some way to repeat the experience… or maybe the better word was *episode* (2006:141) (italics in original).

Jessica Benjamin examines the dynamics of sadomasochistic fantasy desire within the structural relationship of domination and submission. She says that " The fantasy of erotic domination embodies both the desire for independence and the desire for recognition" (1988:52), and locates her argument within a discourse of "freedom through slavery" (1988:52) in which "the self depends upon mutual recognition between self and other" (1988:53). Benjamin argues that self needs the other in order for its own recognition of existence. If there is no other, there is no one to recognize the self, which puts the self into nothingness. In this regard, there is a mutual condition that controls the existence of one another. In explaining this "dialectic of control", Benjamin notes that "If I completely control the other, then the other ceases to exist, and if the other completely controls me, then I cease to exist" (1988:53). Regarded this, Bella and Edward's relationship relies on the control of one another within mostly sadomasochistic terms by means of which each of them, especially Bella, tries to hold the fantasy of control by "enslave[ing] the other" through having his voice in her mind by means of throwing herself into dangerous situations. Edward, the vampire as the figure of the other is constantly kept in anxiety, a situation from which Bella self-consciously feels pleasure due to its consequences such as having his voice as a close connection with him, and feeling her existence through the impact of adrenaline. Her desire mechanism is mostly linked to masochistic streak of self-harm. She tries every opportunity that will place her in danger that would end up with pleasure. She tries to ride Jacob's bike without any experience and she thinks that it is worth feeling the "combination of adrenaline and danger" (Meyer, 2006:162): "I was terrified. I tried to tell myself that the fear was pointless. I'd already lived through the worst thing possible. In comparison with that, why should anything frighten me now? I should be able to look death in the face and laugh" (2006:160). As Anthea Taylor indicates, Bella draws a link among masochistic drive, desire for love and desire for death. Taylor says that:

> Masochism, in terms of the *Twilight* heroine, is operative on many, complementary levels: in the physical dangers and eroticized pain characterizing her relationship with Edward; in her acquiescence to his protectionism; in the way her identity comes to be defined solely through her interactions with him; and in her desire for death, to literalize the idea that they will be together 'forever' (2011: 33-34).

Edward's absence drags her to nothingness and to the loss of the meaning of life. Bella is mostly criticized for her emotional dependence on Edward for a full meaningful life and a meaningful self. Her search for a meaningful existence is a combination of pain, danger and pleasure the incarnation of which, she thinks, is death. Throughout this chain of three elements, Bella seeks omnipotence over her own existence and also over Edward's existence by means of manipulation. Her libidinal impulses triggers her omnipotent impulses "resorting to severe masochistic measures such as killing their [her] feelings, provoking attack, or attempting to kill themselves [herself]" (Novick and Novick, 1991: 311). Bella's attempt to jump from the cliff to the waters of the ocean is another example to her 'script' of masochistic identity under the name of proving her love and desire for the lover at the expense of her life:

I wanted to jump from the top. This was the image that had lingered in my head. I wanted the long fall that would feel like flying. I knew that this was the stupidest, most reckless thing I had done yet. The thought made me smile. The pain was already easing, as if my body knew that Edward's voice was just seconds away (Meyer, 2006: 315).

She finds a peaceful relief in adrenaline:

And I flung myself off the cliff.
I screamed as I dropped through the open air like a meteor, but it was a scream of exhilaration and not fear. The wind resisted, trying vainly to fight the unconquerable gravity, pushing against me and twirling me in spirals like a rocket crashing to the earth. Yes! The word echoed through my head as I sliced through the surface of the water. It was icy, colder than I'd feared, and yet the chill only added to the high (2006: 316).

She fulfills happiness in masochistic feelings:

Why would I fight when I was so happy where I was? Even as my lungs burned for more air and my legs cramped in the icy cold, I was content. I'd forgotten what real happiness felt like. Happiness. It made the whole dying thing pretty bearable (2006: 318).

Bella's cliff-diving can be considered as a reminiscent of Psyche's trial of passing the black river that nourishes Stix and filling the vessel with the water of that river. Unlike Psyche, who is forced by Venus to accomplish her task, Bella self-consciously throws herself into the danger, a situation which she uses for manipulation in her relationships as indicated by Tison Pugh: "With self-chosen suffering guiding her actions, Bella employs her masochistic sexuality as a tool for manipulating others into acting in accordance with her desires" (2011: 153). As a postmodern, postfeminist

Psyche, Bella acts within her own desire mechanism in which she "sacrifices romantic pleasures for masochistic pains, which tortuously lead her back to pleasure" (Pugh, 2011: 141). Her combination of desire, pain and pleasure culminating in death constitutes its dynamics through her politics of body. She exposes her body to different levels of pain, and it is through her body that she will gain immortality and infinite beauty with Edward's bite of her flesh. Her body politics can be scripted within both positive and negative terms considering the consequences which could be critiqued as a site of either agentic identity or abusive relationship. Her oscillation between agency and submissiveness creates a ground which combines contrary elements within a union. Her decisions, as a reflection of postfeminist politics, are a means of "refusing the either/or terms of choice and are instead fashioning forms of relationships, of socialities, that also refuse to choose among love, friendship, and intimacy" (Probyn, 2008: 244). Regarded in this vein, Bella's discourse of identity politics is an "ensemble of discourses, a heterogeneous collection of statements about choice, family, friends, and consumption, and a fluidity of understandings about what can constitute relationships of intimacy" (Probyn, 2008: 244). In this fluidity,

> She, correlates with the transference of multiple, overlapping forms of capital – economic, cultural, sexual and physical. What Bella covets is not simply an eternity as a vampire but the power it conveys, including the physical strength and prowess she is seen to so sorely lack as a human. She chooses not just Edward, but an identity and a lifestyle that has been throughout glamorized, marked by consumer capitalism (complete with prestige cars, the details of which are painstakingly laid out for the reader) and unlimited cash-flow (Taylor, 2011: 41).

New Moon is one of her phases on her way to transformation which is built upon a many layered structure that consists of multiple aspects. *New Moon*, the title indicating the image of the first crescent, refers to the initial attempts of Bella in becoming a determined, agentic identity. This phase is the time for her as a postmodern Psyche taking the arrows from Cupid and turning from a Soul to the corporeal body which later become to an Amazonian level at the end of the series. *New Moon* ends with Bella's rescuing Edward from Volturi, the royal family who regulates the rules for vampires and punishes them with death if they break the rules. Bella draws a parallel line to Psyche's trials in her search for Cupid, yet she turns into a heroine rescuing the beloved. Unlike Psyche, survived with Cupid's act of removing the death-like sleep from her face, Bella becomes a means of survival for Edward. She rescues him by going

to the Volturi and making a bargain with them.

New Moon is a rewriting of the myth of Cupid and Psyche. Both the book and the myth share common grounds on the issue of the awakening of feminine consciousness. This consciousness is written on the texts of agency, sexuality, beauty and marriage. However similar grounds they share, *New Moon* rewrites the myth of Cupid and Psyche in line with the postmodern ideology of consumer society which foregrounds the manifestation of a postfeminist Bella as a rewriting of the mythical female type of second century A.D. Psyche. While Psyche's awakening femininity is governed by patriarchal dominance on her fate relating to sexuality and marriage, Bella displays a freer model of postmodern Psyche who builds up her identity based on the politics of individual choice. Her choice ideology, however scripted in oscillation of physical pleasure and pain, narcissist pleasure and masochism, becomes a means of power through which she turns into an assertive, decision-maker. In line with the postfeminist politics of "the achieved self" (Negra, 2009: 119), Bella rewrites Psyche as a self-centered female who acts in accordance with her own benefits rather than being in the service of masculine desire or in need of a "power to construct a self which matches male expectations" (Talairach-Vielmas, 2007: 5).

3.3 *Eclipse*: A Modern Myth of Artemis

The third book of the *Twilight* series, *Eclipse*, foregrounds a deconstruction of the mythical female figure of Greek Artemis, who is Diana in Roman mythology, in the character formation of Bella Swan. Artemis/Diana myth is approached within a subversive manner in which the characteristics of the goddess are put in line with postfeminist sexual politics that seek expressive female desire and sexual subjectivity that centers around pleasure and passion, and that draw "sexualized representations [which] are not designed to portray women as victimized objects but as knowing and active sexual subjects" (Genz, 2006: 345).

Rewritten within the context of postfeminist politics of identity, Artemis/Diana myth is embodied in Bella Swan as an individual "inaugurating new constructions of the self, no longer caught in the mythology of the unified subject, embracing of multiplicity, challenging the dreary and moralizing generalizations about gender, race, and so forth"

(Bordo, 2003: 260). Bella, in this respect, becomes a postmodern Artemis/Diana who, on her way to transformation, challenges patriarchal interrogations.

3.3.1 Goddess Artemis

Goddess Artemis/Diana is defined with various aspects that place her within different terrains from wilderness to femininity. Mostly known as the "Mistress of the Wild Animals, a goddess of fertility and nature, and a Parthenos (Virgin)" (Rigoglioso, 2010: 51), Artemis is depicted as the protector of natural life, as a guardian of females, and maintainer of fecundity. She is also known as the goddess of the hunt whose "principle attributes were the bow, quiver, and arrows or a spear" (Rigogliose, 2010: 56) and who was known as "the paragon of the huntress" (2010: 56). These major aspects of Artemis are all interrelated to each other. Her being as a "protectress not only of wildlife but also of the wilderness itself" (Hughes, 1990: 193) is connected to her status as a continuation of mother goddess cult protecting nature and celebrating fruitfulness, and, at the same time, to her status as a virgin that is mostly contextualized within her inviolability. Marija Gimbutas points to the features of mother goddess within a variety of qualities, mostly related to regenerative power:

> In her incarnation as a pregnant doe, a chrysalis, caterpillar, butterfly, bee, toad, turtle, or hedgehog, she was a symbol of embryonic life and regeneration. In this fundamental notion lies her association with the moon and the horns. As a bee or a butterfly she emerges from the body or horns of the bull; as a bear she takes care of all young life (2007: 196).

Similarly, Donald Hughes refers to the mother goddess image in his depiction of Artemis and her relation to nature:

> The archetype was a mother goddess, displaying attributes of fecundity and reproductive sexuality. Similar features are displayed in some forms of Artemis that persisted into the classical Greek period, such as the many-breasted Artemis of the Ephesians. This image is covered with animals in high relief, including lions, deer, oxen, and bees, to emphasize Artemis's fecundity as mother of living creatures. Though Artemis was certainly not the only descendant of the primal mother goddess in Greek mythology, she did most fully embody one aspect often attributed to the mother goddess: defender of wild-life. Even though she is usually depicted in classical Greek mythology as the quintessential virgin, she nevertheless remained patroness of childbirth and guardian of the young (1990: 192).

Related to the mother goddess in terms of regeneration and fecundity, yet reviewed within the terms of wilderness and virginity, Artemis could be put in a paradoxical condition in which each quality seems to be opposing the other one, yet these qualities are to support each other. Artemis's virginity and her role as a protector of wild life are related to each other as is expressed in Hughes words: "Though she was referred to as agrotera, "the wild one" she was also referred to as agne, "the pure,' and parthenia, "the virgin" (1990: 193). Artemis's virginity is not only interpreted within her relation to the wilderness, and her effort to protect it. Her virginity is also taken into consideration with regard to her concern "with females, especially the physical aspects of their life cycle, including menstruation, childbirth, and death, however contradictory the association of these with a virgin may appear" (Pomeroy: 1995: 5). Rigoglioso emphasizes that her virginity and her welcome of women's motherhood are a part of her integrated character:

> The idea that Artemis's priestesses at Ephesus and elsewhere may have been women who attempted virgin motherhood resolves the seeming paradox of Artemis's embrace of women's birthing process but rejection of their sexual activity. I thus propose that the Artemisian cult embraced both motherhood and virginity, not as opposites, but as part of a specific practice with a specific purpose (2010: 64).

Thus she "unites in herself the otherwise opposing principles by mediating between them" (Baring and Cashford, 1993: 326). In *The Goddess: Mythological Images of the Feminine*, Christine Downing points to Artemis's virginity as an emblem of unapproachable quality, remoteness and solitariness. Downing connects Artemis's "radical and wholehearted choice of the lonely wilderness" (1981: 168) to passion and a "fantasmal reality" (1981: 173). Downing says that "In Artemis, passion and virginity are strangely intertwined, as are the wilderness and remoteness of her woodland habitat. Artemis and her wildness both invite and resist violation" (1981: 173). Thus her existence as a symbol of "insistence on inviolability, on separateness, on in-her-self-ness" (Downing, 1981: 174) are all linked to representation of "female being in its own essence" (Downing, 1981: 175). As Downing argues

> Thus she is and remains virgin. Her chastity, her physical virginity (though probably not part of the most archaic conception of Artemis), is a central element in the Greek vision of Artemis long before Homer or Hesiod. Originally, Artemis was probably a mother-goddess – as the many breasted Artemis of Ephesus still as even in classical times – whose virginity simply meant that she belonged to no one, that she had never been

confined in a monogamous marriage (1981: 175).

Nor Hall indicates virginity as a status of female body free from masculine possession: “The word virgin means ‘belonging-to-no-man’. Virgin means one-in-herself; not maiden inviolate, but maiden alone, in-herself. To be virginal does not mean to be chaste, but rather to be true to nature and instinct” (1980: 11). Thus, her virginity should be considered as an emblem of a free spirited woman who does not let her body neither possessed, nor manipulated, used and controlled by male power without her consent. Baring and Cashford associates virginity to the image of Great Mother as the lunar goddess and her relation to the moon and its cycles: “Virginity has always been an image belonging to the Great Mother as the lunar goddess. The Virgin Goddess is Life itself, and Life, like the cycles of the moon, appears out of itself without union with anything external to itself” (1991: 192). Her connection with the moon identifies Artemis as a goddess of light and darkness, and she is given multi-layered characteristics that reflect various personifications:

> As virgin, Artemis personifies the new moon, Selene—or sometimes Demeter—is the full moon, and Hecate personifies the dark moon. Hecate is often identified with Artemis as her dark aspect, the underwordly being she might become if she were offended and withdrew her light (Strengell, 2003: 50).

Regarding the connection between Hekate/Artemis personification and their link to the moon, Marija Gimbutas touches on the relationship between light and fertility: “The torch of the goddess probably relates to the fertilizing power of the moon since Hekate’s torches were carried around the freshly sown fields to promote their fertility” (2007: 198). Jane Caputi, as well, indicates multiple personification of the moon goddess Diana, the Roman version of the goddess Artemis:

> Diana was the Roman name for the Triple Moon Goddess: Lunar Virgin, Mother of Creatures, and Destroyer (Huntress). As the moon, she wanders, disappears, and transforms regularly, often under the names of Selene in the heavens, Diana/Artemis on Earth, and Persephone in the Underworld (1999: 106).

Caputi goes on explaining Diana’s power of uniting two seemingly oppositional but paradoxically related aspects in her essence: light and dark. She says that “She [Diana] has inextricably twinned faces, one bright and one dark. Lightness is not linked with ‘whitensess’ as the antithesis of a dirty, obscene, and inferior darkness. Darkness is not the opposite, but the very womb, root or source of light” (1999: 111). Thus “The

Goddess Diana's 'light in the darkness' signifies creation, birth from the necessary dark womb/Earth" (Caputi, 1999: 111).

As a virgin goddess of the hunt, wilderness, fertility, female and the moon, Artemis displays multi-layered characteristics in her essence. Basically identified with wilderness, nature and their protection, Artemis incorporates the principles of Mother Goddess figure: She is an emblem of creative power, a guardian of fertility, and a patroness of wild life. The third book of the *Twilight* series, *Eclipse* is taken under examination in terms of the transformation of Artemis myth according to the postfeminist politics of "body as a site of identity", incorporating the multiple characteristics of the goddess in a more fluid way.

3.3.2 Bella Swan as a Postfeminist Artemis: From Myth to Postmodern Female

Bella's tale of transformation goes on taking its form with a more multi-layered politics of individual choice in *Eclipse*. On her way to transformation, Bella follows a manner of her own shaped by her individual choices which can be regarded as complex, sometimes contradictory, yet always leading to her profits. Her path to transformation is installed with her initiation, her awakening and her determination on what or who she wants to be in her life. The titles of the books in the series mirror her path, and accompany her process of transformation. Titles indicating the phases of the moon are the symbolic processes of the change in Bella's life. *Eclipse*, in these terms, refers to Bella's character formation as a representative of the moon goddess Artemis/Diana myth. Bella, associated with the cycles of the moon, becomes a postmodern moon goddess who rewrites and recreates a new Artemis type who acts according to her own profits.

Bella, who was a postmodern Psyche obtained the arrows of Cupid in the second book *New Moon* now becomes the master of bows and arrows as a figure of Artemis in the third book *Eclipse*. Bella, among the werewolves and vampires, becomes the goddess of wild life, and a patroness of hunt. Rather than being hunted neither by Jacob nor Edward, she becomes the hunter flirting with the prey according to her own "appetites". *Eclipse* presents Bella on the verge of a decision between Edward and

Jacob as a lover, a situation which is also indicated by the title: eclipse is her moment of decision of shading her light on Edward while leaving Jacob in darkness. In a manner of eclipse, Bella, the moon, standing between Jacob the sun and Edward the world, casts her shadow on Jacob leaving him covered with darkness and turning her face to Edward. *Eclipse* foregrounds the intimate relationship between Bella and Jacob in which Bella becomes a flirtatious Artemis who acts with a free-spirited manner.

Bella as a postmodern Artemis draws a dual image which seems contradictory to each other. In Bella's character, Artemis, who is known for her non-commitment to any male existence, becomes a "hunter" of men, looking for an eternal commitment, yet escaping any formal engagement with them. In her assessment of the relationship with Edward, Bella expresses her desire to be with him forever: "The word *boyfriend* had me chewing on the inside of my cheek with a familiar tension while I stirred. It wasn't the right word, not at all. I needed something more expressive of eternal commitment" (Meyer, 2007: 5). Yet, on the other hand, she refuses to be engaged with Edward in a formal manner: "*Fiancée*. Ugh. I shuddered away from the thought" (2007:5). Bella displays a terrain of characteristics varying from powerless, easily affected, helpless girl to a conscious determinant female in her relation with Edward. She admits that she is under the effect of Edward's physical strength and beauty:

> Time had not made me immune to the perfection of his face, and I was sure that I would never take any aspect of him for granted. My eyes traced over his pale white features: the hard square of his jaw, the softer curve of his full lips - twisted up into a smile now, the straight line of his nose, the sharp angle of his cheekbones, the smooth marble span of his forehead - partially obscured by a tangle of rain-darkened bronze hair. I saved his eyes for last, knowing that when I looked into them I was likely to lose my train of thought. They were wide, warm with liquid gold, and framed by a thick fringe of black lashes. Staring into his eyes always made me feel extraordinary - sort of like my bones were turning spongy. I was also a little lightheaded, but that could have been because I'd forgotten to keep breathing. Again (2007:14-15).

Bella is aware of Edward's effective power over herself. She admires his qualities and wants to be like him. This situation positions her as a seemingly passive admirer of male beauty and strength. In spite of her portrayal as a young girl patronized by an old and experienced male figure, she is not a passive recipient of male authority. Her seemingly powerlessness, her would-be helplessness are means of her manipulation of male figures. She keeps Edward and Jacob close to herself by means of her seeming helplessness.

Bella is always aware that she is the essence of Edward's life, and she is indispensable to him:

I knew that the scent of my blood - so much sweeter to him than any other person's blood, truly like wine beside water to an alcoholic - caused him actual pain from the burning thirst it engendered. But he didn't seem to shy away from it as much as he once had. I could only dimly imagine the Herculean effort behind this simple gesture (2007:15).

Though Bella is mostly depicted as in need of Edward and Jacob, she is the center of their lives. Bella is the source of both pleasure and pain in Edward and Jacob's lives. She knows this very well and uses her status as an indispensable beloved in accordance with her own profits. As a character open to innovation and adventure, Bella wants to change. Change and transformation are the key words of her life choices: "Of course this change was necessary - and the key to what I wanted more than everything else in the world put together" (2007: 21). Regarding he passion for change, Bella draws a postmodern individual type who is in mobility and open to new experiences. Mentioning the aspects of postmodernity, William Simon refers to the undeniable existence of the concept of change in the lives of individuals. Simon states that "Among the more critical aspects of postmodernity is the normalization of change, the unprecedented degree to which change permeates virtually every aspect of our lives and the immediate landscape of our lives and the unprecedented degree to which we have come to live with, expect it, and even come to desire it as the normal condition of our lives" (1996: 4). Considered within this condition of postmodernity, Bella, rather than positioning herself within a static, passive recipient of what life has given her, prefers mobility in her life, varying from her humanity to class differentiation. In this respect she presents a multi-layered Artemis, the free-spirited goddess, in a broader perspective in which her rigid principles are subverted and put in a plural meaning. In a world of supernatural existences, she wants to change, "be a monster" (2007: 22), and become a posthuman entity that will erase her inadequacy. She inherently wants to be the master of Edward: "My arms locked behind his neck, and I wished I was stronger - strong enough to keep him prisoner here" (2007:38). Although she knows that she enforces Edward to keep himself under self-control, she pushes his limits: "I crushed myself closer, molding myself to the shape of him. The tip of my tongue traced the curve of his lower lip; it was as flawlessly smooth as if it had been polished, and the taste –" (2007:39). She is always leaves him in the lurch:

And I didn't care that I was supposed to be angry with him. I didn't care that I was supposed to be angry with everyone. I reached out for him, found his hands in the darkness, and pulled myself closer to him. His arms encircled me, cradling me to his chest. My lips searched, hunting along his throat, to his chin, till I finally found his lips (2007: 165).

Bella, the hunter Artemis, is after her prey Edward. What Bella deconstructs in Artemis myth is that she is subverting Artemis's denial of male company as in a monogamous marriage. Although she seems to be against marriage, she chooses to marry Edward in order to get what she wants from life: immortality, infinite beauty and power. Thus marriage becomes a vehicle, not a target for her. Her choice of Edward as a partner is foregrounded in *Eclipse*. Nevertheless, she is also depicted in a close relationship with Jacob, too. Her relationship with two monstrous men, Edward and Jacob, are also taken into consideration in terms of her postmodern symbolism of Artemis and her virginity. Mentioning Artemis and her virginity, Walter Burkert states that "the virginity of Artemis is not asexuality as is Athena's practical and organizational intelligence, but peculiarly erotic and challenging ideal" (1985: 150). Though she had never been confined in a monogamous marriage, Artemis's virginity and her cult accompanied by her nymphs are related to sexual initiation. In "Handmaidens of Artemis", Jennifer Larson points out that Artemis's virginity

is not asexual like that of Athena, but is highly sexualized, just like that of the Greek maiden of marriageable age. Nymphs in their relations with Artemis are not themselves objects of cult, nor do they give or withhold blessings, but they are representative of the social rituals by which females come of age and take their place in society (1997: 255).

Constructing her virginity around the politics of erotics, Bella, becomes a postfeminist female type who "plays" with both Edward and Jacob. Although she is in love with Edward, she also loves Jacob and flirts with him:

'Will you kiss me, Jacob?' His eyes widened in surprise, then narrowed suspiciously.
'You're bluffing.'
'Kiss me, Jacob. Kiss me, and then come back.' (2007:466).

She is eager to have him:

The jolt of anger unbalanced my tenuous hold on self-control; his unexpected, ecstatic response overthrew it entirely. If there had been only triumph, I might have been able to resist him. But the utter defenselessness of his sudden joy cracked my determination,

disabled it. My brain disconnected from my body, and I was kissing him back. Against all reason, my lips were moving with his in strange, confusing ways they'd never moved before - because I didn't have to be careful with Jacob, and he certainly wasn't being careful with me. My fingers tightened in his hair, but I was pulling him closer now. He was everywhere. The piercing sunlight turned my eyelids red, and the color fit, matched the heat. The heat was everywhere. I couldn't see or hear or feel anything that wasn't Jacob (2007:468).

Bella's close relationship with both Edward and Jacob positions her within a postfeminist discourse of free individual who has agency on her choices. Presented as desiring and independent female, Bella becomes a representation of postfeminist Artemis who is drawn within sexual agency. The concept of virginity and its association with the goddess Artemis do have a close connection with Bella and her presentation as a free sexual agent. As previously mentioned, virginity of the goddess emphasizes her inviolability, her self-confident entity. Her state of "belonging-to-no- man" is exemplified in Bella's flirtatious manners both with Edward and Jacob. Nevertheless, she chooses Edward as a partner whom she will love forever and from whom she will get pregnant and have a baby in the last book *Breaking Dawn*. Bella subverts Artemis in her choice of marriage and motherhood. Her process of change can be considered as a process of sexual initiation, which is also related to Artemis's virginity. Though Artemis had never been confined in a monogamous marriage, her virginity and her cult accompanied by her nymphs are related to sexual initiation. In "Handmaidens of Artemis", Jennifer Larson points out that Artemis's virginity

is not asexual like that of Athena, but is highly sexualized, just like that of the Greek maiden of marriageable age. Nymphs in their relations with Artemis are not themselves objects of cult, nor do they give or withhold blessings, but they are representative of the social rituals by which females come of age and take their place in society" (1997: 255).

Bella's initiation is decorated with her postfeminist status as a "sexual entrepreneur' (Harvey and Gill, 2011: 52) in a "sexualized culture" (Atwood, 2006: 77) where "sexual values, practices and identities, the emergence of new forms of sexual experience and the apparent breakdown of rules, categories and regulations designed to keep the obscene at bay" have become "contemporary preoccupations" (2006: 77). Bella's agenda is a sexuality-centered individualism in which "sex is stylish, a source of physical pleasure, a means of creating identity, a form of body work, self-expression, a quest for individual fulfilment" (Atwood, 2006: 86). Hers is a postmodern "self for itself" (Simon, 1996: 12). As stated by Simon:

The postmodern experience, then, occasions the self for itself, the response of those who have no choice but to manage the increasing diversity and density of interpersonal and intrapsychic dialogues; where many individuals learn not only to stage their own lives, but to 'stage direct' numerous changes of scenes and acts (1996: 12).

Accordingly her relationship with Edward and Jacob is a reflection of her choices regarding her identity and self-expression. Bella is self-centered, and her passion for Edward and her intimate love for Jacob are shaped and put in a place according to her individual needs and desires. Her relationships are a means of individualization and in conformity with what Zygmunt Bauman calls "liquid love": "In our world of rampant 'individualization' relationships are mixed blessings […] In a liquid modern setting of life, relationships are perhaps the most common, acute, deeply felt and troublesome incarnations of ambivalence" (2003: viii). Her relationship with both Edward and Jacob become an emblem of her ambivalence. She passionately loves Edward, yet at the same time she is in love with Jacob, too. She never gives up one love for the other. She eroticizes the intimacy between her and Jacob, thus creating a "liquid" setting of love, blurring the line between her friendship with and love for Jacob, and acting as she wishes. She is not in any obscene sexual relationship with Jacob, albeit she lets an intimate physical contact happen between them. She is in a mood in which "intimate relationships are eroticized, though at the same time there is a tendency to conceptualize the erotic as a highly individualized form of hedonism" (Atwood, 2006: 80). Bella, as a postmodern goddess of the wild animals, is a flirtatious Artemis. She presents her "highly individualized form of hedonism" even in her physical contact with Jacob in his wolf form which is highly grotesque and wild:

I reached my hand out, my fingers trembling slightly, and touched the red- brown fur on the side of his face. The black eyes closed, and Jacob leaned his huge head into my hand. A thrumming hum resonated in this throat. The fur was both soft and rough, and warm against my skin. I ran my fingers through it curiously, learning the texture, stroking his neck where the color deepened. I hadn't realized how close I'd gotten; without warning, Jacob suddenly licked my face from chin to hairline (Meyer, 2007:355).

Eclipse creates a text in which "the sexual [is] an increasingly unstable chemistry of social and personal meanings" (Simon, 1996: 27). Bella, creating her own myth of initiation, acts according to her sexual desires that becomes a means of her identity formation and personal meanings. Her intimate encounters with Edward the vampire who provides and promises an everlasting life in wealth and beauty in a royal

manner, and Jacob the werewolf who, compared to Edward, remains animalistic and bestial are reflections of her search for a social and personal meaning. Edward and Jacob become her tools of finding what she wants from life. Bella says that: "And I realized that I'd been wrong all along about the magnets. It had not been Edward and Jacob that I'd been trying to force together, it was the two parts of myself, Edward's Bella and Jacob's Bella. But they could not exist together, and I never should have tried" (Meyer, 2007: 539). In *Eclipse*, Bella is a free floating subject between Edward and Jacob, and she prioritizes her desires and needs without caring in detail what emotional harm she can give to her lovers. Thus, situating Edward and Jacob as samples of her love experiment, Bella goes on her way which is majorly shaped with priorities of personal pleasure and profit. Thus, in a very postmodern manner, she chooses what she can consume best for her needs, and her consumerist approach to her relationships involves sexual discourse in great extent. Placing sex and consumption on the same level, Bella creates her own text of transformation from a simple girl to a powerful vampire woman. In this regard, she uses the discourses of sexuality as a means of identity formation. This situation reflects what Ken Plummer names as "new cultural intermediaries" in which "the individualistic 'therapeutic/expressive culture' which fosters "the telling of self-narratives" (Plummer, 125) is foregrounded. These new cultural intermediaries combine "sex stories" and "youthful consumer" in an interbedded way (Plummer, 125). Bella writes her text within these new cultural intermediaries through which "intimate relationships are eroticized" (Atwood, 2006: 80). She scribes her relation with Jacob within this eroticized intimacy. She has pleasure in gazing Jacob's body (Meyer, 2007: 191), touching him and feeling his warmth even when she is with Edward (2007: 74), and being careless in her physical contact with him:

> With a wild gasp, he brought his mouth back to mine, his fingers clutching frantically against the skin at my waist. The jolt of anger unbalanced my tenuous hold on self-control; his unexpected, ecstatic response overthrew it entirely. If there had been only triumph, I might have been able to resist him. But the utter defenselessness of his sudden joy cracked my determination, disabled it. My brain disconnected from my body, and I was kissing him back. Against all reason, my lips were moving with his in strange, confusing ways they'd never moved before - because I didn't have to be careful with Jacob, and he certainly wasn't being careful with me. My fingers tightened in his hair, but I was pulling him closer now. He was everywhere. The piercing sunlight turned my eyelids red, and the color fit, matched the heat. The heat was everywhere. I couldn't see or hear or feel anything that wasn't Jacob (2007: 468).

Bella contemplates this eroticized intimacy with a mind of postmodern "consumer sensibility" (Atwood, 2006: 88). She loves both Edward and Jacob, and wants to 'taste' them both, yet, within this consumer sensibility, she is always calculating pros and cons in her relationships with Edward and Jacob. Bella does not have to be careful and is not limited in her physical approach toward Jacob. Nevertheless, she is aware that Jacob will not be able to give her what she wants. It is certain that she will be in a tribal life that would make no progress in her life if she chooses Jacob as a partner. On the other hand, Edward is a source of wealth, beauty and immortality. Bella is a youthful consumer who wants to "have it all" and who knows how to get it all. She knows that she will gain profit if she chooses Edward who will turn her into a vampire. She inclines it secretly in her dialogue with Rosalie on the matter of turning into a vampire:

'Just think about it a little. Once it's done, it can't be undone. Esme's made do with us as substitutes ... and Alice doesn't remember anything human so she can't miss it… You will remember, though. It's a lot to give up.'
But more to get in return, I didn't say aloud. 'Thanks, Rosalie. It's nice to understand ... to know you better' (2007: 150).

Her consumerist approach is seen not only in her description of Edward with precious materials such as gold and jewel, but also in her joy of getting Edward's biological mother's ring as an engagement ring:

Nestled into the black satin, Elizabeth Masen's ring sparkled in the dim light. The face was a long oval, set with slanting rows of glittering round stones. The band was gold - delicate and narrow. The gold made a fragile web around the diamonds. I'd never seen anything like it (2007:406).

Bella becomes a self-centered individual acting in accordance with her needs and desires. Thus she is creating her "self for itself" (Simon, 1996: 12) even if she says her eternal commitment to Edward is in the name of love and passion she has for him. Her self is in conformity with what Simon describes as an outcome of postmodern experience:

The postmodern experience , then, occasions the self for itself, the response of those who have no choice but to manage the increasing diversity and density of interpersonal and intrapsychic dialogues; where many individuals learn not only to stage their own lives, but to 'stage direct' numerous changes of scenes and acts (1996: 12).

Bella, as a postmodern virgin goddess Artemis, stages her life within the wilderness of vampires and werewolves. Her management of life and sexuality is directed by her in terms of choice culture in each step of her transformation. She chooses between Edward and Jacob, between humanity and immortality, between opportunities and physical and financial impossibilities. Accordingly, her decisions are centered with an ideology of "self for itself" seeking the best profit and benefiting the freedom of choice. Eva Ilouse defines "contemporary affair" as presuppose[ing] variety and freedom to choose" in "a much wider pool of available partners" (1999:176). Ilouse underlines that individuals are acting according to their preferences and choosing "between various partners" with a motive of freedom of choice (1999:176). Regarded within this politics, Bella becoming the embodiment of "the postmodern articulation of sexuality as free-floating sensation" (Atwood, 2006: 89) pursuits diverse feelings that she can experience with both Edward and Jacob. Thus, she is acting for a "self for itself" and using love as a vehicle to her aims. She chooses Edward as a partner who will promote her life, yet at the same time she loves Jacob and is sorry to leave him. Her self-centered choice politics is seen in her dialogue with Edward:

'Bella ... are you *sure?* Did you make the right choice? I've never seen you in so much pain-" His voice broke on the last word. But I had known worse pain.
I touched his lips. 'Yes.'
'I don't know…' His brow creased. 'If it hurts you so much, how can it possibly be the right thing for you?'
'Edward, I know who I can't live without.'
'But ...'
I shook my head. 'You don't understand. You may be brave enough or strong enough to live without me, if that's what's best. But I could never be that self- sacrificing. I have to be with you. It's the only way I can live' (2007:540) (italics in original).

Eclipse presents Bella as a postmodern version of goddess Artemis in various cultural intermediaries from sexuality to consumerist sensibility, from individualism to freedom of choice. The way Bella deconstructs Artemis myth is majorly drawn around her sexual politics that is fostered by postfeminist and postmodern attitudes. Goddess Artemis is known for her narratives of virginity and mastery over wild life and nature. Her virginity is described within the motives of her inviolability and her status as "belonging to no man". On the one hand, Bella as a postmodern Artemis draws a parallel line to mythical Artemis in her relationships with Edward and Jacob in terms of

her flirtatious manners, and in promising love to both of them. On the other hand she rewrites Artemis myth in her choice of Edward as a partner and her decision of marriage with him. Acting within the politics of postmodern life style in which "sex becomes a question of individual desires, episodes and self-narration" (Atwood, 2006:87), Bella recreates an Artemis type who acts according to her own profits and pushes the borders in her relationships with Edward and Jacob, enforcing them to be within her sexual politics. As a postmodern goddess of wild 'animals', Bella is a flirtatious Artemis who finally decides to have an eternal commitment with a partner for her consumerist aims. As a postfeminist moon goddess, Bella in between Edward and Jacob, chooses to be with Edward and sheds her light on him while leaving Jacob on the dark side of the eclipse.

3.4. *Breaking Dawn* and Mother Goddess

The last book of the *Twilight* series, *Breaking Dawn*, marks the final point in Bella's transformation and constitutes a focal point in Bella's individuation. It is the emblem of Bella's becoming a postmodern Mother Goddess who deconstructs the patriarchal conceptualization of the ancient Great Mother positioned and defined within negative terms. Marriage and motherhood which is regarded as a major concept related to Mother Goddess, and put into regulation only in terms of a productive manner that is to be under the serve of patriarchal culture are subverted into key points of creativity and life force of female power in *Breaking Dawn*. Bella's marriage with Edward, her pregnancy and child bearing, and her transformation from human to a vampire are the key marks of her final culmination as a Mother Goddess. What Bella, in a deconstructive term, supplements and changes in a Mother Goddess ideology is that she recreates a new myth of Mother Goddess within a postfeminist discourse that supports the discourses of freedom of choice, body and beauty ideology of postmodern condition, and postfeminist politics of motherhood as an emblem of new femininity.

The process of Bella's transformation from human to vampire and at the same time to Mother Goddess in *Breaking Dawn* is mainly based on the postfeminist neoliberal politics of identity that supports the individual as a free agent who is self-centered, autonomous, and consumerist. The very beginning of *Breaking Dawn* highlights the consumerist identity politics in its depiction of Bella experiencing the

luxury of wealth. Bella is described within a pleasure of assessment to expensive objects like her engagement ring and her new car:

It wasn't bright out—a typical drizzly day in Forks, Washington—but I still felt like a spotlight was trained on me, drawing attention to the delicate ring on my left hand. At times like this, sensing the eyes on my back, it felt as if the ring were pulsing like a neon sign: *Look at me, look at me*.
It was stupid to be so self-conscious, and I knew that. Besides my dad and mom, did it really matter what people were saying about my engagement? About my new car? About my mysterious acceptance into an Ivy League college? About the shiny black credit card that felt red-hot in my back pocket right now?
'Yeah, who cares what they think,' I muttered under my breath (Meyer, 2008:4).

Although, at times, Bella seems to be uninterested in the wealth she will gain in her relationship with Edward, she, mostly, welcomes it and inherently loves to have various opportunities maintained with wealth and luxury. This situation designs Bella and Edward's relationship not only on love but also on gain and profit. Additionally, Bella combines her consumerist ideology with the ideology of beauty in her construction of her new identity as a powerful Goddess. She wants to have a strong, powerful body which is at the same time young and beautiful. She says: "Virtual indestructibility was just one of the many perks I was looking forward to. The best parts about being a Cullen were not expensive cars and impressive credit cards" (2008: 7). Bella's motives for a better life on her way to becoming a Goddess are centered on individual choices and profits. Although Bella may seem to be under the effect of Edward's personal traits and interruptions in her affairs, Bella fits within terms of autonomous individual leading her life according to her personal choices and governing her identity on her way to the summit of her life. In defining autonomous individual, Nikolas Rose underlies the emphasis on freedom as a capacity to fulfill one's desires through conscious choices. Rose says that:

I term such strategies of governing autonomous individuals through their freedom 'advanced liberal'. In different ways, the problem of freedom now comes to be understood in terms of the capacity of an autonomous individual to establish an identity through shaping a meaningful everyday life. Freedom is seen as autonomy, the capacity to realize one's desires in one's secular life, to fulfil one's potential through one's own endeavours, to determine the course of one's own existence through acts of choice (1999: 84).

In determining her priorities and making her choices, Bella fits within the frame of a governing autonomous individual. She governs her life as she desires. However she seems under the pressure of her father regarding her choice of Edward as a lover, or under the forceful attention of Edward in her relationship with Jacob, Bella acts as she wishes. She positions the three major male characters, her father, Edward and Jacob, according to her desire mechanism in her life. She does not let them condition her on certain occasions. Here, marriage takes an important part in terms of conditioning or being conditioned by someone else in Bella's life. Edward offers marriage as a condition to Bella if she is to become a vampire. He promises to turn her into a vampire as long as they get married. Yet, Bella and Edward have different approaches to the issues such as marriage and love. Marriage can be taken into consideration as a patriarchal force that is used and conditioned upon Bella by Edward. Bella's approach to marriage is in negative terms. She is against to marry at such a young age. That she accepts to marry Edward in spite of her negative approach to marriage makes it seem like Bella is in an engagement with patriarchal norms. Nevertheless, Bella should be examined in line with the postmodern/postfeminist ideology of freedom of choice and ideology of a "governing self" that makes decisions for her individual happiness. Though she is in negative terms with marriage, she chooses it to attain what she wants from life. Marriage is a means for her in order to obtain what she desires to have in her life: immortality and infinite beauty. Apart from marriage with Edward, she has other options like Jacob who could provide her a safer, yet a plain life in which she could not attain new qualities. So her choice of Edward and of marriage is a conscious choice for her individual opportunities and "lifestyle decisions" (Rose, 1999: 86). Bella's choice of marriage is in conformity with what Rose indicates in explaining the contemporary approaches to marriage:

> Marriage and other domestic arrangements are now represented and regulated not as matters of obligation and conformity to a moral norm, but as lifestyle decisions made by autonomous individuals seeking to fulfil themselves and gain personal happiness (1999: 86).

Bella positions marriage as a way to power and pleasure rather than as a realm of passivity. Moreover she approaches it within consumerist politics considering the pros and cons of a possible marriage, but mostly seeking to get the best of it. The major key point in her marriage is that she will be transformed from human to a vampire,

which will provide her immortality as well as infinite permanent beauty and youth:

> The rush was due to the fact that I was getting closer to nineteen every stinking day, while Edward stayed frozen in all his seventeen-year-old perfection, as he had for over ninety years. Not that this fact necessitated marriage in my book, but the wedding was required due to the delicate and tangled compromise Edward and I had made to finally get to this point, the brink of my transformation from mortal to immortal (Meyer, 2008: 14).

Bella seems to be refusing to accept the priority of the perfection of youthfulness in her transformation, but it is her first and major aim. In attaining this aim, she acts within a postfeminist consumerist mentality seeking individual profit. She declares that she is not a loser in her marriage:

> I saw just how silly I'd been for fearing this—as if it were an unwanted birthday gift or an embarrassing exhibition, like the prom. I looked into Edward's shining, triumphant eyes and knew that I was winning, too. Because nothing else mattered but that I could stay with him (2008: 45).

Additionally, she considers her relation with Edward within terms of possession: "I tried to comprehend, through the film of tears blinding me, the surreal fact that this amazing person was *mine*" (emphasis in original) (2008:45). Rather than considering herself as being possessed by Edward, Bella situates herself as the subject of their relation and positions Edward as an object which is possessed, obtained. Her terms of possession also do exist in the matters of female subjectivity, female body and its ownership, and maternity.

Bella's marriage with Edward and her following pregnancy create a many-folded surface of discussion in terms of her female subjectivity within a postfeminist discourse and her female creative power that would accommodate her as a postmodern Mother Goddess. Throughout the series, Bella is presented with her choices and depicted as a young girl who knows what she wants, channels her desires and acts within individual choices of love, passion, behavior and family. She is in align with the postfeminist ideology of "choisiessie" that supports women in becoming active agents of their lives through their choices in terms of education, work and family life. As coined by Linda Hirschman, "choice feminism" celebrates women's choices no matter how radical or traditional they are. Hirschman says that: "A woman could work, stay home, have 10 children or one, marry or stay single. It all counted as 'feminist' as long

as she chose it" (http://prospect.org/article/homeward-bound-0). Foregrounding women's decision mechanism, this ideology keeps women away from patriarchal intervention in their process of forming their lives. Accordingly, women are supported to decide as they want, not as they are supposed. From this perspective, Bella is regarded as an active agent of choice feminism which is a terrain in which she regulates her desires. Thus, her decision of continuing her pregnancy in spite of Edward's insistence on abortion is considered as one of her politics of freedom of choice. She is the owner of her body and she does not let any patriarchal power have any force on it. Moreover, even though the half human half vampire baby does harm her health and puts her body in a deformed and grotesque shape, her choice of continuing her pregnancy, does conform to the contemporary ideologies of femininity which underline "the emergence of a range of new maternal identities and practices" (Tyler, 2011: 22). Imogen Tyler indicates the abundance of the issues of pregnancy and motherhood in the mainstream politics which is layered with many aspects such as "individual freedom, choice, democracy and personal responsibility" (2011: 22). In his context, pregnancy has been regarded as "a neoliberal project of self-realization, a 'body project' to be directed and managed" (2011: 29). Regarded from this point of view, Bella as an example of youthful maternity becomes a model of a decisive female in her rejection of abortion and insistence on becoming the mother of her baby no matter how monstrous it may be, and displays the characteristics of a neoliberal maternal focusing on her own interests, choices and feelings. Her body is a site of her self-realization. After giving birth to her daughter Renesmee, Bella, in describing her emotions, emphasizes the notion of change in her life:

> From that first little touch, the whole world had shifted. Where before there was just one thing I could not live without, now there were two. There was no division—my love was not split between them now; it wasn't like that. It was more like my heart had grown, swollen up to twice its size in that moment. All that extra space, already filled. The increase was almost dizzying (Meyer, 2008: 119).

Moreover she emphasizes the change in a woman's body during and after pregnancy as well: "And human women's bodies had to change to bear children. The constant change of a monthly cycle for one thing, and then the bigger changes needed to accommodate a growing child" (2008: 114). What Bella underlines subscribes to Rosemary Betterton's indication of the transformations in a pregnant body. Betterton mentions the artistic exploration of the change in pregnant bodies. She argues that the

images of pregnant bodies do not conform to the status-quo, but rather promises an ongoing progress and new dimensions. Betterton says that:

> I argue here that works of art, like other imaginative practices, can explore the tensions that pregnant bodies evoke through their "mutations, changes and transformations," and thus offer "new figurations" rather than theoreticalclosure. A different set of intertwined questions concerns the power of the maternal imagination and how it might be deployed in thinking about the pregnant woman who is simultaneously a creative subject and object (2006: 83).

Bella's body in change depicts these "new figurations" which mark the dynamic and creative nature of female body. Bella is aware of the power of change in a female body that adds a performative quality. She is proud of this quality and, obviously despises men for not having such a nature:

> And human men—well, they pretty much stayed the same from puberty to death. I remembered a random bit of trivia, gleaned from who knows where: Charlie Chaplin was in his seventies when he fathered his youngest child. Men had no such thing as child-bearing years or cycles of fertility (2008: 114-115).

Dynamic nature of female body and its creativity overwhelms the passive, static nature of male status-quo. That Bella gives life to a dead vampire cell becomes a token of her creative power that situates her within the characterization of the Mother Goddess. Additionally, her pregnancy becomes "a neoliberal project of self-realization, a 'body project' to be directed and managed" (Tyler, 2011: 29). Having this baby is a way of demonstration of her identity as a free individual. Bella is against patriarchal domination over her body and identity. Edward and Jacob become a source of pressure on her in terms of the necessity of an abortion. They function as a control mechanism over Bella's pregnant body, but Bella does not let them have the last word on her body. She decides to continue her pregnancy and bear that child no matter how dangerous it may be. She says: "This child, Edward's child, was a whole different story. I wanted him like I wanted air to breathe. Not a choice—a necessity. (Meyer, 2008:120). Although Bella frames her maternity with a necessity, it is her passion and decision to continue her pregnancy. This necessity is driven from her passion, not from authoritative patriarchal intervention that dictates the productive obligations for women's bodies.

In addition to being a decisive woman who has the last word on her body, Bella becomes a "creatrix", who could also be taken as a projection of masculine fear of feminine creative power. Jacob and Edward approach to the baby in Bella's womb within monstrous terms. They define it as a monster and insist on the idea of terminating the pregnancy and Edward urges her having "that thing" (Meyer, 2008: 120) out of her body. Edward and Jacob's fearful approach to Bella's pregnancy could be considered within patriarchal anxiety of women's maternal power. Rosi Braidotti marks this anxiety in her argumentation of maternal power as such:

> Monsters are linked to the female body in scientific discourse through the question of biological reproduction. Theories of conception of monsters are attimes extreme versions of the deep-seated anxiety that surrounds the issue of women's maternal power of procreation in a patriarchal society (1999: 291).

With its physical change, Bella's body becomes the embodiment of this fear, which is most obvious in Jacob's description of Bella's growing body:

> Bella's body was swollen, her torso ballooning out in a strange, sick way. It strained against the faded gray sweatshirt that was way too big for her shoulders and arms. The rest of her seemed thinner, like the big bulge had grown out of what it had sucked from her. It took me a second to realize what the deformed part was—I didn't understand until she folded her hands tenderly around her bloated stomach, one above and one below. Like she was cradling it (Meyer, 2008: 160).

Regarding the process of pregnant body, Braidotti states that "There is an insidious assimilation of the pregnant woman to an unstable, potentially sick subject" (1999: 299). Bella's body is depicted within terms of sickness and monstrosity in the eyes of Jacob and Edward. Male fear of female creative power is reflected on Bella's growing body. Although Bella is depicted in a daunting image, she is drawn as a self-confident and self-determinant female who resists patriarchal pressure on her and who believes in her creative power. Bella, as a postmodern Mother Goddess, becomes a symbolic model within whom "deity, world, nature, self and other are ultimately conceived" (Reid-Bowen, 2007: 63) and contextualized within "a specific understanding or revisioning of creativity, relationality and becoming" (2007: 63). Bella's pregnant body is her terrain of the discourse of postmodern femininity which claims for an "active, freely choosing, self-reinventing subject of postfeminism" (Gill and Scharf, 2011: 7). This self-reinventing subject is linked to the concept of Mother Goddess symbolism in Bella's case. Mother Goddess is basically associated with the

concepts of life, death and rebirth. Bella's pregnancy and her capacity of giving birth to half human half vampire baby are linked to the cycles of life, death and rebirth. Bella as a "creatrix" becomes a life source for a new entity. Her process of becoming a creatrix becomes an emblem of death and rebirth at the same time. In addition to becoming an emblem of creativity, Bella also becomes a symbol of death and rebirth. She dies while giving birth to her daughter Renesmee, but is revived with Edward's bite of her. Although Edward's bite could be considered within the symbolism of patriarchy which is taken into consideration as a life-giving power, it should be noted that Bella as a conscious women knows how to use and manipulate this patriarchal intervention. It is her conscious choice to use Edward and get the best of his bite for her individual aims. With the bite of Edward, which was her sole aim in order to construct her new identity, she becomes a vampire and an immortal female. Thus she gets what she wants. The underlying emphasis is on the renewal of life as associated with the concept of Mother Goddess. Marija Gimbutas indicates the association of Mother Goddess with the cycles of life, death and rebirth as such:

> The main theme of Old European goddess symbolism is the cyclic mystery of birth, death and the renewal of life, involving not only human life but all life on earth. Her energy is manifest in springs and wells, in the moon, sun and earth, and all animals and plants. She is the Giver of Life, the Wielder of Death, Regeneratrix and Earth Fertility Goddess, rising and dying with the plants (Gimbutas quoted in Motz, 1997: 26).

Bella as a Mother Goddess contributes to this renewal by giving life to a half human half vampire child. Not only does she create a new entity such as a half human half vampire child, but also she is reborn in the realm of death in her birth giving process. Thus she becomes the symbol of both fertility and rebirth, reflecting energy and dynamism of female creative power that always has the potentials of reforming. Bella has common points with what Goddess possesses as power. As noted by Donna Wilshire, Goddess "always has the raw materials for new forms in Her belly, womb, or cauldron. She is always stirring them, constantly changing, re-newing, re-forming, re-creating them" (Wilshire quoted in Reid-Bowen, 2007: 94). Bella as a Mother Goddess becomes the source of this re-creation. By bearing a half human half vampire child, she creates "new forms" of existence and also she herself becomes a newly created vampire that is associated with her rebirth. Thus she becomes the source of life both for herself and for her daughter, which also indicates that the continuity of life is in the image of women. Thus she signifies what Naomi Goldenberg points out: "Since every human life

begins in the body of a woman, the image of woman, whether thought of as mother or Goddess, always points to an early history of connectedness: Mother-mater-matter-matrix. 'Woman' is the stuff out of which all people are made" (Goldenberg quoted in Reid-Bowen, 2007: 66). Mainly perceived as the source of "life-as-process and transformation" (Reid-Bowen, 2007: 90), womb, with its associations of "earth/womb and darkness/womb" (2007: 91) is conceived as "a maternal space, a place of mystery and transformation, a microcosm of the macrocosmic whole" (2007: 91). Accordingly, female body as a space for an identity becomes the core point in Bella's transformation as a Mother Goddess. Her body as a source of transformation is in the core point of her postfeminist identity politics. Bella's body becomes "a site of significance bearing on how female experience is lived and changed" (Harcourt, 2009: 17). Thus her body becomes a means of transformation, a space enabling change and renewal and "creating a form of politics which we call 'place-based', with the body as the first 'place'" (Hacourt, 2009: 23). Not only is Bella's body a place of transformation and change, but also it is a place of resistance to patriarchal oppressive hegemony. That Bella rejects Edward and Jacob's insistence on abortion and her negation of their decision on her body's destiny is a demonstration of her "understanding of [her] body as a subject" rather than letting her body become instrumentalized and objectified serving submissively to the male hegemony.

Bella's status as a postfeminist Mother Goddess shows parallel qualities with those of an ancient Mother Goddess. Motz, pointing out the characteristics of the Goddess, states that "She is so diversified that she may show herself in virginal as well as maternal form, as maiden or as mother, as protector of the hearth and of the beasts of untamed nature, as life-giving or as life-taking" (1997: 6). In her transformation from human to vampire, Bella, as a Mother Goddess, indicates all these changes from virginal to maternal and becomes the protector of the beasts of untamed nature including vampires and werewolves. She achieves all of these within a "postfeminist sensibility" that foregrounds the "femininity as a bodily property" (Gill and Scharff, 2011: 4). Her body becomes a place of identity script which is loaded with many layers. Bella becomes a mother, turns into a vampire and acquires a stunning beauty. Her body is a place of all these transformations which she sought in order for a construction of a new self. Her politics of identity goes hand in hand with what Gill and Scharff emphasize in explaining the neoliberal postfeminist subject:

> Secure and stable self-identity no longer derives automatically from one's position in the social structure, and in its place some argue that we are seeing attempts to ground identity in the body, as individuals are left alone to establish and maintain values with which to live and make sense of their daily lives (2011: 8).

In grounding her identity in the body, and rewriting a new myth of mother Goddess, Bella exemplifies a model of the Triple Goddess. Reid-Bowen indicates the meaning and process of the Triple Goddess as such: "The model of the Triple Goddess is comprised of three idealized or normative stages of female development: the youthful and independent Maiden (or Virgin), the fecund and relational Mother, and the degenerative and wise Crone" (2007: 67). Similarly, Starhawk mentions the tree major aspects of the Goddess and their associations with other natural elements: "She has many aspects: Maiden, Mother, Crone, moon, earth, tree, star, flame, Goddess of the cauldron, Goddess of the hearth, Healer, spider, Lady of the Wild Things" (Starhawk, dreaming the dark). Bella stays virgin in her relationship with Edward and Jacob until she gets married, thus exemplifies the youthful and independent Maiden or Virgin; after her marriage, she gets pregnant and becomes a mother exemplifying the fecund Mother; finally with her transformation to a vampire, she becomes a strong and wise Crone having acquired supreme physical and mental powers and protecting her family and the wild life around her and becoming the lady of the wild things. Starhawk approaches to the Goddess concept within a different perspective placing more emphasis on the notion of the Maiden and associating it with the freedom of choice. According to Starhawk, Maiden is loaded with a meaning of renewal that is actualized with freedom of choice. She says "To choose is to begin" and indicates that the Mother and the Crone are completed with the Maiden who has the power to choose and direct her power according to the choices made. Starhawk states that "The many faces, the qualities of the Maiden become pointers, saying, 'Experience this – and make its power your own'" (Starhawk, dreaming the dark). Regarding Bella within this frame of Maiden, it can be said that she draws the line of her destiny around the politics of choice that is highlightened with her deliberate experiences of pain, pleasure, change and renewal.

In the model of a triple Goddess, Bella exemplifies the changes and transitions of female experience and at the same time she becomes the embodiment of "existential and metaphysical processes and states (birth/emergence, growth/generation, decay/degeneration and rebirth/ regeneration)." (Reid-Bowen, 2007: 68). Her change

and processes are associated with the cycles of the moon as it is understood from the titles of the books in the series. Title of each book signifying the phases of the moon is linked with the processes of the change in Bella's physical and mental state, indicating endings and beginnings in her life.

That Bella becomes a Mother Goddess is textualized within politics of body. Her experiences are in conformity with what Murphy Halliburton states "all people experience the world from the perspective of being in a body" (2002: 1124). Bella's experience of acquiring a new self, her process of pregnancy and birth giving, her acquisition of a new body and a new look, new physical and mental powers are scripted within the narrations of her body. Her experiences are coded within her body. Her self-actualization is made possible through her bodily transformation. Bella says that:

> My body tried to reject the pain, and I was sucked again and again into a blackness that cut out whole seconds or maybe even minutes of the agony, making it that much harder to keep up with reality. I tried to separate them. Non-reality was black, and it didn't hurt so much. Reality was red, and it felt like I was being sawed in half, hit by a bus, punched by a prize fighter, trampled by bulls, and submerged in acid, all at the same time. Reality was feeling my body twist and flip when I couldn't possibly move because of the pain. Reality was knowing there was something so much more important than all this torture, and not being able to remember what it was. Reality had come on so fast (Meyer, 2008: 341).

Bella's acquisition of her new self and new femininity within a new body is in accordance with what Mindy Fenske notes in "Movement and Resistance: (Tattooed) Bodies and Performance". Fenske notes that "People who undergo significant body modifications … are engaging in a bodily and spiritual transformation (transcendence) through physical pain. The individual comes to know him/herself through the body" (2007:142). Bella is put in a new understanding of her character which is made possible by knowing herself through the body. She says

> I realized it wasn't the darkness holding me down; it was my body. So heavy. Burying me in the flames that were chewing their way out from my heart now, spreading with impossible pain through my shoulders and stomach, scalding their way up my throat, licking at my face (Meyer, 2008: 347).

Breaking Dawn draws the ultimate phase in which Bella is in more control of her physical resistance to pain. Now she becomes a challenger against pain, not a seeker

of it, in order for a survival that will empower her as a mother, as a protectress, and as a creatrix. She says

I kept pushing against the black, though, almost a reflex. I wasn't trying to lift it. I was just resisting. Not allowing it to crush me completely. I wasn't Atlas, and the black felt as heavy as a planet; I couldn't shoulder it. All I could do was not be entirely obliterated (2008:345).

Although, later on, she seems giving up and wants to die at the utmost torture of the pain (2008:348-350), she gains power and strength, formed within in her new self which is stronger and more attentive. Her transformation is her rebirth within a new body with new qualities. Her new body is reflected as an other in Bella's vision in the mirror:

My first reaction was an unthinking pleasure. The alien creature in the glass was indisputably beautiful, every bit as beautiful as Alice or Esme. She was fluid even in stillness, and her flawless face was pale as the moon against the frame of her dark, heavy hair. Her limbs were smooth and strong, skin glistening subtly, luminous as a pearl. My second reaction was horror. Who was she? At first glance, I couldn't find my face anywhere in the smooth, perfect planes of her features. And her eyes! Though I'd known to expect them, her eyes still sent a thrill of terror through me. All the while I studied and reacted, her face was perfectly composed, a carving of a goddess, showing nothing of the turmoil roiling inside me. And then her full lips moved (Meyer, 2008: 371-372).

Bella's definition of her body situates it within the concept of 'other' which is new and different from her previous self, of 'uncanny' which was once familiar but now different and unfamiliar, of 'abject' and 'the sublime' which indicate the formation of her subjectivity through the subversive body form of a vampire and its sublimity. Bella's politics of body which are embedded with the concepts of 'other', 'abject' and 'sublime', are backgrounded with discourses of beauty ideals. That she wants to become a vampire and have an immortal body which is stunningly beautiful and young indicates the correlations between her beauty discourse and contemporary beauty ideals including aesthetic surgery. What she sees in the mirror is an image analogous to "before-and-after picture" as indicated by Deborah Caslav Covino in *Amending the Abject Body:*"The confrontation between the desiring and the desired self, who I am and who I would become, implies a sort of "before-and-after" picture, analogous to those presented both visually and discursively by the aesthetic surgical industry" (2004: 2).

Behind Bella's beauty discourse lie the discourses of aesthetic surgical industry, yet it is Bella as a free individual who wants to have this "surgical" transformation and create a new "picture" of herself. Covino says that:

> Within the aesthetic surgical imaginary, rejuvenated and redefined flesh stands for an other, an abject, that can be contained, in both senses: present within and brought under control. The aesthetic surgical patient can be secure from, and thus a cut above, the suppressed or menacing conditions of mortality, benefiting from a binary construction of the body in which the good body must be estranged and literally separated from its abject counterpart (2004: 71).

Transformation of Bella's body and its construction within a new identity becomes a means of subversive female sexuality which is explored within abject representation. Its construction within a new identity becomes a means of subversive female sexuality that challenges authoritative male control over female body. Moreover, Bella's sexuality and her pregnant body express the core point of the horror that female body creates within patriarchal ideology. Her sexual drives, her pregnancy and her pregnant body are the emblems of an active female identity. Rather than staying within traditional expectations which force women fit into conventional identity forms that are stable, proper, silent and submissive, Bella constructs her new identity out of boundaries and out of dominant ideology which seek the silence of female voice and desire. Instead of maintaining a proper self, Bella chooses to be improper by choosing to become a vampire and deciding to bear a half human half vampire child. she becomes a speaking subject that creates her identity within the terms of abject. In Powers of Horror, Julia Kristeva associates abject with perversion. She says that "The abject is perverse because it neither gives up nor assumes a prohibition, a rule, or a law; but turns them aside, misleads, corrupts; uses them, takes advantage of them, the better to deny them" (1982:15). Thus abject challenges norms and displays transgression. In her approach to abject, Kristeva points the collapse in meaning, and what she notably signifies in abject is that the abject is "what disturbs identity, system, order. What does not respect borders, positions, rules. The in-between, the ambiguous, the composite" (1982: 4). Taken into consideration with its transgressive characteristics, Bella's pregnant body stays within the borders of the abject. The horror and anxiety that her body creates becomes an emblem of abject disturbing the social order and normal life form.

Put in a marginalized image, her grotesque shape expresses female sexuality that foregrounds transgressive approach to traditional confinements which insist control on female sexuality and desire mechanism. Bella rewrites her identity by turning into a vampire, and she finally gets what she wants:

> After eighteen years of mediocrity, I was pretty used to being average. I realized now that I'd long ago given up any aspirations of shining at anything. I just did the best with what I had, never quite fitting into my world. So this was really different. I was amazing now—to them and to myself. It was like I had been born to be a vampire. The idea made me want to laugh, but it also made me want to sing. I had found my true place in the world, the place I fit, the place I shined (Meyer, 484-485).

Bella identity politics is shaped with her desire mechanism. She knows what she wants in her life and acts according to her freedom of choice. *Breaking Dawn* portrays Bella as a Mother Goddess type who is the source of life and symbol of death and rebirth. Her depiction as a Mother Goddess is written within postfeminist ideology that highlights the female experience as freely chosen practices. In that respect, Mother Goddess who is the symbol of death and rebirth as in Bella's case is rewritten with a postfeminist ideology and neoliberal politics that support individual as a free agent who is active in her choices and desires, and responsible for her self-construction. In line with the postfeminist principles, Mother Goddess, who is only given value for her productivity in a patriarchal ideology, is rewritten with new aspects that prioritize individual needs and desires. Moreover, Bella as a Mother Goddess becomes a leader of her society who displays both maternal qualities and warrior-like characteristics that make her both superior to the rest of the Cullen family and protectress of them.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study has been to explore the deconstruction of the mythical female types represented by the character Bella Swan in Stephenie Meyer's *Twilight* series. This exploration is based on the theory of Deconstruction and supported with the postfeminist approach. The study focuses on the examination of the rewritings of mythical female types under the light of postfeminist ideologies of identity that foreground neoliberal subjectivities. In this respect, concentrated on the emergence of new woman types out of old mythical female types, the study aimed to subvert the male-defined female character and her role in myths, and expressed the transgression of stereotypical roles that are prescribed by men. From this perspective, how Bella Swan deconstructs the stereotypical roles which are submissive and in the service of male desire is examined, and how she rewrites the roles of women in myths in accordance with postfeminist ideology of sexual agency and freedom of choice is scrutinized. Thus it has been argued that each book of the series displays the layers of Bella's transformation process from a simple girl to a powerful woman by subverting the traditional role models in myths. In doing this, Bella Swan displays the characteristics of a free agent who acts within autonomous desire mechanism that objectifies male power and male body in the service of female desire. In that respect, Bella Swan becomes a new and deconstructed version of various mythical female types such as Eve, Psyche, Artemis and Mother Goddess.

Aiming the deconstruction of the traditional role models appointed for women in myths, this study has focused on rereading and rewriting of the gender ideology of myths by approaching them within a postmodern, postfeminist point of view. This deconstructive approach situates the character Bella Swan in Stephenie Meyer's *Twilight* series as a "supplement" to before mentioned female types and their texts. In that respect, Bella Swan becomes a new text of the old ones by renaming and reshaping the female character in myths. This deconstruction de-centers the original idea of women and their roles signified in myths, and erases the presence of stereotyped meaning. Thus it defers the established meaning and differentiates it by distancing it from its origin.

Before the myths are put in written form, roles of women in mythical narrations are grounded on their fecundity. Society is grounded on a matrilocal structure in which the Goddess worship was for the maintenance of the continuity of life and fertility. Woman, associated with earth and its fertility, is provider of food and patroness of social order. Identification of womb is associated with the power of creation. As a result, association of womb and earth indicates the cycles of life. In that respect Goddess is provider of life and rebirth, the core aspect of which is to maintain social welfare within a peaceful condition. Shift in the ideology of matrilocal society starts with the invasions of warrior tribes and societies which infuse brutality and male power into society. Thus, woman-centered culture gives way to a patriarchal one in which woman becomes a subordinated being. With the emergence of male power as authoritative and organizing force, roles of women are determined in accordance with male desire. Accordingly, myths are taken under the control of male authority and put in a written form that produces male hegemony over female character. As a result, women in myths have been valued in terms of their relation to men as their wives, daughters, slaves or mothers. Male authority named and determined the role of women in these narratives. The power of myth has had a great impact in forming Western thought of gender roles that position women on the negative part of male/female dichotomy. As the products of male writers, myths celebrated the glorification of male power as warriors, husbands and rulers while placing women in secondary status that serves male desire and needs. In that respect, women are given an identity from male point of view. Accordingly, myths have become an institutionalized form of behavior regulating and dictating gender roles. Coded role models are dictated through myths, and in the same manner, myths contributed to the continuation of traditions taken and accepted as unchangeable and unquestionably regulatory. In this respect, female as an entity whose identity has undergone negative connotations by means of patriarchal definitions is targeted for in feminist myth criticism. Possession of female sexuality by male authority is one of the central problems that are dealt with, and the degradation of female creative power, which was once worshipped in the maternal aspect of Mother Goddess is scrutinized with postfeminist approach. In that respect, how Bella Swan rewrites a new text out of old texts of mythical female types has been the focus of this study. Consequently, this study aimed to display Bella Swan as a “supplement” to mythical female types by deconstructing them in terms of postmodern politics of self that argues for fluidity and impossibility of a fixed self. Thus, Bella Swan, within a

postfeminist frame, prioritizes individual choice and responsibility free from male impact, and becomes an emblem of changing character of mythical female types. As an emblem of this changing character, Bella Swan becomes the author of her own myth.

The first book of the series, *Twilight*, is scrutinized and presented as a deconstructed postmodern version of the myth of Adam and Eve. Bella alters and deconstructs Eve whose sexuality is regarded to be punished, and embodies a postfeminist type of Eve who acts as a free agent determining her destiny according to her choices. In terms of the politics of choice, Bella becomes a new version of Eve who consciously seeks knowledge and desires to have it for her own benefits. In that respect, Edward Cullen's vampire nature is the forbidden fruit that Bella desires to taste. Issues of female curiosity and sexuality which are considered as central concerns of the myth of Fall are embedded in Bella's character formation as a deconstructed version of Eve. Bella's falling in love with Edward becomes her own Fall. Nevertheless, this Fall is not a falling down in her life, rather it is an outcome of her postfeminist attitude that direct her to the "up for it" identity.

Female sexuality and identity considered to be punished and suppressed as a result of the Fall are the core aspects for Bella in her individuation process. In that respect, Bella becomes a deconstructed version of Eve who actively asserts what she wants. Bella wants to taste the forbidden fruit and desires to "consume" it in order to attain immortality and infinite youth and beauty. *Twilight* marks the beginning of the change in Bella's life. Her transformation process goes on with *New Moon* which explores her subversion of the submissive role model prescribed in the myth of Cupid and Psyche. *New Moon* rewrites the myth of Cupid and Psyche in align with the postmodern ideology of consumer society which foregrounds the manifestation of a postfeminist Bella as a rewriting of the mythical female type of second century A.D. Psyche. While Psyche's awakening femininity is ruled by patriarchal dominance on her fate relating to sexuality and marriage, Bella displays a freer model of postmodern Psyche who builds up her identity based on the politics of individual choice. While the issues of sexuality and marriage are under the guidance of patriarchal dominance in the myth of Psyche, Bella as a postfeminist rewriting of Psyche, displays a freer character that has her own authority on her destiny and body. In that respect, Bella, in a postfeminist manner, is in accordance with her own benefits rather than being in the

service of masculine desire as is the case in myth of Psyche.

Eclipse and *Breaking Dawn* manifest Bella within a more intense politics of postfeminist identity. Bella is put in line with postfeminist sexual politics that seek expressive female desire and sexual subjectivity. She is the postmodern, postfeminist embodiment of the Greek Artemis in *Eclipse*, and of Mother Goddess in *Breaking Dawn*. In her rewriting of these two mythical types, Bella decenters the issues of marriage and maternity within a postfeminist approach. Within this approach, she foregrounds the politics of individual freedom and responsibility that claim the ownership of female body. In relation to that, in *Eclipse*, Goddess Artemis, whose most known characteristic is her independence and her rejection of any monogamous marriage, is subverted by Bella's decision of marriage with Edward. Bella, as the goddess of wildlife that is full of vampires and werewolves, aims to use marriage as a vehicle to her individual targets. In *Breaking Dawn*, She rewrites the myth of Mother Goddess by supplementing her new qualities such as warrior-like characteristics. In line with the postfeminist principles, Mother Goddess, who is only given value for her productivity in a patriarchal ideology, is rewritten with new aspects that prioritize individual needs and desires. She creates a new Mother Goddess type that celebrates the maternity within the terms of abject, chooses to be improper by choosing to become a vampire and deciding to bear a half human half vampire child. Her marginalized body expresses female sexuality that foregrounds transgressive approach to traditional confinements which insist control on female sexuality and desire mechanism.

Consequently, Bella Swan writes her own history of becoming a woman by subscribing various messages in her body and deconstructs the prescribed role models for women by acting in terms of freedom of choice and individual happiness that is underlined by the postfeminist politics of identity throughout the series. In parallel line with the postfeminist approach to female body as a site of individual identity marker, Bella reads her body as a means of transformation and personal achievement. She wants to change it, mold it and use it for her own benefits. Rather than becoming a victim, Bella portrays a transgressing female that uses male power for her own interest and profits. In her deconstruction of mythical female types, Bella creates a new woman type who is an active speaking subject expressive of female sexual desire. In this creation, Bella celebrates the consumption based femininity with a special emphasis on beauty

and youthfulness. Accordingly, she deconstructs mythical female types with a postfeminist ideology celebrating individual choices made by women themselves regarding the issues of social and sexual identity that brings an end to masculine hegemony in descriptions and determinations of preferences on behalf of women.

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