

**NAVIGATING (A)SYMMETRICAL
INTIMACY: A MAGICAL
FEMINIST/POSTCOLONIAL READING OF
ISABEL ALLENDE, LAURA ESQUIVEL AND
NAFISA RIZVI'S FICTION**

By

ZAFAR IQBAL



NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF MODERN LANGUAGES

ISLAMABAD

March, 2022

**NAVIGATING (A)SYMMETRICAL INTIMACY: A
MAGICAL FEMINIST/POSTCOLONIAL READING OF
ISABEL ALLENDE, LAURA ESQUIVEL AND NAFISA
RIZVI'S FICTION**

By

Zafar Iqbal

M. A., Islamia University of Bahawalpur, 1992

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

In English (Literature)

To

FACULTY OF ARTS & HUMANITIES



NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF MODERN LANGUAGES, ISLAMABAD

© Zafar Iqbal, 2023



NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF MODERN LANGUAGES
FACULTY OF ARTS & HUMANITIES

THESIS AND DEFENSE APPROVAL FORM

The undersigned certify that they have read the following thesis, examined the defense, are satisfied with the overall exam performance, and recommend the thesis to the Faculty of Arts & Humanities for acceptance:

Thesis Title: Navigating (A) Symmetrical Intimacy: A Magical Feminist/Postcolonial Reading of Isabel Allende, Laura Esquivel and Nafisa Rizvi's Fiction

Submitted By: Zafar Iqbal

Registration #: (Lit) 592-PhD/Eng/S16

Dr. Sibghatullah Khan

Name of Research Supervisor
Supervisor

Signature of Research

Dr. Inayat Ullah

Name of HoD

Signature of HoD

Prof. Dr. Muhammad Safeer Awan

Name of Dean (FAH)
(FAH)

Signature of Dean

Maj Gen Shahid Mahmood Kayani HI(M), (Retd)

Name of Rector

Signature of Rector

Date

AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

I Zafar Iqbal

Son of Abdul Latif

Registration # (Lit) 592-PhD/Eng/S16

Discipline English (Literature)

Candidate of **Doctor of Philosophy** at the National University of Modern Languages do hereby declare that the thesis **Navigating (A)Symmetrical Intimacy: A Magical Feminist/Postcolonial Reading of Isabel Allende, Laura Esquivel and Nafisa Rizvi's Fiction** submitted by me in partial fulfillment of PhD degree, is my original work, and has not been submitted or published earlier. I also solemnly declare that it shall not, in future, be submitted by me for obtaining any other degree from this or any other university or institution.

I also understand that if evidence of plagiarism is found in my thesis/dissertation at any stage, even after the award of a degree, the work may be cancelled and the degree revoked.

Signature of Candidate

Date

Zafar Iqbal

Name of Candidate

ABSTRACT

Thesis Title: Navigating (A)Symmetrical Intimacy: A Magical Feminist/Postcolonial Reading of Isabel Allende, Laura Esquivel, and Nafisa Rizvi's Fiction

This research explores how magical feminist technique and postcolonial elements are intertwined in Isabel Allende's *The House of the Spirits*, Laura Esquivel's *Like Water for Chocolate*, and Nafisa Rizvi's *The Blue Room*. The research contends that the magical feminist and postcolonial texts contest hegemonic colonial/patriarchal discourses in (a)symmetrical modes. Their mutualism productively interrogates both heteronormative and Eurocentric assumptions to develop an epistemic position that is at once enabling and dismantling. Therefore, this research investigates how, through magical realist techniques in postcolonial feminist textual structures, the ordinary becomes extraordinary and the unbelievable becomes believable. I invoke Patricia Hart's definition of magical feminism as a theoretical lens for analyzing primary texts. Stephen Slemon's notion of "Magic Realism as Post-Colonial Discourse" supports Hart's position in analyzing the selected texts. Moreover, I employ Wendy B. Faris' definitions of magical realism as theoretical support that helps explore the nature and cultural work located in the global South. Since this project is qualitative in nature, I have used Catherine Belsey's concept of textual analysis, and Celena Kusch's "Comparative Analysis" are used as research methods for reading the selected fiction. The findings of this research vindicate that there is (a)symmetrical intimacy between the magical feminist and postcolonial texts selected for this study. The three women writers employ magical realist techniques in their femino-centric texts and resist patriarchal strategies. Moreover, the study also finds concerns regarding the underrepresentation of colonized people in general and women in particular. This research is likely to contribute to the production of knowledge in the magical feminist/postcolonial domains.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

THESIS AND DEFENSE APPROVAL FORM.....	iii
CANDIDATE DECLARATION FORM	iv
ABSTRACT	v
TABLE OF CONTENTS	vi-viii
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS.....	ix
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT.....	x-xi
DEDICATION.....	xii
CHAPTER 1	1
Introduction.....	1
1.1 Introduction.....	1
1.2 Locating Isabel Allende, Laura Esquivel, and Nafisa Rizvi’s fiction in Colonial/Imperial, Postcolonial Feminist, and Magical Realist Literary Tradition ...	16
1.3 Situatedness of the Researcher.....	37
1.4 Delimitation of the Study.....	38
1.5 Thesis Statement.....	39
1.6 Research Questions.....	39
1.7 Research Plan.....	39
1.8 Significance of the Study.....	41
CHAPTER 2	43
Literature Review	43
2.1 Introduction.....	43
2.2 Critical Scholarship on Magical Realism.....	43
2.3 Critical Sources on Postcolonial Feminism	71
2.4 Works Already done in this Study	85
2.5 Conclusion	87
CHAPTER 3	89
Theoretical Framework and Research Methodology	89
3.1 Introduction.....	89
3.2 Theoretical Framework.....	89
3.2.1. A Rationale for Patricia Hart’s Concept of Magical Feminism.....	90
3.2.2. Stephen Slemon’s Theorizing on Magic Realism as Postcolonial Discourse ..	93
3.2.3. Wendy B. Faris: Defining Magical Realism	98

3.3 Research Methodology	99
3.4 Conclusion	103
CHAPTER 4	100
<i>Clairvoyance at Work: Isabel Allende's The House of the Spirits</i>	
4.1 Introduction.....	100
4.2 Navigating Features of Magical Feminism	108
4.3 Patriarchal Oppression and Exploitation of Women.....	110
4.3.1. Shades of Patriarchy and Aspects of Resistance	115
4.3.2. Women's Reproductive and Biological Issues	119
4.4 Intersections of Race, Class, and Gender.....	120
4.5 Exploring Magical Realism.....	126
4.6 Magical Realism as a Mode of Socio-political Critique	156
4.7 Conclusion	160
CHAPTER 5	162
A tinkling sensation: A Textual Analysis of Laura Esquivel's <i>Like Water for Chocolate</i>	
5.1 Introduction.....	162
5.2 Interbraiding Magical Realist/Feminist Elements.....	165
5.3 Mama Elena as an Embodiment of Patriarchal Thinking.....	167
5.4 Affirming Female Sexual Autonomy.....	173
5.5 The Discourse of Absence and Silence	180
5.6 Euro-centric Tilt.....	182
5.7 Alterity, Race, Class, and Gender	184
5.8 Elements of Magical Realism	189
5.9 Conclusion	220
CHAPTER 6	222
[W]alk-talk club: Nafisa Rizvi's <i>The Blue Room</i>.....	
6.1 Introduction.....	222
6.2 Magical Feminist Features	224
6.2.1. Zaib as a Clairvoyant.....	226
6.2.2. Domestication of Women.....	232
6.2.3. Femino-centric Elements.....	248
6.3 Elements of Postcoloniality.....	250
6.4 Religious Malpractices.....	256
6.5 Postcolonial Magical Realist/Feminist Technique as a Social Critique	258

6.6 Tracing Magical Realist Elements	259
6.6.1. Marvelous Realism	273
6.6.2. Black Magic Practice and Fortune Telling	278
6.6.3. Defamiliarization	280
6.7 Fables and Myths	281
6.8 Conclusion	284
CHAPTER 7	285
Conclusion.....	
7.1 Recommendations for Future Research	291
WORKS CITED.....	294-300

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<i>THS</i>	<i>The House of the Spirits</i>
<i>LWC</i>	<i>Like Water for Chocolate</i>
<i>TBR</i>	<i>The Blue Room</i>
IMF	International Monetary Fund
WB	World Bank
OED	<i>Oxford English Dictionary</i>
BRE	<i>Benet's Reader Encyclopedia</i>

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

First, I am grateful to Allah Almighty for His countless blessings. Allah (SWT) gave me the strength and consistency to translate my dream and complete this gigantic project. He helped me get through the stress, move back with my family, and have a normal routine life. Throughout the journey, there were special “Nazr-e-Karam” of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (صلى الله عليه وسلم), countless “Darood-o-Salam” on Muhammad ﷺ and “آل محمد” ﷺ.

Foremost among those to whom I owe gratitude is my supervisor, Dr. Sibghatullah Khan, whose invaluable advice, unwavering support, and boundless patience have been pillars of strength throughout my doctoral journey. His profound expertise and extensive experience have served as a beacon, guiding my academic pursuits. Dr. Sibghatullah's steadfast guidance, from the initial refinement of my research proposal to the culmination of my thesis, merits commendation. His reservoir of wisdom has been pivotal in shaping my academic trajectory, making him my mentor and a perpetual source of inspiration in academia.

I want to extend my sincere thanks to my Ph.D. foreign examiners, Daniel R. Schwarz and Geoff Boucher, and my internal examiners, Dr. Inayat Ullah, Dr. Saleem Akhtar Khan, Dr. Shahzeb Khan, Dr. Uzma A. Ansari, Dr. Yasir Arafat, and Dr. Sana R. Chaudhry, for providing valuable feedback and thought-provoking questions. Their insights have improved the quality of my Ph.D. dissertation draft.

I am thankful to all my Ph.D. coursework teachers who introduced me to different avenues of knowledge at NUML. I am equally obliged to the Dean (Prof. Dr. Muhammad Safer Awan), HoD (Dr. Inayat Ullah), and Ph.D. coordinators (Dr Khuram Shahzad and Dr Muhammad Haseeb Nasir) and their staff for the smooth process.

Words cannot express my gratitude to Dr. Synthia Margareta Tompkins, my host supervisor at Arizona State University, USA. Her regular meetings and constant feedback

on my work proved valuable in improving the quality of my work. This visit helped me collect relevant material from different libraries in the USA. Many thanks to the HEC of Pakistan for awarding me a scholarship. I could not have undertaken this journey to the USA without the support of HEC's IRSIP fellowship program.

Completing my dissertation would not have been possible without the endless prayers of my beloved mother (late). She always motivated me to go the extra mile to complete it. I am deeply indebted to my father, who kindled the flame for education, learning, and knowledge. His dream always motivated me to translate, and he wanted to see me excel academically and intellectually. I am happy to see him as a happy and proud father.

I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to my children, especially my daughter Ayesha Zafar, whom I could not give quality time to and take her on outings. I want to register my special thanks to my son Wajeeh Zafar, who was ever ready to extend his technical support whenever I needed it. I would also like to thank my sisters and brothers; without whose support this would not have been possible. I would also like to acknowledge special thanks to my mother-in-law and brothers-in-law for their concerns and prayers.

I am extremely indebted to Mr. Muhammad Suhail, my dearly loved cousin, for his constant support. He sent me dozens of books from the USA and helped me in so many ways.

I also want to extend my special thanks to Dr. Faisal Sukhara, Mr. Muhammad Ali, (Assistant Director FDE), Dr. Ajmal Gulzar (Chairman Dept. English AIOU), Mr. Asim, Najam Bhai (USA), my students for their moral support and encouragement.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my caring wife, *Afshan Zafar* whose unflinching support, patience, and sacrifice made this thesis possible. I will never be able to thank her enough for her sacrifices throughout this process.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This research explores the interbraiding of magical feminist technique and postcolonial elements in Isabel Allende's *The House of the Spirits* (*THS*), Laura Esquivel's *Like Water for Chocolate* (*LWC*), and Nafisa Rizvi's *The Blue Room*¹ (*TBR*). I argue that there is an (a)symmetrical intimacy between magical feminist and postcolonial aspects in the texts selected for this research. As the parenthetical 'A' in the title indicates, the common concerns of magical feminism and postcolonialism outnumber the few differences that surface because of gender. This line of argument is my basic research premise that motivates me to first largely look for symmetrical intimacy and few differences between the approaches of magical feminist and postcolonial writers.

I have adapted the term (a)symmetrical intimacy from Spivak's essay "Burden of English," which is included in her book, *An Esthetic Education in the Era of Globalization*. In this essay, she discusses the implications of the spread of English as a global language. Spivak argues that the global spread of English, often due to colonization, can lead to a form of intimacy between the colonizer and the colonized. However, this intimacy is "asymmetrical" because it is marked by power imbalances, with the dominant culture imposing its language and norms on the subjugated culture. According to Spivak, "[I]n the postcolonial context, the teaching of English literature can become critical only if it is intimately yoked to the teaching of literary or cultural production in the mother tongue(s). In that persistently asymmetrical intimacy, the topos of language learning, in its various forms, can become a particularly productive site" (52). According to her, the use of English can create a sense of intimacy or familiarity between different cultures, but this

¹ Henceforth, instead of using the complete names of my primary texts, I have used abbreviations of the three novels, *THS*, *LWC*, and *TBR* respectively across my thesis.

intimacy is not equal. It involves a power dynamic where the colonizer's language becomes a tool of dominance and control. Spivak's work often emphasizes the need to critically examine the power structures inherent in language, literature, and cultural interactions. She has used it in the postcolonial context of the colonizer and the colonized.

In contrast, I used colonization in the context of the study, that the characters of my primary texts are (internally) colonized. I have appropriated it for the sake of my argument. I argue that there is largely a symmetrical intimacy between magical realism and postcolonialism. I am putting (a)within whereas Spivak has used the term asymmetrical without parenthesis. Their relationship is symbiotic because of their overlapping concerns. Since the presence of common grounds between magical feminism and postcolonialism is larger in number in the selected texts, "symmetrical intimacy" in the thesis title is not parenthetical. (A)symmetrical means largely they are symmetrical, but sometimes there are some notes of disagreement. It has been observed that postcolonial writers are categorical, whereas magical realists are ironic in their tone. The employment of magical elements in the text of *THS* dilutes the political aspect. Similarly, in Esquivel's *LWC* is a compromised text. She talks about it suggestively as if the Mexican Revolution was not a great, significant historical event.

I argue that postcolonial writers operate with an essentialist view and write in terms of binaries. They largely write in a writing-back and dissenting mode, whereas magical realist writers are indirect and ironic in their tone. Their writings are apparently not considered political, and they usually engage readers with fantastical and magical features. This investigation has three texts on board that carry both magical feminist and postcolonial elements simultaneously. This helps me move my argument on the relative intimacy between the magical feminist and postcolonial. It is instructive to substantiate this line of thought with the help of my selected texts and other critical sources.

In the political discussion in *THS*, Allende uses fictional names and adds fantastical details that dilute the real and reactionary stance in Chilean historical discourse. Bower notes that "many critics see that the use of magical realism in the novel weakens the political content" (72). Zamora and Faris (1997) mention several repeating elements or

characteristics in magical realist texts. The three women writers whose texts are under scrutiny in this study have these magical realist features. In this regard, I may say (if not all), but at least three women writers, Rizvi, Allende, and Esquivel, have these magical realist features. Zamora and Faris state in their edited book, *Magical Realism: Theory, History and Community*:

[M]agical realism is a mode suited to exploring — and transgressing — boundaries, whether the boundaries are ontological, political, geographical, or generic. Magic realism often facilitates the fusion, or coexistence, of possible worlds, spaces, systems that would be irreconcilable in other modes of fiction [T]here are boundaries to be erased, transgressed, blurred, brought together, or otherwise fundamentally refashioned in magical realist texts. (5-6)

The resistance in politically charged magical realist texts is somewhat frail as compared to postcolonial texts. Moreover, this research tries to appreciate how real and unreal, natural and supernatural lend a matter-of-fact setting in the primary texts. Magic and reality are blurred which unsettles the reader to draw a clear-cut distinction between real and magical. The writers of the three selected texts present postcolonial societies as places where people think that miracles are real and superior to science. They tend to believe them a ‘healing activity’. Though many segments of Western society believe in miracles and superstitions, postcolonial societies are relatively more inclined towards these things. It is something additional to empirical activity. In magical realist texts, the supernatural is presented without explanation, as if nothing extraordinary has happened; dreams, ghosts, folk tales, myths, and other supernatural and fantastic elements are celebrated as ordinary. Amaryll Chanady supports this argument in her *Magic Realism Revisited* (2003).

The rhetorical, figurative, and narrative strategies make the text magical. Magic realism uses certain structuring principles of the “magical worldview, that is, a number of its textual strategies can metaphorically be called magical” (Benyei 159). The strategies of supernaturalization and defamiliarization employed by the magical feminist writers are not an escape to give rational justification for the real or unreal; rather, the stratagem is invoked

to create a rhetorical magical effect produced by the narrative technique. Hyperbole is also employed as a rhetorical narrative strategy to exhibit events that are not impossible but are considered improbable and interpreted as coincidences or repetitions. I argue that magical writers employ certain narrative techniques, such as hyperbole, defamiliarization, supernaturalization, metaphorical mimesis, and hybridity, that lend the texts magical quality.

The (re)imagining history is a kind of (re)claiming history. It is the job of a postcolonial writer to retrospect and recollect “What came before colonial rule? It is reimagining and reclaiming the history of the colonial people and societies. What indigenous ideologies, practices, and hierarchies existed alongside colonialism and interacted with it?” (Lomba 17). This means colonial history, which remains under erasure in the canonical texts. The history of oppression and exploitation of human resources and their material. Postcolonial writers have a fair idea of colonial history. Postcolonial writers visualize or reimagine precolonial history through their retrospective eye and the availability of oral culture; they try to recapture the culture before and after colonial invasion and intervention. They try to reimagine and reclaim their language and culture, which is a matter of identity and pride for them. For instance, it may be said that it is the Western feminist movement that has inspired the third world/postcolonial feminist writers to re-write their own indigenous histories and appropriate pre-colonial signs, symbols, and myths to recuperate the voice of the oppressed women. Postcolonial feminist writers try to unearth and revive pre-colonial women-friendly traditions and institutions (global sisterhood) eroded under colonialism.

In this regard, magical feminist postcolonial texts play a symmetrical role in decolonizing and destabilizing the established hegemonic structures of power, patriarchy, agency, autonomy, and control. The magical feminist postcolonial texts also question discriminatory Western assumptions. This research deals with the postcolonial reading of the texts; therefore, the texts may be read in binaries like Eurocentric vs. resistive. As most postcolonial writers have been educated and trained in the Western academy, the 'privileged' writers enjoy sufficient double consciousness of their respective regions' colonial and postcolonial history. The tension throughout the texts fluctuates from colonial

to postcolonial consciousness and vice versa. I argue that magical realist feminist postcolonial texts accomplish two-fold purposes of representation and subversion. The study also intends to examine whether the magical realist/feminist texts are written in colonial, neocolonial, and postcolonial contexts, recording the history of trauma, oppression, and exploitation of the marginalized class. The texts also attempt to find the gaps, absences, and silences in realist texts through fables, myths, and allegories.

Magical feminist postcolonial texts, for instance, try to deconstruct those overloaded Western assumptions of conception and representation of colonial objects and bring them from the object positions to subjective agentive positions. The characters Blanca (*THS*), Tita (*LWC*), and, Zaib (*TBR*) are fine examples who interrogate assumptions of patriarchy and other grand social structures like religion, marriage, and family. Moreover, I argue that the magical realist/feminist postcolonial texts provide a critique to socio-political institutions like marriage, family, religion, and patriarchy. Although patriarchy has already been established in the academy, I do it in my selected works. I do not focus only on racism and classicism I have magical and feminist concerns also. I have not looked at racism and classism in isolation. I contextualize in my analysis chapters how patriarchy operates and affects the socio-economic, political, and emotional bearing of the characters in the three texts, especially with reference to *TBR*, the protagonists like Murtaza, Zaib, Sumer, Lala Rukh, Ayesha and Bano are its victim. These texts delegitimize Western hegemonic political, cultural, intellectual, and economic policies and practices that marginalize postcolonial subjects and societies. Furthermore, Latin American and other magical postcolonial writers endeavor to re-present their own culture through writing. According to Asturias, “magical realism positions itself as a postcolonial, anti-imperialist and intercultural practice — are merely an autonomous literary practice— —that revalorizes marginalized cultures, and conceptualizes Latin American identity as heterogeneous and hybrid, and exclusively Western” (57-58). I argue that Allende, Esquivel, and Rizvi give a compassionate representation of the “inner world” and mythico-magical world view of the native folks and expose the neo-imperial malpractices of the Western world towards the ostracized societies. Furthermore, magical realism highlights marginality, free play of imagination, social critique, and unpredictability of human conditions.

In the magical realist texts, magic is representational or mimetic of the real. So, a copy of the real can be linked to the art of the other and become other of the real, alienating from the 'self.' In other words, it is a hybrid which subverts dominant authority structures. It also becomes a kind of counter-discourse and anti-hegemonic writing style, making it symmetrical to postcoloniality. The First World (colonizer) associates the magic(al) with the mystical and mysterious (the colonized third world), whereas the real is considered imperial and rational. I argue that othering is produced through the colonial discourse. The postcolonial hardly forget colonial exploitation that seriously affects their psychology and social attitudes. Terry Eagleton (1994) draws the reader's attention to an important point regarding postcolonialism, "in postcolonial thought, one is allowed to talk about cultural differences, but not—or not much—about economic exploitation" (xiv). Loomba states, "Modern colonialism did more than extract tribute, goods and wealth from the countries that it conquered it restructured the economies of the later (imperial/colonial), drawing them into a complex relationship with their own so that there was a flow of human and natural resources between colonized and colonial countries" (3). Because of the burden of colonial oppression on their collective unconscious, they developed faith in the magical and regarded it as a healing activity. They seem to find no difference between the magical and the real. For them, the magical is something additional to empirical activity. In this regard, they do not find the term 'magical real' conflicting.

Binarism is a key concept in postcolonial theory. 'Magical real' is also an oxymoronic term corresponding to the binarism of the Third World and the First World. This binary highlights the difference between two worldviews: margin and center, self and other, civilized and primitive, good and evil, and moral and immoral. According to Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin, the structure and construct may be read "downwards as well as across, so that colonizer, white, human and beautiful are collectively opposed to colonized, black, bestial and ugly" (25). Furthermore, the binaries help us understand how the West, through epistemic violence and colonial discourse, has established and constructed a Eurocentric myth that primitives lack rationality, order, and culture. In contrast, the First World (Euro-American) stands for science, rationality, understanding, and industry.

The majority of feminist postcolonial theorists' view that women of the low class and race in the third world are often under-represented. This very feature is critically viewed by numerous postcolonial feminist critics (Carby 1982; Mohanty 1984; and Suleri 1992) for ignoring issues of class, race, and gender. Mohanty criticizes Western feminists for their 'failing' to appreciate the issue of class:

[T]he assumption that all of us of the same gender, across classes and cultures, are somehow socially constituted as a homogeneous group identified prior to the process of analysis Thus, the discursively consensual homogeneity of 'women' as a group is mistaken for historically specific material reality of groups of women. (Mohanty 338)

Women of the Third World are multiply marginalized because they have to face diverse issues of race, class, gender, identity, sexuality, and representation. I have cited examples from the primary texts in my analysis chapters. The third world women are stereotyped as passive, subordinate, domesticated, objectified, and commodified. Moreover, patriarchy has romantically portrayed them in some texts as "Angel(s) in the House"² in order to restrict them to the four walls of the house.

Patriarchal discourse assumes that a woman's main concern is to take care of her husband in all respects, rear children, and look after the 'home.' According to Delphy, "the exploitation of women's labour in the home is the cornerstone of their oppression by men" (74). Married women are their husband's helpmates. Moreover, the signs of racial otherness become influential in the making of a (transgressive) female sexuality. The racial discrimination becomes quite obvious when Gertrudis is detached from culinary skills because she is the daughter of a mulatto; she is highly sensual and sexual as black hot blood running through her veins, her elopement with one of her own — mestizo revolutionary

² The term refers to the Victorian poet Coventry Patmore's poem, "The Angel in the House." He refers to women generically as 'Angel in the House' who embodies Victorian feminine qualities such as submitting herself selflessly and devotedly to her husband and children. He has written this poem in the memorial of his deceased wife.

certifies her unbridled sexuality (Zubiaurre 46). In Muslim societies, women are constructed, located, and empowered in familial relations, like mothers, sisters, wives, and daughters, whereas, in African, Native American, and Latin American societies and somewhat Pakistani women, are socially placed in traditional roles: sexually battered, victim of domestic violence and barred from decision making. In the three primary texts, women get empowered through clairvoyance and culinary skills. For Tita, the kitchen is a security zone, a secluded wall that offers protection similar to the maternal womb; whatever lies outside sounds frightening. She was born on a kitchen table and derives satisfaction and protection in the safe home — kitchen. She converted her weakness and limited knowledge into strength. She creates space and enters into people’s hearts through sumptuous dinners. In the novel, the kitchen becomes a spiritual locus rather than a sexual or sensual corner of the house (Zubiaurre 35-36). Esquivel simultaneously uses the kitchen as a place/symbol of empowerment, domestication, and repression. Their domestication in the name of kitchen and household duties reduces their agency. Dobrian notes the kitchen “a site for the production of discourse of the triply marginalized: the Indian, the servant, the woman” (60).

Some women characters like Nivea and Clara, Mama Elena, Qurat ul Ain, Jahanara, and Jamila enjoy the privileged position of motherhood. They hold commanding positions, but, at the same time, they are largely dependent on patriarchy (husbands/fathers). They go through multiple shifting identities in order to eventually become agentive subjects. The rape of the native women by the colonizer (white men) is employed as a weapon of political repression and racial-sexual oppression on native women of low class (Tyagi 48). I locate elements of racism and classism in my primary texts. The portrayal of Native American people in general and women in particular in the primary texts are not presented in a positive light. Afro-Americans, Native Americans, and Latin Americans are painted as if they are sex workers and misfits for other jobs. Bowden and Mummery use the term “sex-workers” in *Understanding Feminism* (81). The discussion regarding prostitution reinforces the idea of mis/under/representation and of Afro/Native/Latin American people. Bowden and Mummery argue in the background of slavery and colonialism:

Colonialism and slavery produce perceptions of black women and women of color

as available for sexual use . . . as being highly sexed than white women (and therefore able to take more roughing up) and of Asian women being sexually compliant; the way fashion industry still presents black women as “animalistic” or “wild” (78).

In Allende’s *THS*, there is a great deal of discussion on the prostitution industry. Transito Soto (owner of the brothel) tells Trueba that “the cooperative of whores and homosexuals had done stupendously well for ten years, but that times had changed and they had had to give new twists” (463).

The protagonists, in particular, and the other women of the three selected novels, in general, remain under strict surveillance. Tita remains under strict surveillance, which has seriously affected her identity and subjectivity. Undue surveillance generates a tremendous amount of trepidation and an inferiority complex among women. It is a kind of metaphoric displacement or Othering that splits one’s self. Through the patriarchal gaze, one’s identity is constituted, indicating power in a relationship. The protagonists and other women in *THS*, *LWC*, and *TBR* are victims of patriarchal surveillance. Women in the three novels have been through multiple shifting identities. They move from object position to agentive postcolonial subjects. In the beginning, they remain under patriarchal surveillance and oppression. Later, they challenge patriarchal authority and exert agency in their diverse capacities. So, the statement is not contradictory. The protagonists (Clara, Alba, Blanca, Tita, Gertrudis, and Zaib) behave differently in different situations.

Unlike (a)symmetrical intimacy between magical feminist and postcolonial texts, we find symmetrical intimacy between feminist and postcolonial theory. The two theories work in subverting grand structures and bringing agency to the Third World people, especially women. When I use the term grand structures, I mean the structures of patriarchy and white supremacy. In this regard, it is through language that grand structures are constructed, deconstructed, and subverted. This research also investigates whether marriage and joint family system institutions are oppressive or humane. The institution of marriage is desecrated and abused. The love takes a new shape, as Frucht states, “In this process the domestic peace and happiness where our love making is familiar as breathing: gentle and soothing, moist, uncomplicated, lengthy” disintegrates into a situation where I

could not feel anything at all” because it feels as if the love itself were lifted away” (33, 102-3).

The (a)symmetrical element is also built-in within Third World and First World feminism. The feminist scholarship of the First World deliberately ignores the Third World women who belong to different social strata, ethnic, racial, and geographical locations. The First World feminist is mistaken in constructing the Third World women as monolithically universalized and essentialized regardless of their socioeconomic and cultural status. Mohanty is critical of the construction and representation of Third World women for certain reasons. She argues that “Western feminist writing on women in the Third World must be considered in the context of the global hegemony of Western scholarship—i.e., the production, publication, distribution, and consumption of information and ideas. Marginal or not, this writing has political effects and implications beyond the immediate feminist or disciplinary audience” (Mohanty 55). At the same time, Mohanty claims that the production of the images of the “third world woman” as always and everywhere oppressed in what sustains the illusion of “first world” women’s autonomy: the assumption that they are secular, liberated, and hav[e] control over their own lives” (53). Though they may share some similarities, they cannot be bracketed as unified, single, and coherent others. This kind of construction engenders their marginalization and ghettoization. Mohanty is critical of “the assumption of women as an already constituted, coherent group with identical interests and desires, regardless of class, ethnic or racial location or contradictions, implies a notion of gender or sexual difference or even patriarchy (as male dominance — men as a correspondingly coherent group) which can be applied universally and cross-culturally” (qtd. in Ashcroft et al., 265). This objective is achieved through colonial discourse, stereotyping, and global hegemonic scholarship and its dissemination. This politics in the background robs women of their agentive subjectivity. First World feminism mostly focuses on economic issues, leaving other socio-cultural issues of the Third World women. I have discussed it in detail under the heading “Critical Sources on Postcolonial Feminism,” chapter 2.

This research further investigates how colonial and patriarchal oppression operates in different geographical locations such as Chile, Mexico, and Pakistan. It examines how

women are gender constructed socially, culturally, and linguistically. Schneider and Foss claim that “English is biased in favor of the male and in both syntax and semantics” (1). Language is man-made. Man monopolizes and regulates society through language. In this way, women remain outsiders and borrowers of the language. Rowbotham argues that, “this borrowing restricts women by affirming their own dependence upon the words of the powerful [patriarchy]” (32). Moreover, how language has been used as a tool in subverting their identities. Schulz observes that it is through language there is “systematic, semantic derogation of women” (qtd. in Spender 16). Moreover, how language has been used as a tool in subverting their identities. It also interrogates how they are confined to private space (kitchen or home) to curtail their subjective agency and reduce them to domestic roles. This reductionist policy seriously affects their socio-economic being. Women, especially native women, are presented as a commodity to be used, and abused in most canonical texts.

It would be appropriate to briefly mention the theoretical lenses I have used as props to read my selected primary texts. In this regard, Patricia Hart and Stephen Slemon are the leading theorists, whereas Wendy B. Faris is a supporting theorist whose theoretical position helps appreciate magical realism. The credit for the coinage of the term magical feminism goes to Patricia Hart. She applies the term magical feminism to Allende’s novels; the term is equally applicable to the other two selected magical feminist texts, *LWC* and *THS*. Patricia Hart argues that as the text is femino-centric therefore, it justifies being termed as a magical feminist rather than a magical realist. I have also invoked Stephen Slemon’s notions, who claim that magical realist texts may be read as a postcolonial discourse because of their shared symmetrical intimacy and symbiotic relationship.

After reading the primary texts of the selected women writers, the reader gets the impression that either women are misrepresented or underrepresented. Reading is not passive; the reader is constantly engaged and conducts dialogue with the text. It moves and transports the reader. Moreover, Patricia Hart’s definition helps me understand women’s feelings. She expresses dissatisfaction with the conventional definitions of feminism because other definitions ignore “the vast emotional charge that accompanies the word,

evoking freedom of choice (30).

Women writers generally write on the marginal representation of women. The fiction of the three selected writers attempts to counter phallogocentric discourse. I assume that Allende, Esquivel, and Rizvi question patriarchy in their texts and remind male writers that they cannot represent women's biological issues like menstruation, abortion, pregnancy, and menopause because of their differential experiences. Moreover, the texts engage with feminist postcolonial issues like race, gender, class, identity, and cultural nostalgia. Similarly, Rizvi's *TBR* can be located within the magical feminist literary tradition and may be conveniently compared to Allende and Esquivel's fiction. I have alluded to it in my introductory and three analysis chapters. The protagonists of the three novels possess the magical power of clairvoyance, especially Zaib and Clara. They can predict and read the aura of evil characters like Adeel, Jalal, and Father Restrepo. The power of clairvoyance, telepathy, and other power sources enfranchise women virtually because it fades gradually by the end of the novels. Tita has her brand of clairvoyance, that is, her culinary power.

The reader finds that the three female writers have deployed magical realist techniques of hyperbole, defamiliarization, grotesque, and narrative magic in their texts. In hyperbole, a statement, information, or feeling is exaggerated intentionally to make a point (not meant to be taken literally) or create some humor. In defamiliarization, familiar things are presented in an estranged way; in other words, it is an artistic articulation of alienation. As far as the grotesque is concerned, Michael Hollington explains the idea in *The Tin Drum*: "grotesque representation of distorted forms . . . challenge our conventional notions of normal reality. The world of everyday reality is 'made strange'; the strange and the fantastical is presented in a matter-of-fact way as if it were common place (qtd. in Faris 224). There is also magic of the book(s) which is narrative magic. Clairvoyance serves as a narrative magic. The shrinking of Esteban Trueba is a fine illustration of narrative magic. Narrative magic may be termed as epistemological magical realism. I have discussed and located the magical realist techniques in my analysis chapters in detail. Allende and Esquivel in particular make effective use of it in their fiction.

After reading Allende's *THS*, the reader finds that in dictatorial regimes human rights are violated. Postcolonial magical realist texts are socio-political critiques. They highlight the colonial, imperial, and hegemonic policies of superpowers. Allende criticizes the USA's subtle intervention, toppling an elected government of Salvador Allende, and imposing an oppressive dictatorial regime of General Augusto Pinochet resulted in human rights violations. Allende exclusively allocates two chapters (13, 14) giving a detailed description of human rights violations in dictatorial regimes (407- 68), whereas Laura Esquivel discusses the Mexican revolution passingly. In Rizvi's *TBR*, we do not find a dictatorial regime in the real sense but people are internally colonized (224). I discuss it in detail in analysis chapter 4.

In the forthcoming discussion, I discuss my selection of the three primary texts and their cultural symmetry and rationalization of looping Pakistan in this trio of cultural 'symmetrical' postcolonial states.

Like Mexican and Chilean texts, the Pakistani text also has a marginal, global South location. Another reason for including the Pakistani text in the trio is because it presents the cultural values and societal attitudes that it shares with other two texts in terms of their locations in the postcolonial and predominantly patriarchal societies. Another reason for looping Rizvi's text with those of Allende and Esquivel is magical feminist concerns that it shares with them. To add, the magical feminist elements have parallels with the postcolonial issues represented in all three texts. In a way, women and the once-colonized natives have shared positions of disenfranchisement. On this basis, symmetrical intimacy is more pronounced in these texts than (a)symmetrical intimacy, which is vindicated through a few differences that I have highlighted in my analysis chapters, particularly in *The Blue Room*, because I have analyzed it in the end. Though the Pakistani text does not share the geographical arc with the Mexican and Chilean texts, the commonalities of the patriarchal, postcolonial, and magical feminist themes provide a justification to loop them for this study.

To crystalize my argument, I attempt to explain the controlling terms of my argument under the following subheadings.

- Magical Realism

I have historically traced and defined magical realism in my introductory chapter. There are numerous definitions of magical realism. It is a challenging task to define and fix its meaning(s) and usage. Different critics use magical realism in different contexts. I have tried contextualizing the terms in magical realist, postcolonial, and feminist contexts. To some critics, it is used as a hybrid term. They believe in the comingling and coexistence of the two worlds. Geoff Hancock defines magical realism as a “conjunction of the two worlds — the magical and the realist” (7). This is how multiple cultures of the global South are represented through magical realist texts. According to Bower:

Magical realism has different meanings, it refers to any extraordinary occurrence and particularly to anything spiritual or unaccountable by rational science. The variety of magical occurrences in magic(al) realist writing includes ghosts, disappearances, miracles, extraordinary talents and strange atmospheres but does not include the magic as it is found in a magic show. (19)

The definitions mentioned above make it clear that magical realism's meanings are not fixed. The scarcity of space and scope hardly allow me to discuss them in detail. A detailed discussion can be found in the theoretical framework and analysis chapters. Second, the introductory chapter serves as a synopsis.

- Magical Feminism and Magical Feminist Postcolonial

Patricia Hart is the coiner of “magical feminism.” She wants a definition that is free from “femino- cultural imperialism”. To her, “magical feminism” is “magical realism” employed in a femino- centric work or one that is especially insightful into the condition of women” (Hart 32). It is a feminist subgenre of magical realism. It refers to magical realism in a feminist discourse. It suits the writers who write in a postcolonial context for voicing the unvoiced. In magical feminism, narrative strategies (defamiliarization, hyperbole, grotesque, and supernaturalization) undermine patriarchal domination and suppression. In magical feminism, ‘ontological disruption serves the purpose of political and cultural disruption: magic is often given as a cultural corrective, requiring readers to

scrutinize accepted realistic conventions of causality, materiality, motivation' (Zamora and Faris 3). Magical feminism draws our attention to have a close look at the discrepancies, ugliness, abnormalities, and pain experienced by women. Magical elements of magical realism are employed in feminist discourse.

The three women writers belong to the magical realist genre. They share and focus on women's issues and their perceptions of reality, which makes them magical feminists. The three novels *THS*, *LWC*, and *TBR* are femino-centric texts (focus on women's experiences), which Elaine Showalter calls 'gynocriticism'. In a similar vein is the opinion of Faris: "While works by women authors such Isabel Allende, Toni Morrison, Laura Esquivel, [and others], have used magical realism in novels that are centered on women's experience and women's problems, there is no single definable feminist ideology that joins them" (172). When I use to the term 'magical feminist postcolonial, I refer to the texts having of magical realist/feminist postcolonial elements. In postcolonial debate, the issues are of class, race, gender, and othering.

- Symmetrical Intimacy Vs (A)symmetrical Intimacy

Symmetrical means harmonious and concordant. Magical feminism and postcolonialism are mutualistic and reinforce each other. Their relationship is symbiotic because of their overlapping concerns. Since the presence of common grounds between magical feminism and postcolonialism is larger in number in the selected texts, "symmetrical intimacy" in the thesis title is not parenthetical. Whereas 'A' in "(A)symmetrical" is within parenthesis because it shows a relatively lower level of discordance between the two. The term 'symmetrical intimacy' may be explained in the light of different critics. According to Bower:

[T]here are variety of themes overlap between magical feminism and postcolonialism that lend symmetrical intimacy like, anti-imperialism, cross culturalism, or the friction between the writing of pragmatic European Western culture and oral, mythic based cultures. What locates these writers politically is their narrative position outside the dominant power structures and cultural enterers. (48)

There is a symmetrical intimacy between magical realism and feminism. Feminism attempts to liberate itself from naturalized patriarchal notions (Selden, Raman, Peter Widdowson and Peter Brooker 115); simultaneously, magical realism also contributes in the process of “patriarchal culture’s disenchantment with itself” (Faris 4). Magical realist texts share symmetrical intimacy because feminist postcolonial issues are embedded well to say aloud the problems women experience around the globe in general and postcolonial locations in particular.

It means they are largely symmetrical, but sometimes there are some notes of disagreement. It has been observed that postcolonial writers are categorical, whereas magical realists are ironic in their tenor. The employment of magical elements in the text of *THS* dilutes political implications.

The following section locates the primary texts in the magical realist and feminist postcolonial literary tradition.

1.2 Locating Isabel Allende, Laura Esquivel, and Nafisa Rizvi’s fiction in Colonial/Imperial, Postcolonial Feminist, and Magical Realist Literary Tradition

(I)

To locate my primary texts in the magical feminist/realist postcolonial literary tradition, I have divided this section into three parts. Part (I) traces the trajectories of Colonialism, Postcolonialism, and Imperialism. Part (II) discusses the common grounds between Magical Feminism and Postcolonialism. Part (III) engages with Magical Realism's origin and historical progression. I discuss the first part in the forthcoming pages.

- Colonialism, Postcolonialism to Neo-Colonialism

According to *OED*, the etymology of the word colonialism comes from the Roman ‘Colonia’ which means ‘farm or ‘settlement’. If the term is oversimplified, it may be defined as invasion and control of other people’s land and belongings (Loomba 1). The following lines demonstrate a clear-cut division between the colonizer and the colonized.

Esteban Trueba assumes the role of a colonizer and messianic. He speaks his colonial mindset in the following words:

Bolshevik's ideas are designed to turn the tenants against me. What they don't realize is that these poor people are completely ignorant and uneducated. They are like children. They cannot handle responsibility. How could *they* know what is best for them? Without me they would be lost if you don't believe me, just look what happens every time I turn my back. Everything goes to pieces and they start acting like a bunch of donkeys. (Allende 72)

European imperial powers like the British, the French, the Spanish, and the Portuguese launched the 'messianic' project of colonialism. In this regard, Southeast Asia, Africa, the Caribbean, and Latin America were/are victims of colonial/imperial manipulation. The practice of colonialism/imperialism continues from the sixteenth century to the present day in one form or another. The philosophy that operates in the colonizer's mind is capitalist thinking. Loomba's observation sounds interesting when she states, "In whichever direction human beings and materials traveled, the profit always flowed back into the so-called 'mother country'" (4). She highlights the significance of colonialism for the Europeans and compares it to a midwife who assisted at the birth of European capitalism; without colonial expansion, the transition to capitalism could not have occurred in Europe.

Now, the question arises: what is imperialism? It is a politico-economic system that operates separately but simultaneously. Ania Loomba uses conditional sentences to make the reader understand its true spirit that operates at the backdrop of the system:

If imperialism is defined as a political system in which an imperial center governs colonized countries, then the granting of political independence signals the end of empire, the collapse of imperialism. However, if imperialism is primarily an economic system of penetration and control of markets, then the political changes don't affect it, and may even redefine the term as in the case of 'American imperialism' which wields enormous military and economic power across the globe but without direct political control. (6)

Allende's *THS* attempts to subvert Socialist structures and subscribes to Capitalist philosophy. Esteban Trueba considers communism as "degenerate ideas" (71). The working class has no idea how the global market operates. They have the slightest idea of investing. He has all the rights reserved to rule the people and the land because he knows how to work from dawn to dusk, invest money, take risks, and share responsibilities. He appreciates Capitalist/Imperialist ideology for its novel economic system that encourages smart investment with maximum chances of profit and minimum risk of loss (Allende 71-72). The mutual collaboration between colonialism and industrialization resulted in surplus capital in Europe, and surplus capital is required to be invested to sustain its growth. Furthermore, it is invested in colonies for their abundant human resources.

Now I intend to discuss the dynamics of postcolonialism. In post-colonialism, the term 'post' generally refers to the end of colonialism and the emergence of a new era that declares, the rule of the great European empire is over. The prefix 'post' complicates the debate regarding postcolonialism. The term post means 'after'; in the real sense of the word, even after colonialism, there is no end to colonialism/imperialism. It is the beginning of neo-colonialism or imperialism because the economic dependency remains there, even after independence. This allows the colonizing or colonizer country to affect the post-colonial country's economy, politics, and social fabric. Huntington has rightly argued that it is through "IMF and other economic and international economic institutions, the West promotes its economic interests and imposes on other [postcolonial/Third world countries/nations] the economic policies it thinks appropriate" (39). Since the country cannot make its policies independently, the 'post'- colonial question is debatable and cannot be used in any single sense. In this regard, the prefix 'post' seems too early to celebrate and premature to proclaim the demise of colonialism. A country can be post-colonial or neo-colonial simultaneously, even after gaining formal independence. The issue of economic dependency still makes the claim of 'post' somewhat compromised. The history of decolonization spans around three centuries.

Another important Canadian critic, Stephen Slemon, whose theoretical lens I have invoked in my theoretical framework, has explored another dimension of post-colonialism that sounds interesting and poststructuralist in approach:

Definitions of the ‘post-colonial’ of course vary widely, but for me the concept proves most useful when it is used synonymously with a post-independence historical period in once colonized nations, but rather when it locates a specifically anti- or *post-colonial discursive* purchase in culture, one which begins in the moment that colonial power inscribes itself onto the body and space of its Others and which continues as an occulted tradition into the modern theatre of new colonialist international relations. (emphasis original 3)

In Allende’s *THS*, Alba’s solitary confinement made her document the history of her own country and family. In this sense, the post suggestively implies resistance to imperial/colonial thinking. In other words, post-colonial texts are somewhat colonial-counter-discourses, versions, or re-visions to empire writes back. The pretext of colonialism/imperialism is presented in a sugar-coated manner to beguile the colonized, that is (the ‘civilizing mission’ and the rejuvenation of stagnant culture). The idea sounds too romantic and simplistically innocent. Its ulterior motives have already been discussed above and in a forthcoming discussion.

Post-colonial writings/literature emerged from the regions previously colonized by the imperial powers. Therefore, its theoretical framework rests on discursive practices, such as resistance to imperialism/colonialism and its related ideologies. The novel *THS* has political implications and is torn between ideologies, i.e., Marxism and Capitalism. To the protagonist Esteban Trueba, Marxist ideology was cancer that was eroding his authority and power. I argue that post is not past or after; colonial influence still operates in the colonies one way or the other, even after they have gained ‘independence.’ Slemon expresses similar ideas in the following words:

The modern theater of neo-colonialist international relations. In the period after decolonization, it rapidly became apparent (to the newly independent nations at least that) the colonial armies and bureaucracies might have with-drawn, Western powers were still intent on maintaining maximum indirect control over erstwhile colonies, via political, cultural, and above all economic channels, a phenomenon became as neo-colonialism. (5)

I argue that the ‘move’ of neo-colonialism and neo-imperialism is a mere façade; the ulterior motive is the expansion and accumulation of capital through the globalization of capitalism. For Marx and Engels, “The need for a constantly expanding market for its goods chases the bourgeoisie over the whole surface of the globe. It must nestle everywhere, settle everywhere, establish connections everywhere” (71). In this regard, colonies provide the colonizers to hunt for the markets where they may have access to cheaper labor, as we find in *THS* where Trueba acts as a colonizer, the very thinking of Esteban Trueba reflects a colonizer’s ideology, i.e., to exploit the resources and the land of the hacienda, Tres Marias.

I argue that the best part of post-colonial literature is that it has provided an opportunity for post-colonial writers to reassess their history. I contend that the two magical realist postcolonial Latin American novels *THS* and *LWC* are politico historical and are a blend of native and Euro- American colonial history, whereas the third novel *TBR* is a social critique on the feudal system.

In the postcolonial literature, it has been observed that post-colonial writers are Eurocentric (as well as nostalgic) in their writings. Their writings are a blend of nostalgia and echoes of imperial domination. It is not a homogeneous category. Vijay Mishra and Bob Hodge have explained this point in their article “What is post(-)colonialism?” in the following words:

When we drop the hyphen, and effectively use ‘postcolonialism’ as an always present tendency in any literature of subjugation marked by a systematic process of cultural domination through the imposition of imperial structures of power. (284)

I prefer to use postcolonialism without a hyphen because postcolonial literature is predominantly Eurocentric, and most of the diasporic writers follow the colonial paradigms in their literary writings. Ahmad considers postcolonial writings minority literature because they were written under Western influence. He finds the writings problematic and gives his candid opinion regarding the subject:

Postcolonial writing. This . . . refers simply to literary compositions - plays, poems,

fictions – of non-white writers located in Britain and North America – while efforts are now underway also to designate the contemporary literatures Asia and Africa as ‘postcolonial’ and thus to make them available for being read according to the protocols that metropolitan criticism has developed for reading what it calls minority literatures. (Ahmad 8)

Postcolonial literature is not a mere imitation of canonical texts; it is a counter-discourse as well and an account of their own culture, history, politics, economy, social issues, and mythology. J. Jorge Klor de Alva gives a new dimension to the term ‘postcolonial’, which does not apply to those groups or people who belong to the lowest racial cadre because they are still colonized. They experience exploitation because they are the lowest in the hierarchal position (qtd. in Loomba 13). In *TBR* and other Latin American novels, people of low class and race are more or less internally colonized by the privileged class. Alva’s theorizing helps me analyze the primary texts. The characters in the three novels, especially the women of the low class and race, experience internal colonization by the elite. Ania Loomba draws the reader’s attention to an important issue that makes the term postcolonial somewhat dismissive; she refers to the officially declared ‘independent’ countries that could not fully reap the fruit of independence because their poor, marginalized class, especially women, have a strong feeling that they are still colonized. There is an urgent need to dismantle internal colonization.

Alva’s definition of postcoloniality sounds interesting and convincing as it relates to my primary texts. In my primary texts, I intend to focus on women who are silenced and colonized by the patriarchy, which is bent on clipping their wings of agency. She further states that “Colonialism’ is not just something that happens from outside a country or a people, not just something that operates with the collusion of forces inside, but a version of it can be duplicated from within” (12). This type of postcoloniality is observed in my selected primary texts, where the marginalized class feels oppressed and demands an urgent need to emancipate themselves from the internal oppression of colonization. For instance, in Esquivel’s *LWC*, characters like Gertrudis, Nacha (family cook) Chenchá, (teacher of Tita in culinary art), and Kikapu (grandmother of Dr. Brown) belong to the Kikapu Indian tribe, feel internally colonized, so is the case in Allende’s *THS* where most of the women

from Garcia family are under the oppression. Though they belong to the elite, patriarchy operates and domesticates women to curtail their agency. Oppression operates at all levels in a variation of its intensity.

A similar situation is observed in Rizvi's *TBR* where Zaib, Sumer, Amna, Lala Rukh, Ayesha, and Bano are the victims of internal colonization. They have no voice of their own. They cannot make their personal decision regarding marriage and career. I have discussed this in detail in my analysis chapters. This insight helps us appreciate feminist postcoloniality, especially concerning Pakistan and Latin America's socio-political context; most of the have-nots and the women are largely affected by the inside colonization and are subject to oppression till they remain in Shahi Manzil. As my primary texts are femino-centric, therefore feminism naturally comes into play. I agree with Loomba's contention that "postcolonial refers to a specific group of (oppressed or dissenting) people or (individuals within them) rather than to a location or a social order, which may include such people but is not limited to them" (17). In this regard, it can be said that postcoloniality is a condition; it is not all about locations or institutions. I discuss individuals and their subjectivities in the analysis chapters of the three novels.

Postcolonialism is more about the postcolonial condition that is beyond geographical boundaries. Postcolonial critics view that nothing is wrong with the term post; the problem lies with colonialism, and colonialism is nothing but the history of the colonized societies and countries. It is the job of a postcolonial writer to retrospect and recollect "What came before colonial rule? It is a kind of reimagining and reclaiming the history of the colonial people and societies. What indigenous ideologies, practices, and hierarchies existed alongside colonialism and interacted with it?" (Loomba 17).

To conclude, the above discussion may help the potential reader understand the phenomena of colonialism, imperialism, and postcolonialism, along with their implications. I also try to relate it to the concept of 'patriarchy' that delegates power to male domination over women. Moreover, this discussion also traces how women gain voice from the distant margin to the center in femino-centric discourse. As magical feminism constitutes an integral part of my dissertation, I discuss magical feminism and

postcolonial feminism in relation to their symbiotic relationship in the next section.

(II)

- Magical Feminism and Postcolonial Feminism

A critical aspect of my research is the magical feminist reading of the primary texts; feminism constitutes an integral part of this project. In this section, I have attempted to critically look at magical feminism and discuss it in detail in my theoretical framework chapter. Later, I elaborate on feminism, its three waves, and feminist criticism. The term magical feminism refers to the application of magical realism in feminist discourse. The term was coined by Patricia Hart in 1987, especially concerning Isabel Allende. In magical feminism, the role of the Other is assumed by marginalized women. The strategies of defamiliarization, supernaturalization, grotesque, and hyperbole are used to undermine fossilized schemata and oppressive mechanisms of patriarchal domination. It also aims to create a space for the oppressed and the silenced women. If I simplify the term ‘magical feminism’, it means the application of magical realist technique in feminist discourse. In the third part, whenever I refer to feminism and postcolonialism, I discuss them in parallels because of their symmetrical intimacy. I discuss it at length in the theoretical framework and research methodology chapter.

Feminism’s chief purpose is women’s emancipation from patriarchy’s discriminatory treatment. It has become an ideology and a movement. It deals with multiple issues of women, like individual autonomy, the right to vote, freedom of speech, the right to earn, the right to abortion and reproduction, the right to education, the right to resist domestic violence, gender stereotyping, discrimination, sexism, commodification, and prostitution. It is helpful to discuss the three waves of feminism briefly.

The first wave of feminism spans from the 1830s to 1900. The political agenda expanded from legal inequalities (rights to vote, property, legal framing against chattel marriage) to the issues related to sex and reproduction, which sowed the seeds for the second wave of feminism. In Great Britain, the People’s Act of 1918 empowered women to vote whose age was above thirty, and later, in 1928, the Act was amended to allow all

women above eighteen the right to vote. Moreover, in the US, the Nineteenth Amendment (1919) granted women the right to vote. Mary Wollstonecraft's canonical book *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* (1742) lays the foundation of feminism. She firmly stands against the stereotyping of women and their domestication; she has urged the patriarchy to recognize women's individuality. Furthermore, she stresses that women must have all the rights to excel in education and prove their intellectual worth; they are not intellectually inferior.

Virginia Woolf's essay "A Room of One's Own" (1929) is another source of inspiration, a milestone, and a beacon of light for women to empower themselves intellectually; it leads them to economic independence. In this regard, she is a Marxist feminist. The prominent feminist activists Voltairine de Cleyre and Margaret Sanger play key roles in shaping feminist thought. Sanger is of the view that women should be given charge of their own bodies and sexuality; they must have the freedom to exercise their rights regarding conception, abortion, and reproduction. Voltairine criticizes and condemns the overbearing and exploitative role of institutions like religion and marriage, which have primarily affected women's lives. Amanda in Allende's *THS* and Gertrudis in Laura Esquivel's *LWC* are good examples of people who exercise their sexuality, desire, and agency in their own way. I have discussed it in my analysis chapters.

Second-wave feminism was the continuation of the first wave, which can be demarcated from 1960 to 1980; the debate broadens from sexuality to discrimination in power structures. It focuses its attention on the scarcity of jobs for women, the difference in wages, and the hostile (harassment) environment in the workplace(s). It also strives for freedom regarding sexual orientation, which leads to radical feminism. Radical feminists do believe that men are incorrigible, and even good-intentioned men reproduce the dynamics of patriarchy. The three texts, *THS*, *LWC*, and *TBR*, highlight the overbearing role of patriarchy that has seriously affected the lives of women. Tita is domesticated, whereas Gertrudis rebels against patriarchy, joins the Army, and is raised to the level of General. In the later stage, Tita also gets liberated from the cruel clutches of patriarchy and gains agency. According to Sanchez, "Gertrudis represents a complete transgression of both sexual and gender codes since she works as a prostitute and later as a revolutionary

soldier” (238). I argue that Laura implicitly inspires women to come out of their cocoons and become professional and career-oriented women if they are to lead a fulfilled life. I have discussed it in detail in my analysis chapters. Carol Hainisch’s article “The Personal is Political” becomes a mantra of second-wave feminism. Betty Friedan’s *The Feminine Mystique* (1963) is another influential work that contributes to liberal feminist thinking. It gives a new angle to deliberate. The work underscores that women can lead a more fulfilled life as career women rather than staying at home, looking after their husbands, and rearing children. She encourages women to explore their potential and individuality and shun traditional roles that curtail their social, political, and economic advancement. The three primary texts advocate this ideology. Betty Friedan raises her voice against sexual harassment and domestic violence. It is hard to define the third wave of feminism; different feminists define it differently. Dean defines the third wave of feminism as:

The notion of a ‘third wave’ within feminist theory originally gained currency in the late 1980s at a time when poststructuralist and postmodernist critiques of hegemonic feminist conceptions of womanhood and subjectivity were becoming increasingly prevalent. These theoretical developments also coincided with, and to a large extent overlapped with, critiques from black, ‘third world’ and postcolonial perspectives of the parochialism of dominant conceptions of feminist politics and subjectivity. (Dean qtd. in Budgeon, 2009:336)

As this study deals with the postcolonial reading of the primary text and relates to issues of race, color, class, and gender, it becomes relevant to my research project. Some of the critics of second-wave feminism like Maxine Hong Kingston, Cherrie Moraga, Gloria Anzaldua, Chandra Talpade Mohanty, Sara Suleri, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, and Chela Sandoval, are of the view that white feminists ignore the pressing issues of “class, color, religion, location, sexuality and the politics of the postcolonial or third world women . . . the postcolonial feminism fight against “state repression and rape, against racism and patriarchy or for better working conditions and choice of sexual orientation, cannot be pitted against each other but need to be addressed simultaneously (Loomba 228-29).

Both the Western and the postcolonial feminists resist patriarchal discourse because

it curtails women's agency. In this regard, we may refer to third-world magical feminist postcolonial writers like my own three female writers, Mohanty and others. They may be in the Western/North American academy but do not originally belong to the West. In postcolonial feminism, a woman of the Third World is stereotyped as a passive, marginalized, domesticated, economically dependent, voiceless victim, whereas a Western woman is an agentive; she is modern, educated, empowered, economically independent, politically conscious, and sexually alive. On the one hand, postcolonial women's movements try to counter the influence and dynamics of globalization; on the other hand, they have to combat the patriarchal oppression of the postcolonial nation-state. It may be said that it is the Western feminist movement that has inspired the third world/postcolonial feminist writers to rewrite their own indigenous histories and appropriate pre-colonial signs, symbols, and myths to recuperate the voice of the oppressed women. Postcolonial feminist writers try to unearth and revive pre-colonial women's friendly traditions, which had been eroded under colonialism. Postcolonial feminist writers have observed that colonial/imperial rule subjugated the colonized in general and the women in particular. The women of the lower color and class are wretched of the earth; they are vulnerable to man's lust. Postcolonial feminist writers view Western feminism with suspicion for the imposition of their own imperialist, capitalist, essentialist agenda.

Without discussing feminist criticism, the discussion on feminism remains incomplete. Therefore, it may be appropriate to discuss briefly some of the key figures of feminist theorists who influence and shape feminist thought. Simone de Beauvoir was a French writer and philosopher who theorized on philosophy, politics, and social issues. Her world-renowned book *The Second Sex* (1949) grabs great attention regarding women's oppression and their social gender construction; one of her famous maxims, "one is not born a woman, but becomes one" (de Beauvoir 283), has colored feminist thought. Here I passingly discuss the gist of her book for the paucity of space. Simone de Beauvoir contends that women are not inferior to men; they should not aspire to be men-like; they are perfectly normal beings and must work on their own identity and individuality. In a patriarchal society, she observes that men are considered essential subjects (independent selves with free will), while women are considered contingent beings (dependent beings controlled by circumstances). To her, marriage is a trap. Men recruit them for motherhood.

In this regard, she is a socialist feminist who sees ‘marriage and motherhood’ as a patriarchal institution or system that is based on women’s exploitation. To Cixous, traditional writing is phallogocentric. Therefore, she introduces her own notion of writing, which she terms *écriture féminine* that is female or feminine writing, a step towards freedom. Similar ideas are shared by another French feminist, Luce Irigaray, who emphasized “writing from the body” as a subversive exercise.

The chief purpose of feminist criticism is to analyze gender inequity, imbalance in power relations, stereotyping, sexual objectification, and patriarchal oppression. In this regard, Elaine Showalter’s insights are significant. She is known for coining the term “Gynocritics,” which means to appreciate women’s inscription not as an artifact of sexism but as a central facet of female reality. Toril Moi criticized it for being an essentialist and deterministic model for female subjectivity. I am adding some more important works regarding postcolonial feminism to my thesis for further clarity.

Clair Chamber and Susan Watkins’ essay, “Postcolonial feminism?” navigates critical scholarship and its related concepts. Both writers cite numerous books and articles related to postcolonial feminist criticism. They refer to some seminal essays of Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak and Chandra Talpade Mohanty’s “Three Women’s Texts and a Critique of Imperialism” and “Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses,” respectively. I have already discussed Mohanty’s essay in my literature review discussion. Both articles are critical to Eurocentric, essentialist, and universalizing agendas. Spivak argues that “the emergent perspective of feminist criticism reproduces the axioms of imperialism” (243). At the same time, Mohanty claims that the production of the images of the “third world woman” as always and everywhere oppressed in what sustains the illusion of “first world” women’s autonomy: the assumption that they are secular, liberated, and hav[e] control over their own lives” (353). Spivak and Mohanty make a case for the women who have been through “transhistorical state of othered oppression” and waiting for someone’s intervention which has escaped the experience, she terms it as a narrative of “feminist individualism.”

Postcolonial feminism seems more inclusive because postcolonialism talks about

cultural and historical diversity. ‘Postcolonialism’ embraces “the insights about gender and sexuality deriving from feminist theory, are usually recognized, differences within feminism are not always acknowledged in the same way” (Chambers and Watkins 299). My research focuses on the characters who are marginalized. Similarly, Chambers and Watkins refer to works that examine “ethics of emotional, sexual, and domestic work done by the bodies of servants and laborers of different kinds” (299). For instance, Dashini Jeyathurai’s (2021) article examines the figure of the Malaysian Indian estate girl in three texts: Preeta Samarasan’s *Evening is the Whole Day*, K. S. Maniam’s *Between Lives* and a humanitarian comic, *Meena: A Plantation Child Worker*. My work also examines the characters who experience internal marginalization and domestic violence. Another work related to my study is Oano Sabo’s (2012) discussion on Kiran Desai’s *The Inheritance of Loss*; he discusses how Desai juxtaposes disenfranchised subjects in India and the United States. (Chambers and Watkins 300).

The article “Understanding Postcolonial Feminism in Relation to Postcolonial and Feminist Theories” by Dr. Ritu Tyagi is mainly concerned with the misrepresentation of women and their double colonization. The term “double colonization” was coined by Kirsten Holst Peterson and Anna Rutherford; they are of the view that Third World women experience colonial and patriarchal oppression simultaneously. They also suffer at the hands of Western feminists (45). Feminist critics critique postcolonial theory for its predominantly male-centered approach. Tyagi refers to Edward Said’s seminal work *Orientalism*, which remains silent on female agency and hardly mentions women writers. Similarly, Bhabha’s work focuses on postcolonial issues of ‘colonizing’ subject and ‘colonized’ object and their ambivalent relationship without referring to gender specifics (46). Another celebrated postcolonial theorist, Frantz Fanon, questions the essentialist and universalistic position of Western feminism.

Kirsten Holst Peterson, in her article, “Feminist Approach to African Literature,” discusses that women’s issues were ignored and agency undermined in the service of glorifying the precolonial African history and restoring self-confidence (qtd. in Tyagi 46). In Ibo society, women are portrayed traditionally as “happy, harmonious members of the community even when they are repeatedly beaten and barred from any say in the communal

decision-making process and constantly reviled in sayings and proverbs” (Achebe 253). Similarly, Caribbean male writers like Edouard Glissant and Joiseph Zobel are accused of portraying “lifeless, distorted, or stereotypical representations of female protagonists” (qtd. in Tyagi 46).

Postcolonial feminist theory emerged from Western or White feminist philosophy. White feminists have ignored some issues that postcolonial feminists try to address. White feminists have ignored the racial, cultural, and historical inequalities that define the status of women of color. Gayatri Spivak contends that White or Western feminists have ignored the issues faced by “Third World” women, using Gilbert and Gubar’s “The Madwoman in the Attic” as support. She argues that Gilbert and Gubar should have considered the colonial context of Bertha Mason’s lunacy and her racial representation. Bertha is Jane’s “truest and darkest double: she is the angry aspect of the orphan child, the ferocious secret self that Jane has been trying to repress” (140). On the other hand, Jane is sane, enjoys economic independence, and marries on her own terms. When Jane is introduced to Bertha Mason, she describes her as “whether beast or human being, one could not tell,” as if she is a degenerated or animalistic character. Spivak critiques Gilbert and Gubar that Bertha is read in comparison to Jane; she hardly achieves her own self. Spivak argues, “Bertha must play her role, act out the transformation of herself’ into that fictive Other, set fire to the house and kill herself so that Jane Eyre can become the feminist individualist heroine of British fiction” (270).

Tyagi discusses Helen Carby’s influential essay, “White Woman Listen! Black Feminism and the Boundaries of Sisterhood”, which discusses how Black and South Asian women are under erasure within Western feminist discourse. The othered races are presented as “backward and barbarous, from which Black and Asian women need rescuing” (qtd. in Tyagi 46). Carby charges Western feminism for its ethnocentric bias, where the representation of other races becomes highly problematic.

Tyagi reviews another article, “Veiled Fantasies: Cultural and Sexual Difference in the Discourse of Orientalism,” by Meyda Yegenoglu in her essay. This essay is written about Muslim women who observe the veil in Algeria. This essay explores how veil and

veiled women are represented in Western discourses. French Colonizing ideology wants to conquer women as Algerian land to be conquered. Yegenoglu argues that “the veil attracts the eye and forces one to think, to speculate what is behind it. It is often represented as a mask, hiding the women. With the help of this opaque veil, the oriental woman is considered not yielding herself to the Western gaze and therefore imagined as hiding something behind the veil” (546-47). West is obsessed with the idea of uplifting the veil of oriental woman for numerous reasons like ‘civilizing,’ ‘modernizing,’ and thereby ‘liberating’ the ‘backward’ (548). The Oriental veil has become an enigma, a desire, a source to fantasize about what is hidden behind the veil. In short, the veil is used as a political strategy and religious identity.

In short, the article examines the intersectional and interventional (a)symmetrical intimacy between the two theories. Third World feminists resist the idea of their misrepresentation and question the First World Feminists how the issues of race, class, and gender, along with their social, cultural, and historical contexts, are ignored.

The above discussion in the preceding pages helps the researcher locate Isabel Allende, Laura Esquivel, and Nafisa Rizvi’s fiction in magical feminist postcolonial literary tradition. It comprehensively covers colonialism’s origins and historical development, postcolonialism, neo-colonialism, magical feminism, and postcolonial feminism. Furthermore, it discusses three waves of feminism and different feminist ideologies. The feminist ideology is powerful and has empowered women in many ways, socially, politically, emotionally, economically, and intellectually. Especially in the Pakistani and Latin American contexts, this study locates the concepts mentioned above through the primary text in analysis chapters where women are still victims of domestic violence, sexual harassment, rape, and patriarchal oppression.

(III)

- Origins and Historical Progression of Magical Realism

Tracing the historical progression of magical realism shows how the genre evolved; second, it is an integral part of my research title, magical feminist/postcolonial reading of

my primary texts. It also refers to some canonical texts that help appreciate how the genre evolved. Magical realism often tackles complex themes like colonialism, postcolonialism, and the intersection of the mundane with the supernatural. Understanding its history may help in exploring these themes more profoundly. Moreover, knowing the background of magical realism allows for comparative analysis with other literary movements and genres. Moreover, the rationale for tracing the history of magical realism is to familiarize the potential reader with its historical background. In this regard, the books of Christopher Warnes and Maggie Ann Bowers' *Magical Realism and the Postcolonial Novel* and *Magical Realism* have helped me navigate the historical progression of magical realism. It may be circumnavigated and divided into three periods, spanning around eight decades from 1920 to the present. It originated in Germany in the 1920s, was rooted in Central America in the 1940s, and has flourished in Latin America from 1955 to this day. The magical works of the great masters produced strong ripples in literary circles, and writers from different continents felt its strong impact and incorporated European techniques to make these writings creative, compelling, and imaginative. This is how the powerful wave of magical realism spilled over geographical and cultural boundaries and became a global phenomenon. The chief proponents of this literary movement are German art critic Franz Roh, Cuban writer Alejo Carpentier, Italian writer Massimo Bontempelli, Latin American writer Gabriel Garcia Marquez, and Chilean writer Isabel Allende. Magical realism is generally associated with Latin America, but many of its influences came from European literature of the modernist era of the twentieth century. It is an avant-garde technique applied to painting, and then it is experimented on in writing. There has been a unanimous agreement among numerous contemporary critics like Amaryll Chanady, Seymour Menton, Lois Parkinson Zamora, and Wendy B. Faris, who credits Franz Roh (1890-1960) for coining the term magic realism (Bowers 9).

The term (*Mgischer Realisum*) was translated into English as magic realism in 1925 to define a new form of post-expressionist painting that was quite different from the early paintings of his predecessors. Franz Roh's concept of magic realism greatly influenced Venezuelan Hispanics till the intervention of French-Russian Cuban writer Alejo Carpentier, who dismissed Roh's concept of magic realism. To him, it was prosaic pretension. Therefore, he propounded his own theory of *lo real maravilloso*, or marvelous

realism in 1949, which was (somewhat opposed to) magic realism. To Carpentier, *marvelous real* is “a genuine, unadulterated, spontaneous, extraordinary event, experience or object found frequently in Latin American native cultures” (Carpentier 102). Zamora and Faris consider the marvelous admirable for its beauty, but it can be equally marvelous for its deformity and grotesque. To them, all that is bizarre is marvelous (Carpentier 101).

For writers like Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Isabel Allende, and Laura Esquivel, magical realism operates in actual and conceptual facts. For instance, levitation, communicating with dead spirits, telekinesis, telepathy, and the animals enjoy transcendental powers; even the walls can communicate in magical realism, as we find in Rizvi’s *TBR*. These fantastic attributes are employed to inscribe the phantasmagorical social realities of the 20th century, as we find in *THS* and *LWC*. Magical realism is an attitude that describes life and the world without explaining its mysteries (Bower 130). Latin American writers used the term, and later, it became one of the popular genres in modern and postcolonial fiction. Modern novels (magical fiction) crossed the boundaries of traditional realism and entered the region of local, cultural, and political realities, fables, myths, and folk tales to energize and introduce their own (socio-cultural and historical) realities to the rest of the world. Magic realism is an “exercise of imagination stretching it through myth, magic, and religion that gives reality a new dimension *BRE*. The first period mostly deals with pictorial objects and images and the horror of wars; therefore, I cannot discuss all of that here because of this research’s paucity of space and scope.

The claims come from the sources cited. I have also included books by Christopher Warnes and Maggie Ann Bowers’ *Magical Realism and the Postcolonial Novel* and *Magical Realism*, respectively, to help me navigate and appreciate the historical progression of magical realism. Magical realism is related to surrealism, but not quite. It is appropriate for material objects that try to capture the essence and existence of things in the world and give them a new form, that is, defamiliarize them. Surrealism, in its nature, is rather cerebral. Magical realism is ontological, and surrealism is psychological. The surrealist painters and writers were greatly influenced by the psychoanalytic writings and the interpretation of dreams by Sigmund Freud and Jung. To them, the reality of things

cannot be sufficiently expressed and explained by consciousness; the true inner life of a man can be tapped through the subconscious and unconscious (Bowers 25). Roh claims that the real beauty of art lies in its novel representation: “*the fact, the interior figure, of the exterior world*” (24). The very idea overlaps with defamiliarization. Magic realist writers implicitly perceive reality through a hyper-realistic, mysterious lens. Three of my female writers fall in the category of creative literary tradition. Their texts exhibit magical feminist postcolonial aspects, which I discuss comprehensively in my analysis chapters.

In the second period, magic realism shifted from Germany to Latin America, and the translated work of Roh, *Nach-Expressionismus, Magischer Realismus* into Spanish made a real difference. The publications by *Revista de Occidente* under the title *Realismo mágico. Post-expressionism: Problemas de la pintura europea mas reciente* influenced, charged, and enlightened Latin American writers, especially Angel Asturias and Jorge Borges. These two great writers translated many significant European texts into Spanish for Latin American readers. Both the writers played a major role in transporting magic realism to Latin America; they carried European influence (techniques like hybridity, hyperbole, mimicry, authorial reticence, etc.) during their stay in Paris from the 1920s and '30s. One was Alejo Carpentier (French-Russian, Cuban), and the other was Venezuelan Arturo Uslar-Pietri. Carpentier was so engrossed in magic realist literature that he introduced his own brand of magic realism and termed it ‘*lo realismo maravilloso*’ (marvelous realism) (Echevarria 97). His stay in Europe made him realize that European surrealism differed from that of Latin America from a cultural perspective. His most significant contribution to Latin American literature is the notion of *marvelous realism*, which is the commingling of different cultural signs and systems; it is the application of European techniques to literature written in Latin American cultural context. Though the concept of extraordinary reality was not new, similar feelings were shared by the Spanish ‘conqueror of Mexico,’ Hernando Cortes, in the 16th century. He also found that the European concept of extraordinary is incompatible with the American continent.

To Carpentier, Latin America is the perfect land where marvels and implausible things are made possible due to its peculiar history, cultural hybridity, geography, politics, demography, myths, and belief system. All kinds of happenings are accepted as routine

without reluctance in this place. Carpentier considers this marvelous reality a shared heritage of all of America. His disconnection from Roh's concept of magic realism was that he found it somewhat cold, artificial, and 'tiresomely pretentious' (85). Carpentier's concept of magic realism is not merely cerebral; it is post-cerebral that is real and phenomenological. Arturo Uslar-Pietri was another influential figure who influenced many Venezuelan writers through his magical short stories between 1930 and 1940. He was ideologically close to Roh's camp; both believe in the mystery of human living within the reality of life. The work of Arturo Uslar-Pietri remained within the confines of Spanish-speaking Latin America. In short, the return of the three writers from Europe to Latin America paved the way for magical realism.

For Flores, magical realism is the blend of magical and marvelous realism. Though the term seems an oxymoron, they are (in)conveniently compatible. Bowers states that "magic realism is related to art forms reaching for a new clarity of reality, and marvelous realism refers to a concept representing the mixture of differing world views and approaches to what constitutes reality (16). The three magical feminist postcolonial writers fuse the modern world views with the indigenous culture of the native inhabitants. Allende mentions Native Indian culture and heritage; Laura Esquivel refers to the Kikapu Indian tribe, and Rizvi talks about black magic and narrates the story of a fake cleric vis a vis the world view of the colonial world. I have discussed it in my analysis chapters.

Angel Flores emphasizes the matter-of-fact delineation of magical occurrences. After the publication of Borges' essays, the interest of Latin American writers revived in magical realism. According to Pope, "With a sense of euphoria and the search for the new beginning for Latin America, there was a cultural wave of creativity and particularly a 'boom' of writing that sought to produce modern and specifically Latin American fiction" (226). Almost all the magical realist writers have their influences that came from different writers; for instance, Gabriel Garcia Marquez wrote under the influence of Kafka and James Joyce, Isabel Allende, Esquivel, and Rizvi's inspiration was Marquez, and Salman Rushdie comes under the magical spell of Gunter Grass and Gabriel Garcia Marquez. Magical realism reached its perfection in the hands of Gabriel Garcia Marquez (Bower 19).

In fact, “magical realist writing in English in postcolonial nations has given rise to a debate concerning the suitability of magical realism as a postcolonial strategy of writing” (Bower 48). In order to locate my primary text, it may be said that “The first woman writer from Latin America to be recognized outside the continent is Isabel Allende, known as a magical [feminist/postcolonial] realist fiction writer. The novel *THS* opens with the magical realist setting in which ghosts (the spirits of the dead appear and communicate to the characters like Alba and Clara) and extraordinary happenings and extrasensory perceptions are commonplace” (Bower 43). Her novel *THS* is occasionally nostalgic and has political consequences. Allende, in her novel, delineates the turbulent political history of Chile and how a dictator, Augusto Pinochet, persecuted leftist socialist leaders and supporters of Salvador Allende (who happens to be her uncle) and later murdered in his presidential palace and toppled his government. The novel underscores the effects of dictatorial regimes on women’s lives. Being the insider (member of the ruling family, writer, and a journalist), she had first-hand knowledge of “Chile’s horrific situation, ‘disappearances’ (assassinations of people whose bodies have never been found), and imprisonment of political opposition, was warned against remaining in Chile and has lived in exile in Venezuela and the United States for most her adult life” (Bowers 72). Under the dictatorial regime, she employs magical techniques for its transgressive and subversive qualities. Furthermore, magical realism is employed to blur the boundaries of fact and fiction that undermine the political content of the novel. My argument vindicates that magical writers are somewhat apologetically compromised. Magical realism (communication of the spirits with Alba and Clara, and visits of Mora sisters) liquefies postcoloniality. Magical realism is purposefully employed in the feminist discourse of the novel. Hart argues regarding magical feminism:

Magical realism in *THS* is associated with the women of the novel and lessens with the domination of the male world of political violence in Chile. However, Patricia Hart also notes that the magical qualities of the female characters are purposefully undermined in the novel. Arguing that it is a form of feminist criticism of the patriarchal control over the women’s lives that she calls ‘magical feminism’. She claims that women find other sources of power, such as telepathy, in the absence of access to any other real power. (54)

Similarly, Esquivel's *LWC* is written from a women's perspective and in a magical realist, matter-of-fact narrative style. The magical aspect of the novel is that through Tita's cooked food, she injects her emotions into people who consume it; for instance, "After eating the wedding cake which she made while suffering from unrequited love, the wedding guests all suffer from a wave of longing': 'the weeping was just the first symptom of strange intoxication an acute attack of pain and frustration—the seized the guests and scattered them across patio;" (Esquivel 39). Esquivel gives a detailed presentation of native/Mexican American women's lives. Her fiction narrates the story of the domestic lives of women living on the peripheries of their relations and society, whether they are rejected by their racist and socially ambitious families, as in the case of John's grandmother, or because of patriarchal constraints, as in the case of Tita (Bowers 46). The novel also discusses political turmoil in the background. I covered it in my analysis of Chapter 4. This novel certainly makes its mark as a magical realist/feminist postcolonial novel. Both *THS* and *LWC* are of the post-boom period.

My third primary text, *TBR*, is also located in magical feminist postcolonial literary tradition; the clairvoyance of Zaib, her mesmerizing eyes, her ability to read other's minds, and communication with the spirits, magicalness of the talking walls, the sleeplessness of the family without suffering the tortures of sleep deprivation are taken as everyday routine matters. Furthermore, the elements of supernaturalization and defamiliarization make the novel a perfect magical realist reading with a Marquezian feel and flavor. In one of Gabriel Garcia Marquez's novels, *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, the reader comes across residents of Macondo contracting an illness that causes insomnia, which they do not take as a problem rather, they are happy with it.

Conclusively, this section navigates the history of magical realism. It also throws light on the transcultural and geopolitical development of magic realism. The translated work of Frantz Roh from German to Spanish makes a real difference. Latin American writers make the best use of their imaginative creativity and contextualize their socio-political culture by invoking magic realist techniques and giving this genre a new glow to the extent that it becomes a Latin American signature. However, it would not be fair to limit magical realism to Latin America only. It traveled from Germany to Latin America and

further proliferated to other parts of the world, like Europe, Africa, and Asia, which made it a global phenomenon. The genre of magical realism is interventional and intersectional to different literary theories and may embrace different geographical cultures.

1.3 Situatedness of the Researcher

I have included Nafisa Rizvi's *TBR* in this project to relate and situate this study to the Pakistani context. As a Pakistani, I want to introduce Pakistani writers and culture in comparison to South America, which is likely to enhance the novelty, relevance, and scope of this research project in the global context. Amy Ling in her essay, "I'm Here: An Asian American Woman's Response," states, "traditionalists find the idea that women writers of Chinese ancestry are a part of American literature so peculiar that they cannot hear about them unless I link my writers to the ones, they are familiar with [I]n other words, progress is made through little steps not giant leaps" (5). Borrowing the idea from her if one wants one's writers (South Asian/Pakistani) to be known, one has to link them to other authors who are comparatively known writers to the West.

The study tries to investigate how narrative magic operates in Allende, Esquivel, and Rizvi's fiction. It is an attempt to appreciate what Hart calls "magical feminism". There is magic at the heart of the three novels: *THS*, *LWC*, and *TBR*. In their fiction, the three women writers commit to women's issues and forge a new genre, magical feminism. Hart calls Allende's work magical feminist for its being femino-centric, which is different from Gabriel Garcia Marquez's use of magical realist phenomena in his fiction. Isabel Allende, in particular, is quite different (tempting/intriguing) in practicing the Latin American tendency of magical realism/feminism. The other two female writers, Laura Esquivel and Nafisa Rizvi, have also developed their own brand of writing regarding raising feminine issues that may be termed magical feminism. Their work is not merely a servile emulation of the great master Gabriel Garcia Marquez.

The three novels present realistic and fictional accounts and are used as vehicles by female writers to transform society. They do not want to sound like idealists; they want to be magical feminist postcolonial writers. I argue that Rizvi's *TBR*, is a bildungsroman's novel. The character of Zaib is a role model. She is the epitome of sagacity, patience, and

clairvoyance. She sets an example of how to win the hearts and souls of her family and in-laws. She teaches the reader how to make a point and settle complex family matters amicably. Similarly, the two Latin American writers want to share with the reader that women should never give up. They must stand for their rights and make patriarchy realize that women cannot be taken for granted. Education and economic independence are the keys to success. Therefore, they need to improve their educational and professional expertise to survive with honor and dignity. In Esquivel's *LWC*, Gertrudis is another fine example. She rebels against patriarchy, joins the army, and rises to the level of a General. In the later stage, Tita is liberated from the cruel clutches of patriarchy and gains agentive subjectivity. Allende's *THS* demonstrates that if women are treated well and taken care of their emotional and psychological well-being, the world can be a better place to live. As we find Trueba's change of role when the novel is about to end, he gives a fair space to Alba that empowers her socially, politically, economically, psychologically, and emotionally so that she may enjoy subjective agency and self-actualization. The protagonists of *THS* and *LWC* go through multiple shifting identities.

As the three women writers belong to postcolonial societies, which are considered primitive, superstitious, and non-scientific, people cherish these primitive beliefs not contrary to science; to them, natural laws are very much spiritual and magically real. Latin American writers, and other postcolonial writers in general, feel they might come under the threatening spell of cultural imperialism. To counter this overwhelming influence, they tried to innovate their own writing style, i.e., unique as well as indigenous can be termed marvelous real. The ripples of this writing style (magical realism) did not remain confined to Latin America; it went on and on to the different shores of the world, like India, Pakistan, and the countries of Africa. North and South American and South Asian writers are simultaneously concerned and engaged with expressing the juxtaposition of the supernatural and the real, articulating magical feminist postcolonial literature.

1.4 Delimitation of the Study

This research is delimited to Isabel Allende's *The House of the Spirits*, Laura Esquivel's *Like Water for Chocolate*, and Nafisa Rizvi's *The Blue Room*. Allende and

Esquivel's texts are English translated works from Chile and Mexico respectively and Rizvi is a Pakistani novelist. The first two of the primary texts (Latin American) are English-translated works. I have used Magda Bogin's English translation of Allende, *The House of the Spirits* and Carol Christensen & Thomas Christensen's translation of Laura Esquivel's *Like Water for Chocolate*. Rizvi has written her novel originally in English.

1.5 Thesis Statement

In the selected novels of Isabel Allende, Laura Esquivel and Nafisa Rizvi, the relative absence and presence of congruity between the magical feminist and postcolonial elements in different cultural contexts of Chile, Mexico, and Pakistan make the selected fiction (a)symmetrical in nature. The fiction under scrutiny blurs the boundaries between reality and fantasy and simultaneously engages with postcolonial concerns. The women characters tend to evolve from being oppressed objects to the positions of agentive subjects because of their multiply changing identities. Patricia Hart's definition of magical feminism and Stephen Slemon's concept that magical realist text may be read as postcolonial discourse are useful in reading the selected texts. Wendy B. Faris' definitions of magical realism also provide theoretical support to analyze the primary texts.

1.6 Research Questions

1. How do the selected writers embed (a)symmetrical dynamics of magical feminist and postcolonial elements in the selected texts?
2. In what ways has magical feminism been used as a creative technique in the selected texts?
3. How do magical feminism and postcolonialism factor in mapping out multiply shifting identities of the female protagonists in the selected novels?

1.7 Research Plan

I have carefully planned out and divided this research project into the following seven chapters:

Chapter One introduces the topic of my study and gives a detailed argument for undertaking this research. It locates the study within the magical realist/feminist postcolonial literary tradition. It further discusses the situatedness of the researcher, thesis statement, and controlling research questions. It also highlights the significance and rationale of the research, along with the structural plan of the study.

Chapter Two is the review of literature that is relevant to my topic. It helps me contextualize my research in the existing scholarship of the research tradition and ensures that my work belongs to a specific kind of scholarship. Moreover, it supports me to look for the gaps in the previous works that my project is likely to fill. Analyzing the selected texts, I have attempted to find the gaps through my interventions. Finally, it assists me in determining the choice of research methodology and methods.

Chapter Three consists of specific theoretical concepts along with research methodology. In this chapter, I discuss that this qualitative research invokes magical feminist postcolonial theoretical positions to read my primary texts and uses Catherine Belsey's model of textual analysis and Celena Kusch's comparative analysis as research methods.

Chapter Four is a detailed analysis of Allende's novel *THS*. In this chapter, I have analyzed how magical realism operates in feminist postcolonial texts. The analysis of Allende's novel attempts to discover why patriarchy assumes the role of a colonizer. Moreover, I explore whether Allende implicitly supports a capitalist agenda that subscribes to patriarchal design. Furthermore, I attempt to investigate how, categorically, through her writing, Allende urges women to turn their quietness into abrasive activism and persuade them that they need to be centered rather than ex-centered.

Chapter Five investigates how Esquivel challenges the notion of patriarchy and home through the characterization of Tita and Gertrudis. The analysis of the study demonstrates that women have the potential to perform all kinds of feats they can do anything or become anything.

This chapter reveals how artistically Esquivel has exploited the magical feminist techniques

in the fiction. This research foregrounds the feminist postcolonial issues of sexuality, class, race, and gender. The study claims that women are not offered real-life opportunities to prove their worth and resourcefulness. In this chapter, I question the traditional view of gender.

In chapter six, my concern is to analyze how Rizvi, in *TBR*, paints the picture of men and explores how they are responsible for women's unhappiness. This chapter demonstrates that Rizvi's feminist approach is comparatively mild and humane compared to the other two Latin American women writers. I have tried to trace how Rizvi has employed magical feminist techniques in postcolonial discourse in her novel. She believes that both patriarchy and feminists need to review their socio-cultural practices for a better life.

Chapter Seven is the conclusion of my dissertation. In this chapter, I review the basic premises of my argument and assess if I have been able to find answers to my controlling research questions. Moreover, in this chapter, I also see if my thesis statement stands vindicated through my analysis. I also try to determine how my theoretical framework has supported me in reading my primary texts in line with my basic research claims.

1.8 Significance of the Study

In Pakistan, fiction has not been quite exhaustively analyzed through the theoretical support of magical feminist postcolonial lenses. The writers whose texts I have undertaken for this study are located in different parts of the world (Chile, Mexico, and Pakistan), making this research multicultural, transcultural, intersectional, and interventionist. South America and the subcontinent, more importantly, the three texts studied draw comparison between Latin American and South Asian cultures. To the best of my knowledge, I have not come across any other work analyzed by theoretical critics such as Patricia Hart, Stephen Slemon, and Wendy B. Faris. Moreover, I have used Catherine Belsey's 'textual analysis' and Celena Kusche's 'comparative analysis' as research methods in order to read my primary texts. *The Blue Room* has not been researched from any angle, whether magical feminist or postcolonial. Another significant contribution of this research project is its

relevance to the ground realities of Pakistan and the oppressive role of patriarchy, religious malpractices, and poverty. Moreover, this research has been able to bring Pakistani culture and a relatively new South Asian Pakistani writer into the limelight to Western academia and also introduce the two celebrated Latin American writers to the Pakistani reader in the magical feminist and postcolonial context.

In the next chapter, I review the existing critical scholarship in/around my study area.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I have tried to review relevant critical scholarship in order to contextualize my research. It helps me situate my work within contemporary scholarship and find gaps. I have reviewed the sources thematically, not chronologically. My literature review is divided into three parts. The first part reviews the selected secondary sources on magical realism, and the second part focuses on postcolonial feminist scholarship. In the third part, I have discussed the works already done in magical feminist/postcolonial scholarship, given the rationale for conducting research on this topic, and how my research differs from the previous theses.

(I)

2.2 Critical Scholarship on Magical Realism

Although it is not easily possible to review all the relevant literature, I have carefully selected the significant secondary sources (books and articles) that vindicate my research and help me determine my research methodology and theoretical framework. I have also summarized established insights and patterns sifted and identified in this chapter. Themes are logically connected, and paragraphs are cohesively bridged, making my argument an exciting read. The recurrent themes which emerge after reviewing the literature are: symmetrical and (a)symmetrical intimacy between magical feminist and postcolonial literature, magical realism and its variants, mechanics of magical realism and how it operates, debate whether magical realism is a Latin American product or a global phenomenon, colonialism, postcolonialism, and postcoloniality, construction of identity and agency through colonial discourse, issues of misrepresentation, stereotyping, identity, and Othering of Native American culture and other minor cultures, and language. Moreover, it also deals with postcolonial feminist issues of race and class, patriarchy,

women domestication, violence and exploitation, and last but not least, how female agency is celebrated.

I argue that there is a symmetrical intimacy between magical feminism and postcolonialism. The term “symmetrical intimacy” is already discussed and explained in my introductory chapter. Both magical feminism and postcolonialism recuperate the voice of the marginalized. Numerous critics and their works support the claim. Stephen Slemon’s essay “*Magic Realism as Post-Colonial Discourse*” traces the magical symbiotic relationship between magical realism and postcolonialism. The title is self-explanatory; magical texts may be read as postcolonial discourse. It allows both versions to flow parallel: one hegemonic version of the European American that is of the colonizer, and the second is the expression of the magical myth of the colonized. I argue that the character of Esteban Trueba is the hegemonic version of the Euro- American colonizer. In contrast, Old Garcia and his family can be taken as the magico-mythical voice of the colonized. Similarly, Dr. Brown and the Kikapu offer worldviews of the colonizer and the colonized. I have explained it in my analysis chapters of Allende’s *THS* and Esquivel’s *LWC*, respectively. Magical realist text may be classified into horizontal (latitudinal) and vertical (longitudinal): horizontal is believing, and vertical is mysterious and imaginative.

Magic realist text tends to neutralize the fantastic elements into narrative realism and begins to read with the fantastic closely. I argue that the three novels *THS*, *LWC*, and *TBR* remain suspended between the two narratives: the fantastic and the real. The intrusion of apparitions from nowhere into the real-world setting is a fine example of fantastic. Clara’s talking to Mora sisters (supernatural machinery) and Zaib’s talking to the blue room walls are some examples of fantastic. Postcolonial magical realist texts are based on myths, history, and folklore. It mentions that magical realism operates in postcolonial cultures and structures in a way to form a new mode of fiction that can be recognized. This form of fiction contains oppositional style, duality, the plurality of worlds, and the postcolonial legacy. Colonialism/realism and imperialism are bent on erasing the memory. In contrast, the postcolonial magical realist texts give space to the imaginative revision in which people have no control to express their silenced voices. I have used Slemon’s insights as my theoretical lens; therefore, I discuss it here briefly to avoid repetition in the third chapter.

The essay strongly establishes a link that there is a symmetrical intimacy between magical realism and postcolonialism. The essay remains silent on feminism my research finds that gap. The main purpose to making this essay, “Magic Realism as Postcolonial Discourse” by Stephen Slemon part of my research is its relevance and second, it provides a sound theoretical foundation to the concept that magical realism may be read as a postcolonial text which it lacked before. Jameson terms magical realism as a “strange seductiveness,” though it hangs in a vacuum and lacks a convincing theoretical foundation yet it gained critical currency (9). This essay establishes a connection that there is a symmetrical intimacy between magical realism and postcolonialism. As both try to recuperate the voice of the silenced and the marginalized. As in canonical texts, the dispossessed are marginalized through imperial centralizing cognitive structures. I use his concept as a prop for the analysis of my primary texts. It has been observed that fantastic elements enter magical text in the forms of clairvoyance, telepathy, and telekinesis, the appearance of apparitions, and communication with the spirits of the dead, in three texts: *THS*, *LWC*, and *TBR*. The reader while reading the text, the general code of narrative realism fails to segregate it from the fantastic and the real; both are closely aligned.

Defamiliarization is a narrative magic technique that magical realist writers employ in their writings. This article hardly defines and explains the concepts used in magical realism like defamiliarization, my research finds this gap. Defamiliarization is an artistic technique of presenting everyday things in an unfamiliar way. The term was coined in 1917 by Victor Shklovsky in his essay “Art as Technique.” According to Crawford, poetic language is formed speech, whereas prose is ordinary, economical, easy, and proper (Shklovsky 209). Shklovsky defines it as the “direct expression of a child” (Crawford 20) He uses examples from Tolstoy, “The narrator of ‘Kholstomer’, for example, is a horse, and it is the horse’s point of view (rather than a person’s) that makes of the story seem unfamiliar” (Shklovsky 16). My primary texts, *THS*, *LWC*, and *TBR*, are packed with illustrations of defamiliarization. I argue that defamiliarization is a creative process that involves innovation of making familiar things defamiliarized. I have discussed it thoroughly in my analysis chapters. This research contextualizes postcolonial cultures within the literary discourse. Second, this paper remains silent on women’s issues, my research finds the gap.

Other critics also find a symmetrical intimacy between magical realism and postcolonial literature not only for its counter-discourse but also for placing the displaced culture(s) of their own. Both of them share nostalgic feel. Boehmer refers to Stephen Slemon regarding the suitability of magical realist narrative in expressing postcolonial issues of cultural distortion and displacement. Similarly, another postcolonial critic, Micheal Dash, navigates a close intimacy between magical realism and postcolonialism. According to Dash, “magical realism provides a means to recover not only the past but also the creative and the spiritual aspects of the myths, legends, and superstitions of the folk in order to isolate traces of a complex culture of survival which was the response of the dominated to their oppressors” (66).

In the same way, Warnes gives his postcolonial version and raises a series of questions regarding magical realism that is the “‘writing back’ of the margins to center, how it blurs the binaries of (modern) thought, how it critiques the assumptions of the Enlightenment, how it shows up the limitations of European rationalism, how it reveals the ethical fallings” (Warnes 6). I agree with Warnes who views that that magical realist fiction needs to be read closely and critically because the “theory (needs to) emerges from the novels rather than imposing itself on them” (7). Allende and Esquivel relate magic (mystery), religion, and science to their own cultural contexts. Their relationship is symbiotic and interventional.

Furthermore, Faris asserts that “Magical realism has become an important mode of expression worldwide, especially in postcolonial cultures, because it has provided the literary ground for significant cultural work; within its texts, marginal voices, submerged traditions, and emergent literatures have developed and created masterpieces” (1). According to Faris, “magical realism and postcolonialism are effective *destabilizing and decolonizing* agents against a dominant narrative mode of writing. Moreover, magical realism enjoys a central position, both reflecting the cultural moment of postcolonialism and achieving substantial work within it” (emphasis added 1).

Magical realism is a *modus operandi* that operates in and inscribes a specific cultural context that is peripheral, cross/intercultural, and diasporic. In magic realist texts,

features of postcolonialism overlap and interplay that makes the term unstable and suspicious. Benyei argues that postcolonial texts may be labeled as magical realist texts or vice versa for their being pluralistic and exotic. The essay does not explain the term “magical realism” but my research fills this gap. For Jean Franco, magical realism is “little more than a brand name for exoticism” (204). According to Camayd-Freixas’s account:

Magical realism is understood to be a sophisticated aesthetic expression of primitivism that served the yearnings of Latin American writers for identity and cultural emancipation. As in most European canonical texts, the cultures of others are either misrepresented or under-represented. The magical realism of Carpentier, Asturias, Rulfo, and Garcia Marquez develops from an urge to reclaim a space of otherness by appealing to myths of difference. (49)

In this regard, the culture(s) of the third world Chile, Mexico, and Pakistan are misrepresented or under-represented compared to Western cultures, which are advanced in technology, modernization, and civilization. The cases of child abuse are over projected through Western media as a recurring occurrence. In contrast, third-world countries are backward and poverty-stricken. Camayd-Freixas treats magical realism as a historical style deriving from an “‘ethnological version’ based on the presence of myth, legend, the syncretism of Indian, black and peasant from the mostly isolated and remote regions of America” (320). This marginalization and alterity urge magical postcolonial writers to seek their identity and cultural emancipation.

Second, I argue that they are neatly sealed and labeled as magic realist texts to propagate, mask and mark the agenda of commercialization and commodification of the colonial Other (Camayd-Freixas 149-50). As I find in *THS*, Afro/Native Americans are stereotyped as sexual objects, for commodification. Similarly, Arabs and their culture is ridiculed and stereotyped as a profligate race. I have discussed this in my analysis chapter (Allende 280).

Moreover, the statement of Evans-Pritchard reinforces my argument that magical is real and real is magical to postcolonial people. For instance, in Gabriel Garcia Marquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, the example of a telescope, magnet, and a magnifying glass serves a miracle for the people who look through the telescope, which reduces the distance miraculously; similarly, the magnifying glass sets to a pile of dry hay in the middle of the street by concentrating sun rays on a sunny day, make them accept two magnetized ingots and magnifying glass in exchange of three colonial gold coins because to the colonizers (people of science) the very three coins of gold were magical real. According to Evans-Pritchard, "Azande people with their "primitive" faith in magic do not see any qualitative difference between the two kinds of activities, i.e., science and magic", to them, 'magical' is 'empirical' that is real (464). Even the European observer had to concede and put magical into a category like 'healing activity'. Azande people take it seriously real, even when a person is about to die; the activity is performed with great faith. To them, it is as real as magic.

Indeed, magical is taken as an extra, supplementary activity called into action at the time of critical juncture. To Evan-Pritchard, magical activity is not an alternative but an addition to empirical activity. Magic is not a foreign element that comes from outer space; it is native, which Alejo Carpentier calls real maravilloso. Similarly, Malinowski argues that it is neither originated nor invented rather it is there from the very beginning as an essential adjunct. The relationship between the two terms sounds interesting. The terms are not in real opposition, though the term can hardly be synthesized or assimilated into one another for their essential internal difference. Magic is an external supplement that realism accommodates. Derrida coins a new term to describe this unnamable relationship with the help of the adjective "parergonal" (53-54). The term parergonal means a piece of work that is supplementary to or a by-product of more extensive work. It means magic is additional or exterior to the inside real. In magical realist text, magic seems adjunct, supplement, and external but very much inside the real (reason).

Wendy B. Faris considers that the magical realist mode is most likely used by writers who are at the periphery (postcolonial) from the "geographical, ethnic, social, cultural, economic or political center" (116). Similarly, women writers of my primary text

are too somewhat marginalized for their inability to have the same access to power corridors in a male-dominated society. Likewise, Bhabha also refers to magic realism as “the literary language of the emergent postcolonial world” (Nation 6). In the same way, Jameson views magical realism as a postcolonial discourse. The statement of Jameson provides sound reasoning that there is a symmetrical intimacy between magical realism and postcolonialism. For Jameson, “magical realist works contain historical references, not only to place their texts in a specific context but also to put a question to existing historical suppositions” (72-73). In this regard, the reader finds historical references in the two of the primary texts, *THS* and *LWC* that lend it fact/fiction.

Maryam Ebadi Asayesh refers to numerous critics such as Jameson, Bhabha, Durix, and Cooper, who view magical realism as a postcolonial mode of writing for its ‘textual and cultural’ hybrid nature and, second, its popularity in postcolonial locals. Her book, *Patriarchy and Power in Magical Realism* helps establish a symmetrical intimacy between magical feminism and postcolonialism because the three theories aim to decenter the center. Feminism decenters patriarchy, whereas magical realism decenters realism, and postcolonialism does the same with colonialism. Postcolonialism manifests how the colonized become the Other to the Western whites and, in magical realism, the mystery to Western rationalism. In short, the purpose of the three theories is to recuperate the silenced minor voices.

To summarize the above discussion, I have tried to explain the meaning of “symmetrical intimacy” in my introductory chapter. Their relationship is symbiotic and reinforces each other to recuperate the voice of the silenced and marginalized. The books and the articles I review are canonical texts on magical realism. The discussion helps me appreciate the poetics of magical realism that covers its different dimensions. The discussion reinforces the idea that there is a symmetrical intimacy between magical realism and postcolonialism. It also discusses a wide range of magical critics and theorists whose critical insights give authenticity to my argument.

Though I have discussed the term (a)symmetrical intimacy in my introductory chapter, to avoid any confusion, I want to talk here very briefly because it constitutes the

title of my thesis. I have adapted the first part of my title, “(A)Symmetrical Intimacy,” from Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak’s essay “Burden of English”. A is within parenthesis because there is largely a symmetrical intimacy between magical feminism and postcolonialism. The selected texts show that there is an (a)symmetrical intimacy between magical realists and postcolonial writers, postcolonial writers are essentialist, assertive, and reactionary, whereas magical writers are more ironical and try to get away with the statements they make in their writings. Magical feminism is a subgenre of magical realism and postcolonialism. Magical realist, postcolonial, and (postmodern) writers employ irony, playfulness, and black humor that dilute the political punch. In *THS* and *LWC*, Allende and Esquivel employ the technique of historiographic metafiction, a typical feature of postcolonial/postmodern writers. Allende uses fictional characters’ names and places that liquefy the political implication. Similarly, Laura Esquivel employs authorial reticence in *LWC* while discussing the Mexican Revolution.

To conclude, the two narrative modes (magical real and postcolonial) give allowance to accommodate and (contradict) each other simultaneously. Ebadi cites numerous critics who explain why postcolonial writers employ magical realism. To them, it has been incorporated as a strategy against oppression or cultural superimposition of the United States and other dominant colonial powers. Bowers argues that magical writers are developing new forms of magical realism related to their “marginalized, postcolonial or cross-cultural contexts” (65).

Another recurrent theme that emerges is the cross-cultural variants of magical realism. I have borrowed the phrase “the cross-cultural variants of magical realism” from Maggie Ann Bowers’ book *Magic(al) Realism*. It is a valuable book that navigates the complexities and shades of magical realism. She draws a clear-cut distinction between magical realism and its related genres. Though the book does not directly address primary texts, her critical insights help me appreciate magical realism and postcolonialism. My research finds and fills the gap as the book hardly discusses theoretical aspects of magical realism. I am interested in reviewing its chapter 5, “Cross Cultural Variants of Magical Realism,” for its indirect relevance to my topic. Moreover, the gap in this chapter is that it largely remains silent about the feminist aspect of magical realism.

Jeanne Delbaere-Grant's essay, "Psychic Realism, Mythic Realism, Grotesque Realism: Variations on Magical Realism in Contemporary Literature in English" (1995), helps me draw a clear distinction among variants of magical realism. Magical realism is an umbrella or generic term that subsumes some closer critical concepts like *psychic*, *mythic*, and *grotesque*. Delbaere- Grant defines *psychic realism* as a "particular sort of magic realism generated from inside the psyche—and sometimes referred to as "psychomachie" — it may be termed as "psychic realism" (251). The gap in the essay is that it hardly discusses postcolonial feminist aspects. To invent the term *mythic realism*, Carpentier had been his inspiration, who coined the term *lo real maravilloso americano* to describe a "magic[al]" reality not created by the imagination or projected from the subconscious but inherent in the myths and superstitions of non-European populations and in the very topography of the Americas" (252). The term grotesque realism defined by Delbaere-Grant, "any sort of *hyperbolic distortion* that creates a *sense of strangeness* through the confusion or interpretation of different realms like animate/inanimate or human/animal" (emphasis mine 256). This article helps me appreciate, trace, and locate the above-mentioned categories in my primary texts.

Moreover, Echevarria distinguishes the two forms of magical realism: the ontological and the epistemological (Echevarria 35). Bowers describes ontological magical realism is that which "has its source material beliefs or practices from the cultural context in which the text is set . . . and epistemological magical realism is that which seeks its inspiration from its magical realist elements from sources which don't necessarily coincide with the cultural context of the fiction, or for that matter, of the writer" (Bowers 91). In this regard, three of my primary texts qualify both magical realism categories. We find that cultural practices and superstitious beliefs come into play in the three primary texts. Jeanne Delbaere identifies a similar kind of distinction but employs different terminology like folkloric (folklore tradition/myths) magical realism and scholarly (narrative technique) magical realism (76).

Chanady frequently refers to the term 'supernatural' but hardly explains it; my research has found this gap. I argue that the concept of the supernatural in the Western world is terrifying, problematic, and rationally impossible, which makes them difficult to

appreciate magical realism because they do not understand that the presence of the supernatural is imperative. Supernatural is part and parcel of magical realism. According to Zamora and Faris, “supernatural is not a simple or obvious matter, but it *is* an ordinary matter, and everyday occurrence — admitted, accepted, and integrated into the rationality and materiality of literary realism. Magical realism is no longer quixotic madness, but normative and normalizing. It is a simple matter of the most complicated sort” (3). Mathew Stretcher implicitly and suggestively talks about the role of supernaturalization in magical realism. He defines magic realism as “what happens when a highly detailed, realistic setting is invaded by something too strange to believe” (Stretcher).

In the universe of magic realism, the supernatural plan does not interrupt at certain crucial junctures into the empirical world. Rather the supernatural is never absent from the magical-realist universe, and, indeed, it is always visible to all. Nothing is supernatural or paranormal in this particular world without being simultaneously real and vice versa (Hart 41). In magic realist texts, writers do demand strong suspension of disbelief; on the one hand, the readers of the magic realist work think alike; for instance, in the work of Kafka, a man can be transformed into an insect (cockroach) though possibly impossible, but the reader entertains this idea as a “game” in magic realist fiction. The idea is not only accepted but celebrated. Chanady’s study distinguishes between magic realism and the fantastic (not fantasy) because, in fantasy, the supernatural and the mysterious are accepted and may be bracketed with the marvelous.

On the other hand, in fantastic, all is real and natural, which is seen as antinomial (430). This essay hardly explains the term ‘fantastic’; my research finds this gap. To Todorov, the reader’s hesitation is the first condition of the fantastic between the belief and disbelief of the supernatural. It is maintained throughout the text between the reader and the character. He theorizes three essential conditions for the fantastic:

First, the text must oblige the reader to consider the world of characters as a world of living persons and *hesitate between a natural and a supernatural* explanation of the events described. Second, *this hesitation is represented, it becomes one of the themes of the work*. And third, the reader *must adopt a certain attitude* about the

text: he will reject allegorical as well as ‘poetic’ interpretations . . . the fantastic gives the writer allowance to talk about the forbidden themes such as “homosexuality, incest, vampirism, necrophilia. . . it leads the reader to question the existence of an irreducible opposition between ‘real’ and ‘unreal.’ (emphasis added 25-80)

Chanady defines fantastic, “In the fantastic, on the contrary, the supernatural is seen as problematical because it cannot be intrigued within the implicit ideological code conveyed by the text. The irrational event or being is described as strange and disconcerting or problematized . . . the uncanny can be defined in literature as a category in which the world appears strange and mysterious without the occurrence of a supernatural event” (12). Moreover, Faris states in her article, “Scheherazade’s Children: Magical Realism and Postmodern Fiction” (1995), magical realism combines realism and fantastic in such a way that magical elements grow organically out of reality (163).

Likewise, Chanady insists that in realist texts, the “code of supernatural” events are disconnected and can hardly be systematized. In fantastic literature, hegemonic discourse is based on rationality, whereas, in magical realism, we find imagination is at free play that rejects fixities and allows literary conventions and popular or religious codes to function. Chanady takes fantastic in a limited sense; she excludes fantasy and horror fiction from the fantastic, whereas, in magic realism, things like dreams, ghosts, and other supernatural elements are celebrated. It is plastic and all-inclusive (oral tradition and elements of postcoloniality/postmodernity also come into play). In fantastic literature, the approach is structuralist and formalist, and the supernatural elements serve not only as a threat to reason and the spirit of modernity but also as an intrusion from outer space in the form of spirits of the dead. Magic realism may be compared to fairy tales and horror stories based on rhetoric strategies where supernatural elements co-exist seamlessly. However, fairy tales are not a source of horror and trepidation, whereas, in horror stories, fear of the unknown is sustained throughout the stories. Tolkien defines “fairy tales as stories about the adventures of men in *Faerie*, the land of fairies, fairy tale princes and princesses, dwarves, elves, and not only other magical species but many other marvels” (10-11). In fantastic, the supernatural is rejected and feared, whereas, in fantasy and magic realism, the exuberance of the innovative imagination is celebrated, requiring a strong suspension

of disbelief in both cases.

Tamas Benyei's "Rereading Magical Realism" directly addresses my research topic. This essay highlights the epistemological aspect of magical realism, a narrative technique that magical writers employ. The essay highlights the features present in most magical realist texts. To Benyei, every magical fiction writer employs their own "magicalness" in varying shades that suit his/her purpose. Magicalness is achieved through textual strategies: hyperbole, defamiliarization, supernaturalization, metaphorical mimesis, and hybridity. I have tried to trace these magical narrative features in my primary texts. Frazer defines magic causality as a cognitive activity in which two erroneous objects are correlated, having no base in reality. Benyei defines it as a trope; and considers it rational causality, a subcategory of magic causality. Nietzsche challenges the cognitive, mental operations, inner experience, and the fundamental assumption of causality. To him, causality is retrospective systematization, falsification, or mythologization in our minds of the process of the world (160). Furthermore, to him, causality is inserted and imposed in thinking through many external ways, which may be termed rhetorical or metaphorical (160). Cause and effect relationship is sowed in mind, which becomes the trope of (narrative) causality itself.

Similarly, Levy-Bruhal theorizes magical realism. He encapsulates the two world views by coining the "mystic" and "logical" mentality. The mystic mentality is different from modern causal logic. For Levy-Bruhl, mystic "employs a belief in forces and influences and actions which, though imperceptible to sense, are never the less" (38). The mystic belief is pervasive and implies no distinction between natural and supernatural: "The primitive mentality does not recognize two distinct worlds in contact with one another and more or less penetrating. To him there is but one" (68). Whereas, logical mentality may be described as a "law of causality that seeks to identify and eliminate contradictions, and is conceptual, empirical and scientifically rational in nature" (qtd. in Warnes 2009: 9). Evans-Pritchard critiques Tambiah and raises a point that it would be a mistake to see societies in isolation; either mystic/primitive/postcolonial or logical/scientific/Western, a society may enjoy co-existence of both the aspects of the mentalities (92). Tambiah coins his own terminology; he prefers to call it "orientation to reality" or "ordering to reality." As we find in

Allende's *THS* and Esquivel's *LWC*, both perspectives go hand in hand. Apart from faith, magical realism also draws on myth, legend, miracle, the marvelous, ritual, and superstition. I argue that my primary texts incorporate all the features mentioned above. I use the notion in my analysis chapters.

To summarize the discussion, there are multiple cross-cultural variants of magical realism. Critics coin psychic, mythic, and grotesque terms to explain magical realism. Similarly, Echevarria distinguishes ontological and epistemological realism. It further states that the idea of supernaturalization is problematic for Western readers because it needs to qualify the spirit of rationality and modernity. In short, the discourse has helped me appreciate the mechanics of cross-cultural variants of magical realism.

There are few themes that resurfaces are othering, identity, and misrepresentation. Magical feminist postcolonial writers are hybrid and learned European art of expression from European and American universities, and also carry the baggage of the colonial and postcolonial world. They want to attain and retain their own identity but are simultaneously influenced by Euro-American hegemonic culture. Postcolonial writers and critics know how their creative and imaginative pulse is curtailed and curbed. In this regard, Chanady's essay, "The Territorialization of the Imaginary in Latin America: Self-Affirmation and Resistance to Metropolitan Paradigm", is an exciting and relevant read. This essay critically reviews two essays: "Magical Realism in Spanish Fiction" and "Magical Realism in Spanish American Literature," written by Angel Flores and Luis Leal, respectively. However, this essay is critical, intellectually thick, yet comprehensive. The essay is three-dimensional: systematic controlling of imagination in Latin America, the second part refers to the issue of the quest for identity and subjectivity particular to Latin American writers, third putting resistance to Eurocentric archetypes, and introducing their own brand of writing. I argue that magical writers are Eurocentric in their approach because they had been the intellectual product of Euro-American universities. At the same time, they are also exposed to their own culture; the credit goes to them for bravely introducing their own culture and landscape in their writings. So, their writings are more sort of an identity-driven struggle. The three feminist postcolonial writers (Isabel Allende, Laura Esquivel, and Nafisa Rizvi) resist/assist and experience push and pull for Eurocentric archetypes. It critiques

European epistemic dominance that has managed to control imagination from medieval times to modern riding on the notion of ‘pragmatic reason/cult of reason or European positivism.’ Luiz Lima Costa states, “the cult of a reason incarnating permanent, universal laws came in service to, and at the same time was desideratum of, political centralization” (31). Moreover, “medieval theocentrism gives way to the centrality of reason, which leads to evacuation of *poiesis* from the concept of *mimesis*, thus deforming the Aristotelian notion by restricting subjectivity to the imitation of an external reality in accordance the precepts of hegemonic rational paradigm” (Chanady 125).

The second part highlights the issue of how Latin American writers are Othered, and their writing is tainted as a “peripheral” production. Spivak’s coinage of the term Othering and the process of imperial discourse through which colonizing Other and the subject colonized other are produced simultaneously is an interesting feature. Dudley Fitts’ derogatory remarks concerning the “ineptitude, uncertainty, imitativeness, sentimental histrionics” of Latin American fiction, which the Anglophone critic considered “invincibly second rate,” (qtd. in Zamora and Faris 127). I argue that this feature of Othering in magical realist text lends a symmetrical intimacy to postcolonialism. The intellectuals, writers, and theorists are Othered in comparison to the First World intelligentsia, critics, and theorists. In both the theories, feminism and postcolonialism resist this ex-centric approach, and try to recover the minor voices of the Other.

In this regard, credit goes to Latin American magical realist writers, particularly Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Isabel Allende Laura Esquivel, and many others who assert their identity through the successful manifestation of Poiesis as opposed to mimesis in their fiction. Over time, their writings became mature and magically innovative by applying magical realist techniques. The literature produced by magical writers does not strictly follow the norms of realism with its dominating (Eurocentric) standards of the worldview. Chanady refers to Flores’ explanation of creative and imaginative writing and its salient features, which overlap with magical writers. Concerning Latin American writers, the geographical (Latin American) location gives an extra edge that serves as a schema/stimulus to their creative instinct. According to Flores, “the practitioners of magical writers, cling to reality as if to prevent “literature” from getting in their way, as if

to prevent their myth from flying off, as in fairy tales, to supernatural realms” (qtd. in Zamora and Faris 115-16).

There is a debate that magical realism cannot be compared to fantasy and supernatural realms because the practitioners of magical realism remain grounded in reality, whereas fantasy is cerebral or psychological. Magical realism is not fantastic or escapist literature for its attachment and association to the mundane world. Chanady links her discussion to Alejo Carpentier’s claim that a unique New World marvelous reality is characterized by the “impressive geography, cultural and racial miscegenation, early chronicles fictionalizing the continent, and turbulent political situation” (133).

Moreover, Chanady draws readers’ attention towards celebration and its difference in both genres: magic realism and fantasy. In magic realism, the celebration of the imagination finds its place in carnivalesque and critiques social institutions like patriarchy, family, education, religion, economy, and their established hierarchies. I argue that the role of these institutions has been somewhat oppressive. In my primary texts, I have tried to navigate it in my analysis chapters, especially the role of patriarchy and religion in *THS* and *LWC*. She further states that “magic[al] realism revives the long tradition of storytelling and the pleasure of fabulation, while at the same time provides a critical perspective on society” (434). She further moves her discussion to an important issue: magic realist texts are postmodern and postcolonial. Postcolonial magical realist texts delegitimize the Western hegemonic political, cultural, and economic policies and practices which have marginalized postcolonial societies.

Asturias states that magical realist texts respond to Western discourse that misrepresents native Indians as an object of study. I argue that Latin American writers attempt to re-present their indigenous subjectivity; Allende and Esquivel give a compassionate depiction of the inner world and mythico-magical worldview of the indigenous people and expose the neo-imperial malpractices of the Western world towards the marginalized societies. To Asturias, “magical realism positions itself as a postcolonial, anti-imperialist and intercultural practice are merely an autonomous literary practice that revalorizes marginalized cultures, and conceptualizes Latin American identity as

heterogeneous and hybrid, and exclusively Western” (57-58). Asturias’s argument paves the way that there is a symmetrical intimacy between magical realism and postcolonialism for its anti-imperialistic approach.

Some Latin American critics believe Latin America is negatively represented in magical realist texts and labeled underdeveloped. Freixas equates it with primitivism and a non-realist mode of writing. It is the product of early nineteenth-century infatuation with non-Western cultures that greatly impressed writers like Asturias and Carpentier. Rulfo’s depiction of rural society is similar to the description of primitive, postcolonial cultures, as we find in the three novels, *THS*, *LWC*, and *TBR*. We come across a detailed description of the country life in the three novels; for instance, the reader visits *THS* to Tres Marias (village life); in *LWC*, most of the action takes place on a ranch near Mexico, and *TBR* is set against the background of a feudal tradition, and the twenty-six families reside in a small agricultural town Dera Murshid.

The genre of magical realism is also associated with constituting national identity, and Sakai terms it “subjective technology” planned to cultivate a sense of collective identity in a diverse and torn-apart continent. Gabriel Garcia Marquez solves the conundrum of why magic realism is associated with Latin America in one of his known essays, “Fantasia y creation artistica en America latina el Caribe” (Fantasy and Artistic Creation in Latin America and the Caribbean); he asserts that Latin America is a continent where marvelous is in abundance which is showcased in his fiction that helps him prove that Latin America is opposite to Europe. In this regard, it may be said that the genre of magical realism gained its prime time in the hands of Latin American writers.

Referring to the oxymoronic and juxtapositional nature of magical realism Linda Kenyon mentions in one of the journals on magic realism of the Canadian review *The New Quarterly*, that in magic realism it is hard to draw a line between the real and the magical and the ordinary and extraordinary. Young and Holloman argue that magical realism is culturally juxtaposed: one mythological and the other logical. It poses a challenge not only to realist convention but also positivist thought and modernity in general.

To sum up, it has indeed helped me appreciate the difference between fantastic and

fantasy; moreover, it assists me in understanding how supernatural elements operate in magic realism, fantastic, fantasy, and horror fiction and why Latin America is more associated with magic realism than the rest of the countries of the globe. The reason is evident that the magical writers gave identity to Latin America, and Latin American magical realism gained currency. In the article's concluding section, Chanady gives multiple definitions of magic realism. The above discussion reinforces a symmetrical intimacy between magical realism and postcolonial literature.

Similar ideas are presented by Chanady, referring to Gabriel Garcia Marquez, regarding territorialization and legitimation of magical realism to Latin America, "the boundless realm of haunted men and hysteric women," that "outsized reality," "nourishes a source of insatiable creativity more adequate for the representation of the continent's excesses than the rational talents of Europe" (88-89). At the same time, Flores considers it a global phenomenon because of his inclusive approach, including European fiction. He appreciates it for its new imaginative and authentic expression of writing. Flores uses Henriquez Urena's felicitous phrase — "we may claim that Latin America now possess an authentic expression, one that is uniquely civilized, exciting, and, let us hope, perennial" (qtd. in Flores 116). Given the above discussion, I argue that magical realism has been loaded with the most modern imaginative narrative and innovative stylistic techniques. Chanady complains that Western scholarship has portrayed colonial heritage in a pejorative light. Paz, the Mexican poet, critically comments about European reason that "it has not managed to solve any world's problems; on the contrary, it had led to the creation of totalitarian societies, moreover, the dreams of reason are intolerable and it mirrors multiply "torture chambers"" (212).

The epistemic violence is done through colonial discourse. There is calibanization of the colonized through colonial discourse; it is a conceptual framework, a kind of epistemic violence on the part of the colonizer towards the colonized. This feature lends the argument a symmetrical intimacy to postcolonial feminist discourse. To substantiate the point, Chanady claims that Latin American history is in no way inferior to the European philosophical system. My primary texts show that the culture and language of natives are inferior to Euro-American culture and language.

According to Roth Palencia, the myth conceived that Spanish Indies were man-eaters, named cannibals, cannibal law approved, to enslave them (qtd. in Taylor 47). Restrepo argues that the mythical concept of Amazon framed through the colonizing lens, “the erotic and dangerous figure of the Amazon . . . revealed a deep European fear of an inverted social order” (53), thus enabling the native Amerindians to be coded as savage and uncivilized. The Spanish and Portuguese colonial empires viewed the Latin American land as a female body to rape and plunder. Peter Hulme’s words, “the new continent was often allegorized as a woman” (xii). This shows a severe concern of misrepresentation exists as far as the colonized people are concerned.

Similarly, Leopoldo Zea’s remarks regarding the study of *Discourse from the perspective of Marginalization and Barbarism* expose the true nature of Western supremacy. He remarks, “Europe is the real Caliban, because of its cruel domination of its colonies, and the factitious Caliban was actually a projection of Europe’s own negative qualities” (274). Chanady, in her essay, “Territorialization of the Imaginary: Self-Affirmation and Resistance to Metropolitan Paradigm” (1995), highlights that Latin American magical realist writers do not endorse hegemonic paradigms but rather produce a counter-discourse to introduce their own magico-mythic values to counter scientific, restrictive, lifeless, and dehumanizing realist values and cerebral modern European spirit and literature. They often seek inspiration from European Other and look for exoticism. Allende’s *THS* and Esquivel’s *LWC* embed magico-mythic values of Latin American culture. The three novels contain fables, folk tales, parables, and myths. There is a constant struggle and resistance-thinking between the two cultural values of the dominating and the dominated.

Chanady mentions Cortazar, who emphasizes the significance of the subjective creation of reality and “subvert the canonical fantastic rejection of the supernatural and simultaneous “seduction of the uncanny,”” to use Louis Vax’s expression (62). It is their sheer subjective creativity that makes them master writers of the magical style of writing. She believes that Latin American writers have learned the European art of expressionism and surrealism and applied it to their own native culture(s). It has also helped capture the sense and sensibility of their own people and made literature subversive, defocalized from

the canonical rational and positivistic hegemonic paradigms through the non-reflexive lens typical to primitive worldview. Here Chanady does not define and explain surrealism, leaving a gap for the new reader to appreciate the concept. Surrealism is known as super-realism. Surrealists give superiority to the reality of the unconscious mind. According to critic Fowlie, the surrealists regard that “conscious states of man’s being are not sufficient to explain him to himself and others” (16). Therefore, they turn to the unconscious to express their inner life. In short, surrealism is cerebral and psychological, whereas magical realism is rooted in mundane realities and encompasses the world of imagination.

To conclude, I may say that “The Territorialization of the Imaginary in Latin America: Self-Affirmation and Resistance to Metropolitan Paradigm” is an enlightening essay. The title is self-explanatory. It states that the magical realist movement incubated in Germany flourished in Latin America and proliferated to the different shores of the world. It became an international literary phenomenon that spread its ripples and expanded tentacles to the rest of the world. This essay critiques the imperial exploitation of the colonized, which is rightly noted by Durix, “Imperialist powers deprived colonized people not only of their territories and wealth but also of their imagination” (187). In reaction, Chanady argues that the postcolonial writers practiced the magical realist genre to assert their own cultural identity and displacement. It served as a vehicle to liberate their literature from the Eurocentric/metropolitan hegemonic paradigm.

I contend that the worlds presented in magical realist fiction are poles apart providing contradictory worldviews, as we find in *THS*, the spiritual world of Clara and Mora sisters is in sharp contrast to the real political cataclysm of Chile. The opening section of the chapter, “Cross Cultural Variants of Magical Realism”, mentions a few definitions of magical realist critics. Many postcolonial writers (Toni Morrison, Maxine Hong Kingston, and Leslie Marmon Silko) are of the view that they have employed the magical realist technique as a “counter-discourse” against the dominating Euro-American culture, and second, it has helped them express their own private versions of their cross-cultural backgrounds (Bower 85). This feature of magical realism shares a symmetrical intimacy with postcolonialism. The technique of magical realism assists them in writing authentic versions of their own history they had experienced. Toni Morrison claims that African

Americans' history remained erased because of the dominant American culture's oversight. In other words, magical realism allows the two versions to flow parallel: one version of the authoritative history European American perspective, and the second is the expression of magical myth. Evans interviews Morrison, and she claims that magical realism provides "Another way of knowing things" (Evans 1985: 342). Allende's *THS* is one of its examples. The other way she means the blend of practicality and magic gives a new version that undermines the authoritative version.

I argue that in official and canonical texts, the history, culture and language of the colonized are under erasure. Magical feminist postcolonial writers try to fill the gaps, silence, and absences through their writings. The writers revisit and document the true history of the silenced, the marginalized, and the dispossessed within colonial history. Dash terms it "the counter-culture of the imagination". He further states that magical realist text in a postcolonial context may be best defined as healing, "re-visioning" process of colonial fractures through introspection a process that produces a "positive imaginative reconstruction of reality" (66).

Thieme argues that magical realist texts demonstrate that a world used to exist before the imposition of dualistic Western rationalism. They had their own system to represent life before discourse, history, and gender stereotyping (19). The two novels *THS* and *LWC*, in particular, represent Western and native worldviews alongside their own system, which represents life before history and discourse. Magical realism is inclusive, appreciating each other perspective and individuality. In magical realist texts, the narration gets suspended, and it becomes hard to distinguish between past and present (non-linear narrative), male and female, and fantasy and reality. Magical realist texts resist linearity and closure.

In this regard, a symmetrical intimacy exists between magical realism and postcolonialism. The postcolonial theory provides the genre sound theoretical foundation. Slemon explains how the mechanics of magical realism operates and how postcolonialism and magical realism intersect and intervene with each other gaining a more significant end that is to bring to center the minor voices so that they may be heard. Moreover, the two

theories foreground myths and the history of the othered cultures. The artistry of the discourse is that it remains suspended and locked without dominating the other and rending gaps, absences, and silences (Slemon 11).

I argue that magical writers rewrite and fictionalize history. Postmodernist critic Linda Hutcheon coined “historiographic metafiction” in late 1980. It refers to the novels which fictionalize actual historical events and characters. The term incorporates three domains such as history, fiction, and theory. In this regard, P. Gabrielle Forman’s essay, “Past -On Stories: History and the Magically Real, Morrison and Allende on Call” (1995), is useful and relevant to my project. It mentions one of my primary texts *THS*. Through the use of magical realism, the history of Chile is foregrounded. She asserts that magic realism “relies on a South American reality: the confluence of races and cultures of the whole world superimposed on the indigenous cultures in a violent climate” (7). I have discussed this point comprehensively in the analysis of chapter four.

This essay suggestively refers to historical references in the novel *THS*. A well-versed reader of Chilean history can comfortably identify these characters in *THS*. In the magical feminist postcolonial texts, writers drag the reader into a politico-historical event, as we find in *THS*. Suarez-Murias suggests, “myths and historical references coexist: they nurture each other” (100). The essay challenges hegemonic voices (meta or grand narratives like, patriarchy and state apparatus) who try to silence the minor voices (marginalized men and women of low caste and status). This essay is helpful to appreciate how and why magical writers, in general, and Allende, in particular, exploit historical references to recuperate the erased history and myths of the Othered.

Conclusively, some postcolonial fictions have a political thrust, but incorporating magical elements dilutes its efficacy. Two of my primary writers, Isabel Allende, and Laura Esquivel, discuss Chilean history and Mexican Revolution in their texts.

The push to Othering is a consistent feature of hegemonic forces. Benyei does not consider magical realism a sacral art or an attempt to recapture the pre-colonial, primitive culture, which is hard to attain under the sun of rationalism and empiricism. To him, it is not essential to read it as an oxymoron; hypothetically, he reads realism as mimesis or the

mimetic faculty. On the other hand, magic is considered contrary to that is common or ordinary. Magical is representational or mimetic. Mimicry breeds self-othering. Taussing defines mimesis as the human ability to become Other. To him, mimetic activity is essentially considered magical in its intentions: “[T]he wonder of mimesis lies in the copy drawing on the character and power of the original, to the point whereby the representation assumes that character and the power” (Benyei 156). In this regard, mimesis may be linked to the art of making Other and becoming Other. Mimicry is also a postcolonial trait. When we become Other, we are double alienated, alienated from our ‘self’ as well as from the original Other, as if we are copying. According to Horkheimer and Adorno, we find our self- hanging in an absolute space of alienation (qtd. in Benyei 156). Mimesis has the potential to submit and surrender to become Other.

Othering is a gradual regression and repression that one follows a blind presentation of Other to become Other at the cost of one’s roots (culture, language, self). Trueba in (*THS*) is an illustration of Othering and self-Othering. This all is done to dominate the world after being dominated. Benyei is interested in the poetics of magic realism rather than merely reading it as a term. He wants to place it in a category that may be termed a method or technique. To read magical realism as an oxymoronic phrase would be a semantic move. The meanings of realism are inflated and entailed, synonymous with European, modern, and rational. This kind of reading would be a mistaken ambition, as it suggests that magical realist texts are irrational and the magical world is remote from modernity and rationality, or the term is the synthesis of the two opposing dialectical tendencies: the magical and the real.

The following discussion demonstrates how identity and agency are constructed through colonial discourse. In this regard, the essay “Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses” by Chandra Talpade Mohanty is relevant to my thesis. The gap I find in this essay is that it hardly talks about magical realism. It mainly discusses how Western feminist politics operates regarding constructing the ‘Third World Woman’. She is also critical of the model/methodology (binary) used by the analysts that led to the stereotypical image of average Third World women holistically. At the same time, the first world women are presented otherwise.

To sum up, Third World women's sexuality is constructed and stereotyped as if they are ignorant, poor, uneducated, tradition-bound, domestic, family-oriented, and victimized. In contrast, First World women have control over their bodies and sexuality; they are educated, modern, and free to make decisions. In other words, they enjoy subjective agency.

- Similarly, the essay "Postcolonial Feminism/Postcolonialism and Feminism" by Rajeswari Sunder Rajan and You-me Park sounds interesting and relevant to my research project. Rajeswari Sunder Rajan and You-me Park, in this essay, refer to Mohanty, Spivak, Minh-ha, Visweswaran, John, and Mani regarding the "monolithic" construction of Third World women and call upon The First World feminist writers, critics, and theorists to take into consideration the differences of class, race, gender, location, religion, sexualities, socio-cultural and political conditions. Moreover, insist on the need to unearth "global power relations, though it is economic, political, military, and cultural hegemony" (51, 296-304). The essay also remains silent on magical aspects; my research finds and fills the gap. First World intellectual trajectories affect the feminist postcoloniality of Third World women writers. According to Rajan and Park, "when Third World Women" speak in the voices of these feminists, it is to repudiate otherness, tokenism, stereotyping, exceptionalism, and the role of "native informant." They seek to resignify the attributes of Third World women silence, the evil, absence, and negativity, for instance" (55).

Isabel Allende is a Chilean writer who gets nationality in the USA, Laura Esquivel is a Mexican writer, whereas Nafisa Rizvi, Pakistani, all had been to the USA. Third-world (postcolonial) writings are stamped, clubbed, and categorized as sameness, whole cultures/national histories. In the primary texts, women (especially of the lower class) are exploited. Women are objectified and used as a bargaining chip to settle family-business matters. In my analysis chapter (see Chapter 3), I discuss how Zaib (the protagonist of *TBR*) is used as a bargaining chip to settle business-family matters. Maria Mies and Cynthia Enloe state that "violence is routinely used to keep women in subjection while their sexuality and labor are exploited" (qtd. in Rajan and Park 58). In Allende's *THS*, Native American women like Nana, Pancha, and Amanda are not the only victim of violence but also sexually abused. Women are raped during custodial imprisonment. Alba, too, fell

victim to custodial violence/rape at the hands of Trueba Garcia. The torture on Alba sounds like inscribing the history of Chile. The following lines give a vivid description of Trueba Garcia's violence, "A brutal slap knocked her [Alba] to the floor. Violent hands lifted her to feet. Ferocious fingers fastened themselves to her breasts, crushing her nipples" (452). In Esquivel's *LWC*, during riots, "the rebels entered houses, destroyed everything, and raped all the women in their path" (88).

I argue that the element of othering and marginalization is not limited to language and culture; it reaches out to women writers in general and Latin American writers in particular who are othered by the male establishment of writers. The article "Feminist Criticism and Latin American Literary Scholarship" by Amy Kaminsky directly refers to Latin American feminist writers. This paper highlights the issues of women writers as an object of study. My research studies the work of three women writers analyzed through a magical feminist postcolonial lens. This research attempts to respond to and authenticate Latin American feminist writers who are not only taken for granted but also marginalized by universalized, stable Western phallogocentric discourse. It further interrogates why male writers are considered the norm, a cultural tradition, and national identity, whereas women's writing is poetisa: not befitting to the traditional genre. Kaminsky endeavors to establish a growing interest in feminist scholarship, and several doctoral studies are being conducted on the issues of gender, sexuality, creativity, representation, subjectivity, and sexism because feminist scholars found it provocative and intellectually stimulating.

Kaminsky recalls her experience of marginalization in a symposium titled "Hispanism as Humanism," hosted by the State University of New York at Albany. The majority of the participants were male, and she was one of the fewest who drew the attention of her colleagues to the issue of women writers. Her presentation was taken for granted. She was expecting key question(s) implied in her presentation: "What would be the canonization of feminist literary theory and criticism?" As gender is a social construct, most of the feminist criticism produced through a critical lens that examines the power imbalance between men and women is not limited to the social sphere but equally pervasive in the academic production of literary texts where a female authorial signature is most often marginalized. Male writing is considered a benchmark, and their writing becomes a

touchstone or standard for national identity, a cultural tradition that solely establishes and determines the literature of Latin America; in other words, it has become a predominantly manmade canon. Doris Meyer reports that Latin American literature authored by women in the national and cultural framework was categorized or hierarchized as minor genres or termed as 'poetisa' that is not befitting conventional genres (qtd. in Kaminsky 136).

To Kaminsky, most feminist criticism on women-authored texts reflects a desire and endeavor to express sympathy and solidarity with that scholarship that may be termed feminist literature. She further recalls that she was not the only speaker whose paper was related to feminist criticism, another speaker who read a research paper on "masculine myopia" was Thomas O'Connor. Among seventy-one speakers, there were only five speakers who spoke on the issues of women. These five minor voices felt alienated and marginalized. So, feminist criticism began to emerge in Latin America by 1980.

Similarly, Domatila Barrios de Chungara shares similar feelings with other postcolonial feminist critics regarding class. She makes her point through an experience she narrates when she went to Mexico City in 1974 to attend a conference, the International Women's Year Tribunal, there she realized the glaring difference between the Tribunal agenda and her own political struggle for the women working in the Bolivian tin mines under oppressive conditions, but none of the Western feminist speakers spoke on the problems related to Latin American women's economic plight (201). It dawned upon her that the issues and the priorities of the First World feminist were different from that of the Third World feminist. The third world postcolonial feminist writers are trying hard to negotiate the pressing and complex issues of patriarchy, class, and racial oppression, which are absent in the First World feminist debates.

Furthermore, Kaminsky mentions books with bibliographic notes to authenticate her argument (see pp. 138-39). To substantiate her claim, she offers some tangible evidence. Kaminsky states that "[I]n 1970 three dissertations were completed on topics related to women writers. In 1975 there were five, in 1980, four, and in 1985 there were seven. By the 1990's the numbers had increased dramatically; fourteen in 1993, twenty-six in 1994, and twenty-one in 1995" (141). Moreover, exclusive feminist articles by feminist critics

were published in many journals to show the recognition of women's issues which previously were placed in footnotes or endnotes, a kind of marginalization and indifference. With every passing year, the trend of research of Ph.D. theses on women writers is multiplying. The dissertations mainly focus on women's issues, making such research real. Now some Ph.D. research is being conducted on women writers from Asia, Africa, Latin America, South-North America, and Chicana feminist writers to highlight experienced discrimination. The research I have undertaken for my Ph.D. (is continuity in the research tradition) on women writers to bring them into the limelight, especially Pakistani writer Nafisa Rizvi who remains neglected as a writer here and in the international arena.

Similarly, Miller and Gonzalez report that Mexican women writers in the 1950s and 60s were equally reluctant "to entertain the notion that gender plays a role in writing." Over time women writers started to open up through their autobiographical writings about gender and sexism; and how they are different from their male counterparts. I argue that three of my primary texts have autobiographical touches. Isabel Allende discusses political cataclysm, and Nafisa Rizvi talks about the religious details of a particular sect because she belongs to it. Molloy notes the scarcity of female writers compared to male writers in her autobiography "Sentido de auencias". So is Rosario Ferre's in "La cocina de la escritura." Traba theorizes feminine textual difference in her work "Una escritura diferente,". Luisa Valenzuela argues body, language, and femininity in "Mis brujas favoritas." Gorodischer published her poetry, fiction, and essays under the title *Mujeres de palabra* that directly addressed to the question and explained her point of view regarding "what is meant to be a Latin American, women and a writer".

It opened the door for Latin American writers who gleaned intellectual threads and inspiration from international theorists like Elaine Showalter, Sandra Gilbert, Susan Guber, Virginia Woolf, Luce Irigaray, Helene Cixous, and Julia Kristeva. The writings of these theorists invite the reader's attention to the issues of gender, sexuality, female authorship, readership, and textuality. The main thrust of the Latin American feminist writers is the undeniable fact of gender suppression and marginalization. Kaminsky draws attention to another critical issue is the strained relationship between male critics and the marginalization of feminist criticism. Most Latin American feminist writings are analyzed

through the postcolonial lens with special reference to attending to the question of gender.

To sum up the discussion, Kaminsky warns feminist scholars to read Latin American Literature or Third World literature analytically and to be conscious of the universal generalization of imperial culture. Latin America has become a laboratory for feminist criticism. Ph.D. scholars are showing keen interest in feminist scholarship, especially regarding the issues of gender and sexuality. It is observed that Latin American feminist scholarship is taken for granted and marginalized. This research is another attempt to highlight postcolonial issues in Latin American and South Asian magical fiction. In a way, my research tries to bridge the gap in the rest of the research on magical feminism.

The essay “Unsavoury Representation in Laura Esquivel’s *Like Water for Chocolate*” highlights women’s magical empowerment through culinary skills. The first heading relates to magical elements in the text. The second section discusses gender and reinforcement of patriarchy. Price critiques how patriarchy/matriarchy (Mama Elena) affects through her gaze (vigilant surveillance) the agentive subject position of the protagonist Tita. This essay documents how women are constructed sentimental and passive in Esquivel’s fiction. It further categorizes what are the characteristics that make women natural and unnatural. Helen Price also traces postcolonial issues of race and class in the text. According to Coulthard, in most of the canonical texts colored[native] characters are cannibalized, stereotyped, and fixed in primitive time and space (94). It refers to some of the magical aspects of the novel. The food cooked by Tita is not ordinary. It is a god feast. The food becomes agentive and magical at the hands of Tita. Price in the last part of the essay critically talks about the erasure of the Mexican revolutionary discourse. Here author employs authorial reticence. Referring to my argument, magical realist texts are compromising in their tone. In this regard, Esquivel’s *LWC*, is an example of a compromised text (in terms of overlooking the historical reality in its true form) and authorial reticence. She talks about it suggestively as if Mexican revolution is not a great significant historical event.

Magical feminism is another recurrent theme in my primary texts, as the three texts foreground women’s issues and their perspectives. Patricia Hart’s book *Narrative Fiction*

in the Fiction of Isabel Allende extensively covers the topic. It is a pertinent book to my project. It directly addresses one of my primary texts *THS*. This book is divided into twelve chapters. Patricia Hart is credited with the coinage of the term ‘magical feminism’ regarding Isabel Allende. I invoke her definition as a prop to support my theoretical framework. In her book, she refers to epistemological magical realism as “derived from aspects of knowledge rather than from cultural belief” (Bowers 130). Hart herself refers to it as “narrative magic” “neofeminista” (919).

Chapter three is “Visions and Revisions”; this chapter is packed with ideas which may be used for analysis. In chapter four, “Magic Books” and “the Magic of Books”, Hart considers the book’s magic lies with the reader, and storytelling is a spiritual activity. She traces reality with myths. Chapter five, “Calling Shapes and Beckoning Shadows: Invoking the Spirits”, refers to colonialism when Native Indian culture and heritage (mummies) are stolen and smuggled by Jean de Satigny compared (a greedy Frenchman so called husband of Blanca) to a European colonizer. When she learns of his illegal activities, she experiences visions and revisions as if mummies are moving the hallway at night (Allende 285). In the novel *THS*, spirits are presented as a real possibility. At times, apparitions are the creation of one’s imagination, as we find in the case of Esteban Trueba. On hearing the rustling of fugitives who have taken political asylum in his house without his knowledge, Trueba believes that the ghost of his dead mother is troubling him.

Chapter six, “The Legend of El Cantante,” highlights a feature of hyperbole or plenitude in *THS*. It foregrounds Chile’s historical, legendary figures— Pablo Neruda, Salvador, and Victor Jara. She talks at length about the inspiring story of Jara to lift the spirit of those who are downtrodden. The parallel between Pedro and Jara is drawn: a blend of real and fiction, myth and history. Chapter seven, “The Girl with Green Hair,” focuses on the aura, mind reading, and color. Allende uses color to divide and present the events of her narration to her readers (Hart 115). According to Tansley, the interpretation of violet and purple are highly spiritual colors. Violet refers to warmth, fondness, sagacity, soul power, and true greatness. Some psychics view that the average person hardly enjoys the bliss of aura (7). Chapter eight, “he Incredible Shrinking Man,” is a manifestation of Allende’s skill of blending (narrative) magic with real. The shrinking of Esteban Trueba is

incredibly magical. The whole chapter revolves around the critical idea of how psychology affects physiology. Mythology is also infused with psychology. Chapters nine to twelve are not related to my topic of research.

To conclude, the significance of this book can hardly be overemphasized. It enables me to read my primary text through a different lens that is magical feminist postcolonial. She aggressively makes her point about why she is not convinced by the ordinary definitions of ‘feminism’ for their inadequacy. This book has been a great source to contextualize three of my primary texts. It foregrounds historical figures of Chile who had been under erasure like Victor Jara, Pablo Neruda, and Salvador. The book says little about postcolonial aspects; in this regard, this research project bridges this gap.

To sum up the discussion, I have tried to review the literature available on magical feminism. The paucity of space of this research does not allow me to include every article and book on magical realism. I have tried to make a careful choice the most relevant secondary sources in this review. Moreover, the discussion helps me appreciate the poetics of magical realism that covers its different dimensions. My review of these sources has provided me critical insights that point out the gaps and provide space for my intervention.

(II)

2.3 Critical Sources on Postcolonial Feminism

The title of the section is self-explanatory that suggests that there is a parallel between feminism and postcolonialism. For postcolonial feminist writers, language is crucial because it gives postcolonial subjects (male/female) representation through which their identity and subjectivity are constructed. In this regard, language appropriation serves as a tool for subverting patriarchal and colonial authority. Colonial/imperial authority and patriarchal oppression dominate postcolonial people and women in particular; both theories try to resist dominance in their own capacity. Ashcroft draws “similarities between ‘writing the body’ in feminism and ‘writing place’ in post-colonialism; similarities between the strategies of bisexuality and cultural syncreticity; and similar appeals to nationalism may be detected” (1989). I intend to review some of the relevant books and articles that deal

with postcolonialism and feminism related to my project.

Colonialism/Postcolonialism by Ania Loomba is a seminal book for understanding historical aspects and theoretical concepts related to colonial/postcolonial discourse. I include this book for review for two reasons: first, it is directly related to my topic, and second, it is written in concise and clear language. I discuss it here precisely to avoid repetition. I employ some of its concepts under the heading “Tracing and situating the history of colonialism/imperialism and neo-colonialism to postcolonialism,” and some of its concepts in my analysis chapters.

The book offers a critical analysis of postcolonialism. It refers to numerous renowned theorists, like Edward Said, Gayatri Spivak, Homi K. Bhabha, and Frantz Fanon. Postcolonial studies permit the minor voices of once-colonized peoples and their progenies to be overheard. Postcolonial sounds shorthand for peripheral; it has intersectional and interventional nature to probe into other areas like feminism and magical realism, which lends it a symmetrical intimacy. Terry Eagleton (1994) draws the reader’s attention to an important point regarding postcolonialism, “in postcolonial thought, one is allowed to talk about cultural differences, but not—or not much—about economic exploitation” (xiv). This economic exploitation leads to neo-colonialism. Loomba states, “modern colonialism did more than extract tribute, goods and wealth from the countries that it conquered it restructured the economies of the later (imperial/colonial), drawing them into a complex relationship with their own so that there was a flow of human and natural resources between colonized and colonial countries” (3). Moreover, she makes a distinction between colonialism/neo-colonialism and imperialism. Loomba also talks about the problematic of the pre-fix ‘post’ that cannot be used in a single sense.

There is a debate about which country is postcolonial and why and why not; on the other hand, certain countries are postcolonial but do not strictly fall in the category of postcolonial. Alva defines and applies postcoloniality to Latinos or Latin American hybrid. I also use this very idea in my three primary texts; he thinks “many people living in both once-colonized and once colonizing countries are still subject to the oppression put into place by colonialism” (Alva 245). Pakistan and Latin America are struggling with the

shocks and aftershocks of colonial domination and imperialism. Césaire claims that “colonialism not only exploits but dehumanizes and objectifies the colonized subject, as it degrades the colonizer himself. He explains this by the stark equation: colonization= “thingification”” (21).

I argue that capitalism is a form of imperialism that may be termed neo-colonialism. Gunder Frank states that “under the aegis of colonialism, capitalism had penetrated anywhere. Latin America, he claims, has been capitalist since the sixteenth century. According to this view, plantation slavery is nothing but one kind of capitalism, where the slave functions like capital, or like property” (qtd. in Loomba 130). Loomba highlights that the problem lies not with “post”; it lies with “colonialism”. She shifts her discussion to patriarchy and its impact on woman’s life. Loomba discusses colonial discourse used by the colonizer as a tool to control the mind and resources of the colonized. She brings in many theorists (Antonio Gramsci, Louis Althusser, and Michel Foucault) in her discussion regarding colonial discourse; her discussion revolves around the ideas of “hegemony” and “interpellation”. Postcolonial theorists (Edward Said, and Frantz Fanon) dismantle ‘meta-narratives’ and realize the need to challenge “dominant Western, patriarchal philosophies.” These ideas are related to my topic. In my primary texts, different ideologies operate, and these ideologies are propagated through discourse. In Allende’s *THS*, there is a debate on Marxist and Capitalist ideology.

Similarly, the reader also comes across patriarchy/matriarchy in the primary texts, *THS*, *LWC*, and *TBR*. Numerous feminist postcolonial critics emphasize that their colonization analysis needs to be considered. To them, the dynamics and effects of colonialism differ as far as men and women are concerned; Women find themselves double colonized and [triple marginalized]. I argue that first, as a colonial subject, second patriarchal oppression, and third, gender differences come into play. Moreover, their poor socio-cultural, economic dependency, and racial standing make them triple marginalized. (Spivak 1985a, 1985b, 1985c and 1986; Mohanty 1984; Suleri 1992). The practice of silencing and subordinating women is still practiced even after independence. Postcolonial literature is revisionary and interdisciplinary. It tries to figure out the difference between misrepresentation and reality. Postcolonial study is the dismantling of colonial beliefs.

Another parallel that may be drawn between feminism and postcolonialism is the misrepresentation and sexualized construction of [postcolonial/colored] black bodies of both males and females. They are allegedly charged with sexual promiscuity. This notion of racism is relevant to my study, as I am concerned with Latin American literature, where female sexuality of the marginalized class is misrepresented. The same idea is reinforced in Gilman's "Black bodies, white bodies" in the following words:

[T]he representation of the African in nineteenth-century European art, medicine and literature, reinforced the construction of the sexualized female body. The presence of male or female black servants was regularly included in painting, plays and operas as a sign of illicit sexual activity. 'By the nineteenth century the sexuality of the black, both male and female, becomes an icon for deviant sexuality in general'. (228)

In the second chapter, "Colonial and Postcolonial Identities," Loomba investigates the tools through which postcolonial identities are constructed. She refers to colonial negative stereotyping, the construction of binaries of self and other, developed, underdeveloped, the hierarchy of color, race, class, and gender identities constituted. This assumption of racial superiority leads to racial hierarchy. Ideologies of race help maintain economic disparities. As two of my primary texts are Latin American, it is appropriate to refer to Latin America, where a "hybrid population resulting from Spanish and Indian sexual contract encoded a complex hierarchy of color, class, and gender" (111).

To conclude the discussion, it may be said that the colonized people and women, in particular, are Othered, internally colonized for their subordinate object position. The challenging task for both theories (feminism and postcolonialism) is to give them a voice and bring them to the 'center' where they may be 'voiced' or 'heard'. The critics of both theories interrogate canonical texts of the Euro-American writers and question the structures of patriarchal domination for its essentialist universal nature. Both theories attempt to expose white hegemony, exploitation, and patriarchal oppression of all kinds in all shapes.

The Rutledge Companion to Postcolonial Studies, edited by John McLeod, is another concise yet comprehensive book. The review of this book becomes compelling

because it refers to Latin American postcoloniality. The book remains silent on magical feminism, which my research attempts to address. The British Empire ruled India (Subcontinent) in South Asia through the East India Company (EIC). It gains impetus through a steady conversion from a trading corporation into a semi-independent state. The British presence in India greatly affected indigenous culture, language, and economy.

Moreover, the activities of missionaries and the dissemination of English help the British to produce English-speaking classes to serve their end. In short, the East India Company took over India that remained a gold mine in the nineteenth century. England's colonial policy may be viewed as a guideline for the British to translate their desire for colonial expansion. An influential aesthetic writer John Ruskin while delivering a lecture at Oxford University in 1870 speaks the following lines:

England must find colonies as fast and as far as she is able, formed of her most energetic and worthiest men; seizing every piece of fruitful waste ground she can set her foot on, and there teaching these her colonialists that their chief virtue is to be fidelity to their country, and that their first aim is to be to advance the power of England by land and sea. (37)

Another motif that repeats during the review of literature is the issue of race, class, and gender. As two of my primary texts are Latin American; it is appropriate to refer to Latin America, where a “hybrid population resulting from Spanish and Indian sexual contract encoded a complex hierarchy of color, class, and gender” (Loomba 111). This symmetrical intimacy between feminism and postcolonialism is that Western feminists operate behind the scenes, imposing their own brand of feminism that is universalist, imperialist, or Eurocentric essentialist agenda.

Loomba also critiques the Western feminists for their imperialist agenda who construct Third World women or women of color as monolithic objects of knowledge. She refers to Ann Jones, Chandra Mohanty, and Angela Davis, who point out that in Western feminism, women of dark skin are neglected and overgeneralized, or the questions of class and race have not been sufficiently addressed. My analysis chapters have traced how labor or poor-class women are neglected, and objectified. Combining postcolonial and feminist

perspectives broadens the scope of this reading. Another tool European colonialist employ is the ‘civilizing mission,’ this self-proclaimed role of saving native women from oppressive patriarchal domination and subjugation give them the allowance to interfere and impose their ulterior agenda. This domestic beating is stereotyped as their cultural identity, a signature of manhood, as we find in the analysis chapters of *TBR* and *THS*.

Loomba concludes her discussion of the second chapter by stating that “colonized women were not simply objectified and commodified in colonial discourses, but their labor (sexual as well as economic) fed into colonial machine. If black slaves were the backbone of plantation economies, ‘third world women remain the poorest of the poor in the post-colonial world’ (172).

As my research deals with the feminist reading of the text, therefore, the following feminist criticism is pertinent to my topic. In colonial discourse, native women are presented as promised colonial lands to possess, plunder, and conquest. Some of the women in the three novels are presented as a commodity. In Rizvi’s *TBR*, Zaib’s father does not take her consent regarding her marriage; she is used (merely as a token of money) to settle a family score. The elements of color, class, gender, and sexuality operate in the three novels. Blacks (men and women) are associated with negativity, whereas white is the opposite. Gilman states, “The primitive is black, and the qualities of blackness, or at least of a black female, are those of prostitutes” (248). I explain it in my analysis chapters, especially regarding women of race and class.

As my research deals with the feminist reading of the text, therefore, the following feminist criticism is pertinent to my topic. In colonial discourse, native women are presented as promised colonial lands to possess. Women in the three novels are presented as a commodity. Ipsita Chanda’s essay, “Feminist Theory in Perspective”, highlights that woman’s status is based on “class,” “caste,” “community,” and “tribe” which determine her status within society, and treated accordingly. And this element of class consciousness seriously influences feminist practice. The women in the three novels get different treatment from society because of their class and tribe factors, especially women of lower class and caste led sub-human life. Women demand rights and economic equality serves as

a threat to the status quo.

Chanda argues, “A woman’s belonging to a propertied class does not automatically mean she is wealthy herself. The ideology of womanhood may well regulate her to a normal role—even if the property is registered in her name, its control may lie with the male members of her family” (492). Through economic dependency, Zaib’s agency is curtailed. Her father does not take her consent regarding marriage and decides that she is going to marry after four months. Rizvi in *TBR*, contends patriarchal approach that has affected the lives of women; there is another example, we find in the case of Khuda Baksh (a farmer), whose corpse is destroyed by Fida Hussain (a landlord) on the pretext that he refuses to give the hand of his daughter for marriage.

The matter is taken by Jirga (traditional court of justice in Pakistani villages, and tribal areas), it concludes after hearing all the witnesses and relevant people that “Neelo should be given to Fida Hussain as his wife, but in return, Khuda Baksh would be compensated twice over for the loss of his crops and be exempted from having to give dowry to his daughter” (80). Khuda Baksh, being the patriarch of the family is rewarded at the cost of his daughter, whereas, the daughter is sacrificed and used as a bargaining chip. Hence, woman’s poverty is a reality that is perpetuated. Economic deprivation and other forms of oppression depict women’s daily life in the three novels. According to Chanda, “The consciousness of patriarchal oppression, meditated and intensified by various social and economic formations, is the inception of a feminist view of the world” (492). Patriarchal oppression runs throughout the three novels that have seriously affected the lives of the women in the novels. e, are those of prostitutes” (248). I explain it in my analysis chapters, especially regarding women of low race and class.

Interestingly, “gender relations within and between classes, may also lead to further violence against women” (Chanda 497). I have tried to contextualize how the issues of race and class affect the identity of the characters in the three texts. It is interesting how the elite treats the native lower class. To the reader, “Pedro Tercero Garcia closely resembles his father. He was dark- skinned, and had the same hard features that looked as if they had been sculpted in stone, the same big sad eyes, and the same dark, stiff hair that stood like a brush”

(Allende 153-54). For Trueba, Pedro Tercero is a cannibal, a dirty little boy, a little shit, an Indian who is a source of contamination. He should not play and mix up with Blanca because he neither belongs to her class nor race, he is nothing but a flea-ridden brat, and his bad manners may be infectious to her manner of speech and conduct. This is how, through language, identity is constructed. Once, Nana warns him “to stay with his own class instead of nosing around señoritas” (Allende 173). Trueba’s rage remains unabated, and he gives vent to his venom by kicking the furniture, whipping the walls, and hurling abuses of all kinds. He raises serious questions about Clara being a complete failure regarding Blanca’s character building. He accuses Blanca has no moral scruples. She has no sense of race and class. She behaves like a bohemian (Allende 223). Now, I intend to shift my discussion to postcoloniality, as the issue is intersectional and interventional to feminist postcolonialism.

Taylor draws the reader’s attention to another vital issue of Latin American postcoloniality, which is the issue of race and gender. The indigenous Indian population occupies the lowest rungs of the social ladder. According to Lewis, “legal and other writings continued to depict the Amerindians as inferior, frequently through strategies of infantilization and feminization” (qtd. in McLeod 53). The issue of gender intersects with that of race in colonial Latin American society. Lewis finds that Latin American women’s freedom is curtailed to keep the pure blood segregated from the Latin American “bad blood” (76). From the above discussion, it may be inferred that the colonial class considered mixed or black races as inferior.

To sum up, the book is good for understanding the dynamics of the colonial empires over the postcolonial locations. However, through myths, the identity of Latin America is constructed and constituted. The issues of race and gender intervene and intersect in American society, where the mixed-race or Amerindian communities are considered inferior race or bad blood. This book offers a blend of intellectual and material exploitation of the postcolonial world. It also makes the reader conscious of the true nature of Latin American postcoloniality.

Feminism is another dominating theme of this research project. After a sifting review of the literature, another recurrent theme that resurfaces is patriarchy. Patriarchy is

bent upon erasing female agency. No essay that captures the true spirit of patriarchy sounds so convincing as this essay by bell hooks, “Understanding Patriarchy”. This essay is short but powerful autobiographical, as some examples come from her childhood. bell hooks writes her name with the small letter “b” to register her protest against patriarchy. bell hooks states, “patriarchy is the single most *life-threatening disease* assaulting the male body and spirit in our nation” (Stress added 1). Most men are unfamiliar with the term; if they do, they associate it with feminism. White uses a phrase that best explains patriarchy, “imperialist white-supremacist capitalist patriarchy” (1).

Patriarchy is a socio-political system that insists males are inherently dominating and superior to everything, and everyone deemed weak, especially females and males, are endowed with the right to dominate and rule over the weak and maintain that dominance through various forms of psychological terrorism and violence as we find in case of Trueba in *THS* by Allende. hooks argues that institutions like religion, family, and schools promote patriarchy. According to religious teachings, man’s role is to rule the world, whereas women’s role is subsidiary and contingent in power relations. Patriarchy tries to justify it as a natural way to regulate social life. She refers to numerous examples from her own life demonstrating the difference between the two sexes and how gender is constructed by patriarchy. Anger and violence are befitting for boys but inappropriate and unnatural for girls. Playing marbles for girls from a patriarchal perspective can be a dangerous and disturbing proposition. This is how male and female roles are learned and appropriated. If the assigned roles to the girl were not accepted, she was beaten black and blue hook does remember the way her dad beat her in childhood. He “wanting me to acknowledge that I understood what I had done. His rage, his violence captured everyone’s attention. Our family sat spellbound, rapt before the pornography of patriarchal violence. After this beating, I was banished—forced to stay in the dark” (2).

hooks internalizes the above-event mentioned that has kept her traumatized her all her life, and the reality dawns upon her that the patriarchal father is the ruler in the household; if she is to stay home, she is bound to obey, a fitting way to get schooled in the art of patriarchy. Patriarchal thinking operates all over the world in men and women. John Bradshaw defines patriarchy “as a social organization marked by the supremacy of a father/

[mother (matriarchy)] in the clan or family in both religious and domestic functions” (2). bell hooks in her terse essay “Understanding Patriarchy,” further enlists the rules of patriarchy, “blind obedience the foundation upon which patriarchy stands; the repression of all emotions except fear; the destruction of individual willpower and the repression of thinking whenever it departs from the authority figure’s way of thinking” (2). The most common form of violence is the violence that takes place in homes between parents and children. Esteban Trueba’s overall attitude to his children, wife, and sister is based on violence and aggression. This violence perpetuates and reinforces the domination and subjugation of the other. hooks reflects the aftermaths of patriarchy; it promotes insanity. It is the root of the psychological ills. She further states that men and women participate in this tortured value system and must work to end patriarchal oppression. Patriarchy is a thinking pattern that may be observed in women, as we find in Mama Elena in *LWC*. This essay is purely on patriarchy and does not address any magical feminist concerns. Since I am looking at both postcolonialism and magical feminism, hooks essay on half addresses my concern.

Theorizing Patriarchy by Salvia Walby is another canonical text to appreciate patriarchy. The book is relevant to my project. It talks about woman’s control and domination through patriarchy. I have used some of its concepts in my analysis chapters. I mainly focus on the issues which pertain to sexuality and domestic violence. The book covers the first wave of feminism comprehensively for its political and socio-economic implications. Walby critiques the institution of marriage as oppressively patriarchal. The role of the state is also pro-patriarchal for its indifference to the marginalized, subordinate, and silenced class. Furthermore, it discusses four approaches: radical, liberal, Marxist, and dual-system theory. It comprehensively covers other issues like class, gender, sexuality, rape, domestic violence, sexual harassment, and women’s disadvantaged position. Feminism can hardly be discussed without patriarchy. Though it is not central, it is the most essential feature of feminism. The book remains silent on magical realism, which is a staple concern of my research. To summarize my discussion, I review the work of eminent feminist critics like bell hooks and Salvia Walby. Their theoretical concepts and insights have helped me appreciate the dynamics and mechanics of patriarchy and other feminine-related issues.

A Room of One's Own is another book on a series of lectures delivered by Virginia Woolf at Newnham and the Odtas at Girton. It is a landmark of the twentieth century in feminist thought. The punch-line of this book is the struggle against patriarchy which is a feminist agenda that intrigues me to review it for its relevance that is a feminist reading of the primary text. Woolf declares, "England is under the rule of patriarchy" (30). In this regard, we may say that Pakistan and Latin American societies are patriarchal. She urges, "A woman to have money and a room of her own if she is to write fiction" (1). The two of my primary texts lay great emphasis on reading and writing. In Chapter 1, Woolf refers to Mary Beton, Mary Seton, or Mary Carmichael as allusions; these women have been ill-treated by patriarchy. In three of my primary texts, women have to face more or less the same unfortunate fate. They are beaten and oppressed by patriarchy. They are forced to marry against their will; academic, political, and economic activities are curtailed to curb their agency. Educational opportunities are rare for women.

The reader hardly finds women in the primary text who enjoy the presentable public position; otherwise, they are stereotyped. In *LWC*, Gertrudis is the only character raised to the rank of General in the army; the rest of the characters seem ordinary if magical power is withdrawn. The fictional University Oxbridge and the role of Beadle (a representative of patriarchy) creates serious hurdles for women who want to enter libraries. Woolf writes, "Lock up your libraries if you like; but there is no gate, no lock, no bolt, that you can set upon the freedom of my mind" (75- 76). In Esquivel's novel *LWC*, Mama Alena hardly encourages girls to study; they are kept busy with household chores. The three daughters are domesticated and confined to the kitchen, especially Tita.

Chapters two and three discuss the misrepresentation and erasure of women by male-written text. Woolf raises a fundamental question, why women did not write in the Elizabethan period? She creates a fictional character of Shakespeare's sister Judith Butler who might have written plays of par excellence but could not do so because a level playing field was not available to her. She was to stay home, do chores like mend stockings, and mind the stew. Judith kills herself and is "buried at some cross-roads where the omnibuses now stop outside the Elephant and Castle" (3.7) to an unmarked grave. Trueba's sister Ferula had to take care of her mother, though she is gifted with natural beauty and good

sense. Ferula is a regal matron with a curvaceous figure, her moon-like oval face gradually fading into pale, eyes growing dull full of shadows and soul tormented, for no other reason than she is made to plunge into thankless service of her mother. It is taken for granted that women are meant to serve their mothers and siblings. She has to take care of her ailing mother round-the-clock, Dona Ester, who has turned into a block of solid flesh (Allende 47).

In Chapter Six, Woolf traces women writers' difficult times. Their work has been scrutinized and criticized through the male establishment grid. The last chapter highlights that a true writer should be above sex discrimination. S/he needs to be androgynous. If the writers of the primary text are not known to the reader, one cannot say with certainty whether they are men or women writers. This book has a strong feminist punch. The reader gets to know how women have been marginalized and silenced by patriarchy. Generally, Women are hardly provided with a level playing field. Their history is the history of erasure and oppression. She suggests that if they are to grow as independent beings, they need a room/space of their own and considerable money to write fiction. She encourages women to read and write and lead from the front intellectually and academically. The following feminist discourse demonstrates how women struggle for their identity and agency.

Connecting the dots, Moi refers to one of the essays printed in the book, *Images of Women in Fiction: Feminist Perspectives* that not only raise literary consciousness among women but also highlights their commitment regarding personal growth in the world of academia. To her, the fictional world depicted by the writers against “oppressive and objectionable ideological assumptions” stays true to life and should not be confused with “an authentic expression of real experience”; otherwise, this exercise reduces all “literature to simplistic forms of autobiography”

(46). My primary texts, especially *THS* and *LWC*, strike a balance between fact and fiction which give them mild autobiographical touch. The book *Images of Women in Fiction* rejects Anglo- American feminist criticism and insists on an authentic reproduction of the ‘real world’ as the essentialist feature by feminist critics. The feminist reader of this period desires a strong, independent, and positive role model from whom she seeks

inspiration and positivity—a role model. According to Cheri Register, “A literary work should provide role models, instill a positive sense of feminine identity by portraying women who are “self-actualizing, whose identities are not dependent on men”” (20). Register gives punch to her argument that “female reality is not monolithic, but has many nuances and variations” (13). In my research project, the protagonists of the three novels march gradually but surely toward the goal of self-actualization.

Conclusively, the book is an excellent read to inspire women to come out of their cozy cocoons to battle against patriarchy. In this regard, reading and writing may serve as a weapon that empowers them intellectually and economically; otherwise, their history is the history of erasure and oppression.

To counter patriarchy, the question of female agency is also relevant to postcolonial feminist writers. Rajan and Park argue that “if women are the most frequent victims of ethnic conflict, riots, programs, and civil wars, they are also increasingly visible as participants and even leaders of revivalist movements so that the question of female “agency” has had to be radically rethought” (64). I argue that Esquivel seems a liberal feminist and has shown Gertrudis at par with men. Gertrudis was replying to the questions posed to her concerning her heroic role in the revolution in grand style: puffing a cigarette, her posture of ease, cracking tales of fantastic gallantry, and her command to the firing squad amid the battlefield made people open-mouthed. She left the discussion in the middle and began to dance perfectly in great rhythm showing her other dimension of personality (179). Gertrudis inspires Tita to never give up on Pedro. She gives her the recipe to enjoy conjugal pleasures without any fear or threat. She states that after enjoying intimate sexual intercourse, “use a douche of boiled water with a few drops of vinegar” (Esquivel 202). She convinces Tita that she has the right to have complete control over her body. I argue that Gertrudis is an agentive symbol of revolt, freedom, and sexuality. She is the epitome of liberal (value of equality and liberal freedom) radical (society is patriarchal) female agency.

Chanda refers to another kind of empowerment based on liberal ideas. Her reference was to contraceptives that empower women to control their bodies. We find in one of our primary texts of Laura Esquivel’s *LWC*, where Gertrudis inspires Tita to never give

up on Pedro. She gives her a recipe to enjoy the conjugal pleasures without fear or threat. Gertrudis states that after intimate sexual intercourse, “use a douche of boiled water with a few drops of vinegar” (202). To Chanda, “Empowerment consisting of elements of self-confidence, inner strength, the ability to control life inside and outside the home, seems to assume a self-contained individual whose social location and context has no effect on her” (498). The three novels’ protagonists embody the above-mentioned qualities that empower them from object to subject positions. I argue that the most empowering tool is education. To women, in particular, it gives them vertical socioeconomic uplift. Agarwal contends that “education and empowerment seem to have a priority on development agendas. . .” (1994). Therefore, the protagonists of the two novels, *THS* and *TBR*, are avid readers. It empowers them with the elements of “self-confidence,” “inner-strength,” and “the ability to control life inside and outside the home” (Chanda 501).

Women empowerment cannot happen in isolation; men’s healthy participation can make this transformation happen. We find Trueba’s change of role when the novel is about to end; he gives a fair space for Alba to empower her socially, politically, economically, psychologically, and emotionally so that she may have subjective agency. Another question surfaces on the agenda of feminist practice in “post” colonial locations. In practice, it has been observed that the marginalized and deprived class experience serious issues of livelihood, or a job, is a survival issue; “and in order to secure these, they are ready to question and actively subvert the existing hierarchy of gender and economic power” (Chanda 501).

Blanca envisions that economic independence is crucial to the empowerment of women. She realizes that women must be encouraged to learn new trades; their brains are not “sparrow-brains”. They should actively participate in the socio-political sphere of life and gain agency and recognition (385). Moreover, Blanca learns a lesson from her own poor miserable life. She wants her daughter (Alba) not to suffer the same fate of economic dependency because she has suffered at the hands of patriarchy. She wants her daughter to study and gain the identity of an independent woman. Blanca tells her daughter, “I don’t want you to be a poor like me or have to depend on a man for support” (334). I argue that now the time has ripened to create space for women to be empowered. Moreover, revisiting

and reprioritizing socio-economic, political, and patriarchal hierarchical structures has become imperative.

The essay is comprehensive and deals with the feminist issues of class, race, and gender. It draws the reader's attention to how feminism and postcolonialism intervene and intersect, affecting the mutual configuration. The essay is critical of the role of The First World feminist writers who push and stereotype Third World women to margin through epistemic violence. Furthermore, it urges them to revisit their notion of "monolithic" and "sameness" and must revisit the socio-economic, geo-political, and patriarchal conditions in which they survive. To Third World Women, the issue of agency is equally important because women of the lower class are misrepresented, curtailing their agency through sexual subjugation.

(III)

2.4 Works Already done in this Study

Some theses have already been written on magical feminism, exploring its different dimensions. It is impossible to discuss all of them, but I discuss some relevant to my study. I also point out the gaps in these theses and state how my study differs from them and why it is necessary to carry out this research.

Carl Joseph Ponzio's *Reading for Magical Gaps: The Novice Reader Aesthetic Response to Magical Realism (2013)*. This research suggests a theoretical prop and methodology for the novice reader to interpret the texts through his imaginative eye and devise strategies to enhance aesthetic pleasure while reading these magical realist texts. He invokes reader-response theory, the same reading models of Wolfgang Iser and Stanley Fish to read texts of Isabel Allende, Laura Esquivel, and Gabriel Garcia Marquez, *The House of the Spirits*, *Like Water for Chocolate*, and *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, respectively. This research hardly discusses the feminist postcolonial angle, whereas my study finds this gap. Moreover, I have also used different theoretical frameworks and research methods to read the texts, adding a new text, Nafisa Rizv's *The Blue Room*.

The research of Irene Linda Koski *Women's experience in the novels of four*

modern Chilean writers: Marta Brunet, Maria Luisa Bombal, Mercedes Valdivieso, and Isabel Allende (1989), aims to bring four Latin American women writers into the limelight who have been ignored by critics and readers of the rest of the world despite being rich in literary tradition. It explores whether the four Latin American writers may be studied as a national group. Irene researches Marta Brunet, Maria Luisa Bombal, Mercedes Valdivieso, and Isabel Allende's fiction. The four novels (*The Last Mist*, *Mary Nobody*, *The Gap*, and *The House of the Spirits*) are feminocentric to give voice to the unvoiced. These texts are in Spanish, but the research is in English. This research covers feminine consciousness and the struggle against patriarchy. It discusses magical realist elements passingly, whereas my study covers other aspects to identify the gaps. In one of her texts, *The House of the Spirits*, the researcher compares and contrasts with Gabriel Garcia Marquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude*. She also mentions the difficulties she has to face in publishing her work and making a noticeable space as a female writer in a male establishment. At the same time, my research covers the magical feminist postcolonial reading of two texts, Esquivel's *Like Water for Chocolate* and Rizvi's *The Blue Room*.

The research of Maria Ruth Noriega Sanchez's *Magic Realism in Contemporary American Women's Fiction* (2001) is an exciting read highlighting the significance of magic realism. She considers it an aesthetic category appropriate for women writers who are considered a minority ethnic group by the male establishment writers. It is a comparative study between separate literary traditions. She employs textual analysis as a research method to analyze the texts. She selects two writers from each geographical location: African American Toni Morrison and Gloria Naylor, and their novels are *Songs of Solomon* (1977) and *Mama Day* (1988).

Similarly, from Native America, Louise Erdrich's *Tracks* (1988) and Leslie Marmo Silko's *Ceremony* (1997). From Chicano and Mexican borderland, Laura Esquivel's *Like Water for Chocolate* (1989) and Ana Castillo's *Far From God* (1993). In comparison, my texts are entirely different except for one from this study. In this regard, my study finds the gap. The nature of this research is interventional and intersectional, which overlaps with my research.

Rosanne Brunton's thesis, *Feminine Discourses in the Fantastic: A Reading of Selected Inter-American Writers* (1990), "analyses four contemporary novels from the

perspectives of the Inter-American, the fantastic, and the feminine” (n.p). The four women writers and their works are Margaret Atwood’s *Surfacing*, Toni Morrison’s *Beloved*, Simone Schwarz-Bart’s *TiJean L’horizon*, and Isabel Allende’s *La casa de los espíritus*. The feminocentric texts talk about women’s experiences of marginalization, their struggle against patriarchy, and the socio-economic exploitation of the contexts in which they survive. It is a comparative study that shares American cultural values. The novels are read as a postmodern study, whereas my research focuses on the magical feminist postcolonial reading of Rizvi, Esquivel, and Allende’s fiction.

Carey Ellen Emmons’ *The Mystical Space of Mexican Feminism Within Magical Realism in the Works of Laura Esquivel* (2003) mainly covers the mystical space of Mexican feminism within magical realism. In contrast, my research is not confined to the spiritual aspect of magical realism but to other elements. Ellen focuses on the feminist movement exclusive to Mexico. The study appreciates the “androgynous consciousness Esquivel has coined as the New Man, able to access and incorporate all consciousness male and female, old and new” (Emmons iv). Emmons explores how magical realism creates interstitial spaces and allows voices to be heard and memories recalled.

From Art to Literature: Magic Realism in *Like Water for Chocolate* and *Mangos, Bananas and Coconuts* by A. Elaine Stewart (1999) covers only one aspect of my research: magical realism. She analyzes texts by invoking the theoretical concepts of Seymour Menton. She applies the art techniques (various painting categories) to narrative texts *Like Water for Chocolate*. In this respect, my theoretical framework is entirely different from this research project.

I have mentioned some of the theses dealing with magical feminist postcolonial themes. I find the gaps and point out my intervention how my research differs from the above-mentioned theses and why there is a need to carry out this research.

2.5 Conclusion

I have reviewed the selected works from the existing scholarship on magical realism, feminism, and postcolonialism. This review of the literature has helped me find gaps and

contextualize my study through my space of intervention. In this chapter, I have tried to develop logical connections between the reviewed sources. Moreover, I review some of the existing theses in the field, identify gaps, and outline my contribution. I provide a rationale for my research, highlighting its distinctiveness from previous work. A few books or articles are deliberately left out because they have their space in analysis chapters. Second, reviewing all the literature available on the subject is impossible. This review has also assisted me in determining the theoretical framework and research methodology that I discuss in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 3

Theoretical Framework and Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction

The review of literature enables me to have a clear idea of what theoretical perspectives may be employed to read my primary texts. Moreover, it also helps me understand what research methodology and methods suit this research project. First, I discuss the theoretical framework I employ for this research; secondly, I elaborate on the methodology and methods used in this investigation.

3.2 Theoretical Framework

My research is based on the broad areas that is magical feminism, and postcolonialism. To vindicate my assumptions on the selected texts, I employ the lenses of multiple theorists, like Patricia Hart, Stephen Slemon, and Wendy B. Faris, respectively. Patricia Hart reinforces that magical realist text can be read as a magical feminist text. As my project relates to feminist reading, her theorizing helps me establish that it may be read as a magical feminist text. Similarly, Stephen Slemon's theoretical notion allows the researcher to read magical realist texts as postcolonial discourse. At the same time, Wendy B. Faris' theorizing provides me with a suitable position to test my claims to analyze my primary feminist postcolonial texts as magical realist texts. I also employ relevant concepts of postcolonial magical realist/feminist critics. This research invokes theorizing of magical realist theorist(s) as two of my primary writers are Latin American and one South Asian. Whenever I talk about postcolonial/feminism, they are not studied separately; they are clubbed because of their intersectional and interventional nature. To support my argument, I have drawn parallels between feminism and postcolonialism. For a better understanding, I want to discuss my theoretical framework under the following headings:

- A Rationale for Patricia Hart's Concept of Magical Feminism

- Stephen Slemon's Theorizing on Magical Realism as Postcolonial Discourse
- Wendy B. Faris: Defining Magical Realism

3.2.1. A Rationale for Patricia Hart's Concept of Magical Feminism

I invoke Patricia Hart's definition of magical feminism as my theoretical lens to see if it fits my primary texts. Since Hart is the coiner of "magical feminism," she wants a definition free from "femino-cultural imperialism". To her, "magical feminism" is "magical realism" employed in a femino-centric work or one that is especially insightful into the condition of women" (Hart 32). She further states that her definition overlaps with Ellen Morgan's definition of the *Neo-Feminist Novel*, she insists that "it should show the condition of women from old to new forms, and that the way this is shown should at all times seek to be authentic" (145). She deliberately avoids the use of the word feminism only in her definition. Patricia Hart gives a detailed rationale for the term that many people have different expectations and interpretations of the word feminism:

Some critics view it as "equal opportunities in the workplace, while others believe it implies special considerations for women at home raising children, and indeed how these children (male and female) might best be raised. Some define it in terms of affirmative action to correct past inequalities or speak of special "feminine" insight, intuition, or other traits. Some think it means new opportunities for women, and others see in it a breakdown of traditional values and the destruction of the family. Then some think it is about who has to wash the dishes on a given night". (30)

Because of this, a dictionary definition is not likely to be of much help, and Hart does not feel satisfied with the one the *American Heritage Dictionary* offers: "A doctrine that advocates or demands for women the same rights granted men, as in political or economic status" (30). Moreover, Hart has coined the definition of "magical feminism" as a tool to deal with the fiction of Allende's *THS*, (Esquivel's *LWC* and Rizvi's *TBR*). She proposes to examine whether the fiction of Isabel Allende may be called "magically feminist" either because it is plainly "magical realism" used to make points about the female condition or because, in certain specific instances, it uses magic to demonstrate a truth about the female

condition” (32). In addition to that she “subtly calls the whole literary tradition into question, asking if at present “magical realism” is [an] appropriate vehicle for her continent at all, or whether magic may at times be opiate of the oppressed” (Hart 32). I have invoked the notions mentioned above as a theoretical lens to read my primary texts. The cited sources in the discussion are from Patricia Hart’s *Narrative Magic in the Fiction of Isabel Allende*. I contextualize the three women writers in the discussion to make a magical feminist point.

Hart argues why she deliberately avoids the use of “feminism” in her definition for its being inadequate and elusive; therefore, she employs the term “magical feminism”, as the definition of feminism “*ignores the vast emotional charge* that accompanies the word, evoking the freedom of choice to some, while terrifying others with specters of what they consider morally unacceptable alternatives such as lesbian lifestyles and abortion on demand” (emphasis added 30). It is interesting to examine how Allende, Esquivel, and Rizvi use magical realism to their advantage to score feminist points. I have tried to document it in my analysis chapters.

Hart finds Allende’s working definition of “clairvoyance” is useful, and I invoke the very definition of clairvoyance as a lens to read my primary texts. To Allende, “Clara is able to see the future, to read the minds or auras of those near her, and to envision scenes and objects at a distance, she is also possessed at times of acute insights and perceptions.” (Hart 38). Allende’s definition of clairvoyance is most nearly in accordance with the one borrowed from *American Heritage Dictionary*, “First, the power to perceive things that are out of the natural range of human senses. Second, acute insight or perceptiveness” (38). Hart terms the magic of clairvoyance in *THS* as magical feminism (55). Similarly, in Laura Esquivel’s *LWC*, Tita’s magic of culinary skills and its impact on the people who consume food, in Rizvi’s *TBR*, Zaib’s communication with the talking walls, to read the mind of people like Jalal and his sons rescues her father are the examples of clairvoyance.

Hart unpacks the mechanics of magical realism by tracing its trajectory. It is pertinent to discuss how concepts like realism, magic, magical realism, and clairvoyance are defined and explained in the light of critics and dictionaries. The simplest and the most

literary definition of realism is “the idea of an imitation of nature” (Hart 12). According to *Webster’s Third New International Dictionary*, realism can be defined as “Preoccupation with fact or reality. The objective procedure is not influenced by idealism, speculation, or sentimentalism; disposition to think or act unemotionally and to reject what is impractical and visionary” (Webster). Magical realism can be defined as “it is realism that is juxtaposed with magic. If realism implies an objective narrative, then magic sometimes implies just the opposite — a subjective touch, an idealistic brush stroke” (Hart 16). The novels *THS*, *LWC*, and *TBR* hold realistic and fictional accounts. Realists do not want to sound like idealists; they want to be realists. George Eliot is one of the earliest realist novelists who urged her opinion in an aside in *Adam Bede* (Chapter 17). She states:

[T]hese fellow mortals . . . must be accepted as they are: you can neither straighten their noses nor brighten their wits . . . So, I am content to tell my simple story . . . dead nothing but falsity, which despite one’s best efforts, there is nothing to dread.
(Eliot 165-66)

Patricia Hart defines magic in the light of a couple of dictionaries, as it is usually confused with magical; certain writers use the term alternatively because their features overlap and sometimes lead to magic. *Webster’s Dictionary* defines magic as simple sleight of hand: “The art of producing unusual illusions by legerdemain” (Webster). According to the *American Heritage Dictionary*, the definition of magic sounds more helpful: “The art . . . that attempts to produce supernatural effects or to control events in nature” (Heritage). It further says that “[A] power that seems to violate or go beyond natural laws” (Heritage). The best way to define magic is by contrast with natural law. Sir James George Frazer defines magic: “It is a spurious system of natural law as well as a fallacious guide of conduct; it is a false science as well as an abortive art” (qtd. in Hart 11). It is generally taken for granted that every person of the twentieth century knows about natural law, which sounds too good to be true. Even for the most modern scientist, it is hard to claim that he knows all natural laws. The three female writers, Allende, Esquivel, and Rizvi, belong to postcolonial societies, considered primitive, superstitious, and non-scientific. In this regard, the term is relevant. People cherish primitive beliefs as not contrary to the scientific; to them, natural laws are very much spiritual, magical, and real.

Hart theorizes magic which “produces a sense of wonder, a wonder that cannot be dispelled by a rational explanation as, can say the initial marvel at some new electronic gadget. If the sense of wonder is missing, “magic” is devalued to “trickery” (18). To her, any phenomenon which produces a sense of awe in its spectator cannot be dispelled by what we think we know or what we assume somebody knows of natural laws (19). The definition sounds pragmatic within the realm of ‘magical realism.’ Latin American writers felt they might come under the threatening spell of cultural imperialism. To counter this overwhelming influence, for that very reason, they tried to innovate their own style of writing, unique and indigenous. After the Second World War, a new wave emerged in writing fiction by Latin American writers in particular: the paradigm shifted from realistic or natural writing to surrealism and existentialism due to dictatorial regimes and absurdity in European human conditions. This strategy was employed to politely expose the dictatorial regimes’ naked realism. Imbert states that post-World War II writers wrote prolifically ‘gratuitous literature,’ an amalgamation of materialism and spiritualism, pleasingly alluring and grotesque, a blend of utopianism and dystopianism (517). These features mentioned above are very much present in the multicultural works of the three female writers. North and South American and South Asian writers are simultaneously engaged with expressing the juxtaposition of the supernatural and the real, formulating magical realism. It is not mere fantasy or illusion; something real occurs every day.

To conclude, Hart’s rationale for magical feminism sounds convincing. She talks at length regarding clairvoyance and allocates a complete chapter in her book *Narrative Magic in the Fiction of Isabel Allende* to magical feminism and defines it in the light of different dictionaries. She tries to explain magic, magical realism, and magical feminism in detail. She also refers to different critics who find an interesting connection between auric colors, especially regarding different characters in *THS*.

3.2.2. Stephen Slemon’s Theorizing on Magic Realism as Postcolonial Discourse

This essay “Magic Realism as Postcolonial Discourse” shows how Stephen Slemon’s theorizing levels the field for magical realist text as a postcolonial read. When I say Stephen Slemon’s theorizing opens a new dimension, I mean that Slemon provides a sound

theoretical foundation for the concept of magic realism, which it lacked before. Stephen Slemon refers to many critics, like Amaryll Chanady, Roberto Gonzales Echevarria, Fredric Jameson, Jean Weisgerber, Robert Wilson, Susan Beckmann, Enrique Anderson Imbert, James Irish, and Seymour Menton, who are of the view that “The concept of magic realism is a troubled one for literary theory” (9). I employ some of his theoretical concepts as a prop to test my claims. I read my primary texts as postcolonial magical realist texts; Stephen’s theorizing supports my reading. Slemon argues, “[I]f magic realism is read as a postcolonial discourse in this way, a framework for reading texts across post-colonial cultures can be established not merely on the basis of shared conditions of marginality in relation to metropolitan cultures, but also on the basis of shared literary response to postcolonial conditions” (20). I invoke this concept of Slemon as a theoretical lens to analyze my primary texts. According to Slemon, “Such a matrix can provide a basis for comparing works differing widely in genre” (20). Moreover, against it, a comparative reading of Isabel Allende, Laura Esquivel, and Nafisa Rizvi might prove fruitful.

Some other critics and theorists support Slemon’s contention that magical realist texts can be read as postcolonial. Harris argues that postcolonial studies offer a good strategy to read, interpret and analyze magical realist texts through cross-cultural imagination. He further states that magical realist text allows us “to perceive *realism and fantasy* as a threshold into *evolution and alchemy*. That threshold is a component of the “mental bridge” within and across cultures . . .” (stress original 74). In my primary texts, this approach operates within magical realist texts as continuous within the dissimilar postcolonial cultural context. When magical realist text is read as postcolonial discourse, it provides a positive and liberating response to the codes of colonial and imperial history and its legacy of fragmentation and discontinuity. The postcolonial magical realist writers formulate new codes of recognition through which the silenced and the marginalized can be voiced and centered.

Kroetsch and Kenyon draw a symmetrical intimacy between magical realism and postcolonialism; they argue that “magic realism as a literary practice seems to be closely linked with a perception of “living on the margins” encoding within it, perhaps, a concept of resistance to the massive imperial center and its totalizing systems” (15). The texts of

the three novels deal with the perception of the dispossessed and marginalized objects and position them as agentic postcolonial subjects. The female protagonists of the three novels (Clara, Blanca, Alba, Tita, Gertrudis, and Zaib) resist patriarchy and challenge oppressive socio-cultural systems that silence them. They exert their identity and agency in their own capacity.

This research focuses on those aspects of the novels that share features of common concern in postcolonial literature. It provides a platform to draw comparative analysis among different postcolonial cultures and appreciate the continuities/similarities and dissimilarities in literature written at different geographical locations. The phrase “Magical Realism” is an oxymoron that refers to a binary, magical and real:

In the language of narration in a magical realist text, a battle between two oppositional systems takes place, each working toward the creation of a different kind of fictional world from the other. Since the ground rules of these two worlds are incompatible, neither one can fully come into being, and each remains suspended, locked in a continuous dialectic with the “other,” a situation which creates disjunction within each of the separate discursive systems, rending them gaps, absences, and silences. (Slemon 11)

I also employ this notion as a theoretical lens to fill the gaps, absences, and silences in my primary texts. There is (a)symmetrical intimacy between magical realism and postcolonialism. Both the narrative modes (magical and real) move side by side without subordinating or containing each other. This use of language carries a great significance in the postcolonial cultural context. It is generally assumed that postcolonial texts operate within a certain framework like double vision of the history of the colonizer and the colonized. Tiffin termed it “metaphysical clash” (32).

According to Faris, both the postcolonial and the magical realist texts have decolonizing styles and allow minor voices (the silenced and the marginalized) to emerge and be heard within the mainstream. Stephen Slemon considers magical realism as a central element of postcolonial literature. In magical realist texts, the language of narration is divided into two oppositional systems to create different fictional worlds from the other.

Magic realism has gifted the writers to develop a strategy for writing in a postcolonial world. Magic realist techniques question dominant discourse or Western assumptions, the same kinds of decolonizing moves that we find in postcolonial texts.

I partly employ this idea that the magical realist texts rewrite colonial history consciously in their fiction to set the record right. According to Dash, “people in the postcolonial cultures constantly engage in a special “dialogue with history”” (65). It is true, especially about *THS*, where the last chapters discuss history graphically and captures the revolutionary spirit and oppression of the dictatorial regime of General Augusto Pinochet. I have discussed it in the Analysis chapter. He further states that magical realist text in a postcolonial context may be best defined as a healing “re-visioning” process of colonial fractures through introspection, a process that produces a “positive imaginative reconstruction of reality” (66). Magic realist text tends to neutralize the fantastic elements into narrative realism and begins closely reading with the fantastic. The novels remain suspended between the magical and the real narratives. I argue that magical realist texts embed postcolonial elements of myths, history, and folklore. Colonialism is bent on erasing the memory, whereas postcolonial texts give space to the imaginative revision in which people have no control to express their silenced voices. In this regard, the role of postcolonial texts is categorical and aggressive. It also emphasizes that writing (real) is futuristic and oral (magical) literature is postcolonial, traditional, and nostalgic. It mentions that magic operates in postcolonial cultures and structures in a way to form a new mode of fiction that can be recognized as magical real. This form of fiction contains oppositional style, duality, a plurality of worlds, and the postcolonial legacy.

To Bhabha, magic realism has become the literary language of the emergent postcolonial world (6). Similarly, Alfonso Grosso considers the term “magical realism” something third- worldly and primitive” (191). Jacques Stephen Alexis, states that “magical realism weds postcolonial politics of resistance and self-definition to the autochthonous, and continuous the political deployment of magical realist aesthetics begun by preceding authors: “Myths and magical traditions, he further argues, were the collective forms by which they gave expression to their identity and articulated their difference from the dominant colonial and racial oppressors” (132- 3). For Alexis, “Magical realism refers

to the inclusion of any mythic or legendary material from local or oral traditions in the contemporary narrative” (269). It is done to challenge Eurocentric assumptions, their linear narrative and to include the existing meta-text that strengthens their native pre-colonial culture. Suzanne Baker considers magical realism a “postcolonial strategy” successfully deployed from Latin American fiction to other postcolonial contexts (89).

It has been observed that magical realist texts are almost obsessed with ideas based on imagery, history, and myth. The three texts are packed with the concepts mentioned above: imagery, myth, and history. The characters’ connection with the spirits in the three novels is mythic; Allende’s *House of the Spirits* discusses family and country history aggressively and categorically, but to dilute its impact, in magical fiction, the writer employs fictional character(s) that makes it a compromising text in that it is not up front discussing politics. To postcolonial writers, printing discourages and obliterates colonial memory and past; it attempts to fix the past as a dead record and excludes but, at the same time, energizes and allows the creation of marginal spaces for the lost voices to recover and make them speak through imaginative reconstruction of reality. In this sense, we cannot say that it is merely mimetic; it is more of a creative and kind of the empire writes back response. According to Faris, “the carnivalesque side of the magical realism is that in which its realistic fictional language is partially freed from its habitual mimetic constraints. But only partially” (34).

To sum up, it may be said that Stephen Slemon provides a lens, a prop, and a theoretical foundation to magical realist texts that can be read as postcolonial discourse. It discusses the mechanics of how the primary magical realist texts can be analyzed within a postcolonial theoretical framework. Moreover, the primary texts are analyzed through postcolonial feminist key concepts like patriarchy/matriarchy, the colonizer and the colonized, hybridity, colonialism/imperialism, feminism, marginalization, objectification, and commodification of women, sexuality, agency, identity, stereotyping, othering, race, gender, and class. Furthermore, it discusses themes of common interest like history and myth. To Stephen Slemon and many others, magical realist text is a postcolonial discourse. Magic realism is an effective tool of decolonization so is postcolonialism. Nevertheless, at the same time, magic realist text is a textual mimicry; therefore, it is dominantly realist and

colonizer's discourse. Realist fiction is a European import. As textual mimicry, the text becomes a hybrid that undermines the authority of realism. Magic realist text has the authority to represent postcolonial society as well as metropolitan centers.

3.2.3. Wendy B. Faris: Defining Magical Realism

Wendy B. Faris' definitions in her book *Ordinary Enchantments: Magical Realism and the Remystification of Narrative*, sound convincing. I invoke her definitions as a theoretical framework to read my primary texts. I find the definitions comprehensive and all-inclusive. Though she applies the five chief characteristics to postmodern fiction, the definitions equally apply to postcolonial texts because my primary texts contain all these features. According to Faris, these are the five primary characteristics of magical realism:

First, the text contains an "irreducible element" of magic; second, the descriptions in magical realism detail a strong presence of the phenomenal world; third, the reader may experience some unsettling doubts in the effort to reconcile two contradictory understandings of events; fourth, the narrative merges different realms; and, finally, magical realism disturbs received ideas about time, space, and identity. (7)

I am also employing some concepts of Wendy B. Faris' essay "Women and Women and Women" to analyze my primary texts, especially *LWC*. This essay includes headings like "Housekeeping, Virgin Paper; or, Inhabiting Female Bodies, The Female Body of Writing, Cooking, and "La Mysterique" (170-219). Faris argues that women help an individual not only grow as an individual with full potential but also help him equally be an effective member of a community as well.

Similarly, magical realist texts do the same function: giving voice to the unvoiced in their own communities and the pluralistic world (172). Most of its concepts are employed for the textual analysis of my primary text *LWC*. I discuss it in detail in my analysis chapter of *LWC*.

These definitions offer a comprehensive theoretical framework to locate magical elements in my primary texts. Moreover, the theoretical insights of the other magical critics are equally helpful in appreciating magical realism and its different dimensions. The book

is a canonical text and a must-read to appreciate the essence of magical realism. Chapter 1, “Definitions and Locations,” is good for developing my theoretical framework, and the last chapter is helpful for textual analysis of the fifth chapter *LWC*. I argue that this book has demystified the ordinary enchantments into the extraordinary. I found it a compelling read to unpack the complexities of magical realism. The book reinforces the idea that it has become rather imperative for Latin American women, in particular, and the women of the Third World, in general, to occupy public space to counter patriarchy and matriarchy.

3.3 Research Methodology

This research is qualitative, interpretative and library based. I am involved in dealing with the critical reading of the cultural and historical texts. I have used Catherine Belsey’s idea of Textual Analysis and Celena Kusch’s idea of Comparative Analysis as research methods. Celena Kusche’s essay ‘comparative analysis’ is included in her book, *Literary Analysis: the basics*. I have provided a rationale for using these research methods in the forthcoming paragraphs. First, I have discussed ‘Belsey’s textual analysis as a research method’.

Catherine Belsey’s essay, “Textual Analysis as a Research Method,” is included in Gabriel Griffin’s *Research Methods for English Studies*. I have employed her notions of textual analysis to read my text. There may be multiple readings/interpretations of the same literary text by using different theoretical lenses in a literary text, meanings are never fixed, single, or final. Belsey argues:

The questions I address to this painting are much the sort I would raise in reading any text, written or visual. What is it about? What kinds of prior knowledge might illuminate it? What difference does it make if we locate the work textually and historically? What position, or range of positions, does the text offer its reader? (160-61)

In this regard, the role of the reader becomes crucial who critically reads/interprets the text, inter- texts, and tries to establish the *difference* of the text in question. The reader analyzes the text on multiple levels like, poetical, metaphorical, allegorical, and

philosophical. Textual analysis provides the researcher with the key to say something new: “what is distinctive about the text [of the three women writers] emerge as its difference from the others” (Belsey 160). It can be understood as “close reading of cultural artifacts. It has to be informed by background research into the context of the cultural artifact under scrutiny, the context of its production, its content and its consumption” (12). Moreover, textual analysis encourages the use of secondary sources that give the research not only authenticity but also gives him support that whatever s/he says has already been said in the existing scholarship. Secondary sources provide the researcher with “well- informed, coherent and rhetorically persuasive arguments” (Belsey 160).

Textual analysis is useful to the projects in which text is appropriated for cultural inscription. As my project deals with magical feminist postcolonial reading of the three women writers, it underscores that women are domesticated in houses or kitchens, they are flattered beguiled by the title ‘angel in the house’ if they shun that space they are labeled otherwise (evil/witches) if we read the text through magical feminist/postcolonial lenses reader finds “portrayal of male authority, distribution of power, the relationship between ‘at home and abroad’, and absence or presence of rulers” (6). Belsey contends Barthes with reference to “Death of the Author,” undermines the role of the reader, to her, “text has priority; ideally, the text sets the agenda” (147). No text is innocent, it has a political/ideological agenda.

It may be said that Belsey tries to settle the debate “The death of the Author and the birth of the Reader” which has been misunderstood and misinterpreted by the reader and the critics alike. Belsey underscores the significance of the text and gives it a priority over the two without undermining their importance. She argues that the three (author, text, and the implied reader) complement one another. Moreover, there can be multiple interpretations of the same text, in textual analysis, the main job of the analyst/the potential reader is to explore something that exists in its difference, and the meaning is never fixed, single, or final. Textual analysis has a feature similar to that of Derrida’s poststructuralist stance, where meaning is plural and multiple.

If a reader is advanced and well-read, socially, culturally, and historically, he can

interpret the text well but it does not mean to his own will. Every work is written for the implied reader's consumption. As a researcher, one cannot interpret Latin American text, till or unless s/he is not familiar with Latin American culture and history. Fish redefines the role of the reader, for him, "Reading is not a matter of discovering what the text means, but a process of experiencing what it *does* to you . . . and in response what we do to it; a question of interpretation" (74). For the reader, the text is inviting that allows the reader to construct meaning. The text is full of "indeterminacies" where the reader becomes proactive to interpret the text in multiple ways. He lays down some 'certain interpretative strategies' which are common to the reader's competence to unearth the hidden, in this regard reader's role becomes active. The reader is not free from social, cultural, and literary engagements, his mind is not a tabula rasa while reflecting the text; it does inscribe its own inscription. In other words, we can say that "no reading is innocent or without presuppositions" (77). Wayne Booth argues that "We must never forget that though the author can to some extent choose his disguise, he can never choose to disappear" (20). Celena Kusch's comparative analysis is quite relevant for the comparative analysis of my primary texts is given below.

I have employed some of the concepts of Celena Kusch's comparative analysis from her book *Literary Analysis: the basics*, to analyze my primary texts as a research method. Kusch considers comparing one of the most crucial critical thinking strategies employed in any analysis (80). Moreover, Comparative analysis allows us to compare texts "across cultures, periods, genres, locations, and/or times" (Kusch 81). The three women writers are located in different geographical locations and have distinctive cultures. For this kind of study, this method is useful. Felski and Friedman argue that:

Comparison is a mode of thinking . . . that seems fundamental to human understanding and creativity and that depends upon principles of relation and differentiation. Not just a cornerstone of analytic thought, comparison pervades everyday life as one of the ways in which we organize and make sense of the world around us. (2013, pp. 1–2)

Comparative analysis further allows us to compare the shared themes and examine

their detailed applications. By comparing across differences, we learn more about our human similarities through literature's common themes, such as love, death, loss, coming-of-age . . . the relationship between the human and the divine (Kusch 83). Women also want to enjoy economic independence and their role in the public sphere, like politics. For thematic comparisons, the texts do not require any direct connections. In fact, no literature is produced in isolation; it is intertextual.

Julia Kristeva states, "the concept of intertextuality recognizes that even from the earliest written literature, texts are produced in dialogue with each other, whether intentionally or not" (qtd. in Kusch 85). The texts of the three women writers carry allusions from different genres like science fiction, fantasy literature, thriller, and horror movies. I have referred to these aspects of intertextuality in my analysis chapters. Linda Hutcheon argues that "art is derived from other art; stories are born of other stories . . . retold . . . in new forms" (2). While reading the primary texts of the three women writers, the reader feels as if they are under the magical spell of Gabriel Garcia Marquez. The connections may be purely coincidental whether the writer has gone through the texts or not. The reader encounters cultural myths, fictionalized political turmoil, and religious discourse.

Making literature widely accessible to different readers at different times was challenging. But in today's world, translations are common and vital in converting literature in other languages to a global audience. Two of my primary texts have been translated from Spanish to English. In this regard, this method of comparative analysis suits my study. Regarding translation, Kusch states, "The strategies of comparative analysis in order to interpret intertextuality, readers can approach translations, a multilingual reader/writer attempts to convey in a new language the content, style, and meaning of a source text" (88).

It may be said that Celena Kusch's essay "Comparative Analysis" has helped me for the analysis of my primary selected texts out of three two of them are translated works. Moreover, translation bridges cultural gaps but at the same time makes the reader conscious of the cultural differences that exist between nations and cultures.

3.4 Conclusion

In this chapter I have tried to give a rationale for employing the concepts of Patricia Hart, Stephen Slemon, and Wendy B. Faris respectively as theoretical props to read my primary texts. Since I analyze my primary texts in a comparative mode, Clena Kushes' idea of comparative analysis supports in many ways, my use of Belsy's textual analysis as a research method. My theoretical framework and research methodology have supported my analysis in forth coming chapters. A fair idea of theoretical framework and research methodology has supported me in the next three chapters on the analysis of my primary texts.

Chapter 4

Clairvoyance at Work: Isabel Allende's *The House of the Spirits*

Clara lived in a universe of her own invention, protected from life's inclement weather, where the prosaic truth of material objects mingled with the tumultuous reality of dreams and the laws of physics and logic did not always apply.

—Isabel Allende, *The House of the Spirits*, 92.

"I would like to have been born a man, so I could leave too," she said full of hatred. "And I would not have liked to be a woman," he said.

—Isabel Allende, *The House of the Spirits*, 50.

4.1 Introduction

This chapter examines women's emotional and physical needs. The novel depicts the marginalization of women within patriarchal and religious structures, highlighting patriarchy's stereotypical tendencies. It showcases the transformation of women from passive object positions to empowered subjects through the protagonists' clairvoyant abilities.

Allende attempts to demonstrate how women are abused for their being vulnerable, racially and economically. But, at the same time, the reader finds them struggling to gain subjective agency. Allende foregrounds postcolonial issues of race, class, and gender. As the text is magical feminist/realist, the protagonists seek assistance from apparitions. The protagonists are empowered through magical realist techniques like clairvoyance, interpretation of dreams, telekinesis, telepathy, mind or aura reading, and prognostication. Isabel Allende employs magical realist techniques like supernaturalization, hybridity, defamiliarization, grotesque, and narrative magic. I have tried to explore whether Allende

has successfully incorporated magical realist techniques in feminist postcolonial text. To vindicate my reading claims in the text analysis, I have used Patricia Hart, Stephen Slemon, and Wendy B. Faris theoretical positions as a prop to read my primary texts. Belsey's textual analysis and Celena Kusch's comparative analysis of texts have been used as research methods for the analysis of *THS*.

Isabel Allende (1942) is a prolific writer and one of the most celebrated contemporary Latin American literary figures. She has been awarded numerous prestigious national and international awards, like the Hispanic Heritage Award in Literature (the United States, 1996), National Literature Prize in 2010, Library of Congress Creative Achievement Award for Fiction (the USA, 2010), Hans Christian Andersen Literature Award (Denmark, 2012), President Barack Obama awarded her the 2014 Presidential Medal of Freedom, Anisfield-Wolf Book Award: Lifetime Achievement (the United States, 2017). She has written 23 books, some of her major works have been translated into 35 languages, nearly 70 million copies have been sold. She has been awarded 15 international honorary doctorates along with 60 awards in over 15 countries. Her literary works have been adapted for movies, plays, musicals, operas, ballets, and radio programs. Her fiction is based on history, politics, culture, and a blend of myth, magical feminism, and personal experiences.

She was born in Lima, Peru. She belongs to a political ruling and diplomat family. Her father's first cousin, Salvador Allende (Former President of Chile), was removed and later assassinated by the military coup under military dictator General Augusto Pinochet in 1973. After the coup, the situation became extremely hazardous, and she had to leave Chile to save her life. When she came to know that her grandfather, who was 99 was on deathbed. She thought to write a long letter to celebrate her cherished memories. The letter took the form of a book *THS* (1982). The inclusion of magical feminism makes it a great read. She has her own style of writing and is often compared to Gabriel Garcia Marquez. Some of her works include *Of Love and Shadows* (1987) *And Shadows* (1987), *Eva Luna* (1989), *The Infinite Plan* (1991), *Daughter Of Fortune* (1999), *Zorro* (2005), *Ines of My Soul* (2006), *Island Beneath The Sea* (2010), *Ripper* (2014) and *The Japanese Lover* (2015), *In the Midst of Winter* (2017), and her latest book *A Long Patels of the Sea* published in 2019.

Clara's daughter Blanca develops a deep relationship with Pedro Tercero, which results in nothing but conception. Pedro Tercero is the son of Pedro Segundo, the peasant foreman of Tres Marias. When Trueba learns about Pedro Tercero, a man far inferior in race and class, he hurls a tirade of abuses and pledges that he will not spare him. Trueba tells Blanca that he has killed Pedro, and now she is left with no option except to marry Jean de Satory. Alba (daughter of Alba) becomes the center of attraction and proves a lucky child for the family. After Clara's death, things move from bad to worse. Now, Alba is eighteen and a university student; she meets Miguel and falls in love. He is a revolutionary and later becomes a guerilla leader. Political turmoil in the country is mounting day by day. Socialists win the elections. Soon after the coup, he realizes that he has committed a mistake; he does not get the due share and respect in the new government; rather, he is humiliated, his daughter is arrested in front of his eyes, and he finds himself helpless.

The narrator shows how injustice and exploitation are done to the Indians and their lands. Consequently, he is bent to take revenge on Alba (the poor victim) for the injustice done to his family. Trueba is left with no choice except to seek assistance from Transito Soto, who, by that time, is well connected with the military high-ups. She runs a brothel. She makes a promise of Alba's rescue, which she fulfills. Alba does not go for abortion, though she is not sure whose child she bears, whether it is Miguel or the result of rape during Esteban Garcia's custody. Alba and Esteban are busy writing the family saga and fifty years of history of the country. The concluding chapters underscore the oppression perpetrated by the dictatorial regime of Pinochet.

The novel can be read on both micro and macro levels: on a macro level, Tres Marias may be compared to a colony, colonized by the colonizer, Trueba. The intensive reader finds binaries in the text, like the class struggle between land-owning upper-class criollos (a criollo is a person who is born and raised in South America but is a direct descendant of Spaniards, the del Valle Trueba family) and Garcia's family who represents the peasant class, civilization versus poverty, and ideological rift and conflict between Marxism and Capitalism. In postcolonial magical realist texts, worlds are incompatible and binaristically drawn generates othering within discursive system rendering them gaps,

absences and silences (Slemon 11). The novel's protagonists (the three women) assert their agentive subjectivity against patriarchy differently and subtly. The three women writers highlight the issues like childbirth, abortion, and sexual violence against women. Allende also talks about the significance of genealogy (issues of family names and their genealogies). While discussing postcolonialism, the issues of class, race, and gender also come into play.

Magical realism provides a means for the writers to express a non-dominant or non-Western perspective, whether that be from a feminist, postcolonial standpoint, in opposition to dominant cultural discourse (Bowers 102). All the approaches tend to recuperate the voices of the silenced and the marginalized. Magical realist [feminist] writers tend to consciously attempt to reconstruct imaginatively and recuperate the lost voices that have been pushed to the margins of consciousness and bring those discarded fragments to the center (Slemon 16). In the genres, invisibly visible hybrid, oxymoronic binaries are drawn between magical and real, black and white, and women and men, with special emphasis on women for their marginalized position. In postcolonial magical realist texts, linguistic binaries are drawn; during the dialectical interplay of the binaries, fixity is undermined and eroded, consequently rendering gaps and absences that further generate “otherness” (my paraphrase Slemon 18). Hegerfeldt argues that women are marginalized to the extent that they do not have access [voice] to the power circles/centers in a male-dominated society (122). Deborah Cohen states, “Allende considers magical realism as a kind of support system for feminine writing, confirming its decolonizing potential for women” (qtd. in Faris 177). Magic realism has gifted the writers to develop a postcolonial writing strategy. Magic realist technique questions dominant discourse or Western assumptions, the same kinds of decolonizing moves that we find in postcolonial texts. The postcolonial magical realist texts produce a nostalgic longing for the world that has passed or passed away (Slemon 19). In the novel, Allende attempts to recuperate the world she had lost, which was taken from her. I have analyzed the text under the following headings:

- Navigating Features of Magical Feminism
- Patriarchal Oppression and Exploitation of Women

- The Intersections of Race, Class, and Gender
- Magical Realist Elements
- Magical Realism, a Mode of Socio-political Critique
- Conclusion

4.2 Navigating Features of Magical Feminism

*Where there is a woman there is magic*_____

This woman is a consort of the spirits.

—Ntozake Shange, *Sassafras, Cypress, and Indigo*

To analyze the novel, I invoked Patricia Hart’s notion as a prop (theoretical lens) to read my primary texts. Hart explains that magical realism is a complex ploy by Allende for feminist purposes. She argues that the magical realism in *THS* is associated only with the women of the novel and lessens with the domination of the male world of political violence in Chile. According to Maria Rojas, “*THS* is a femino-centric novel in that the female characters here are not in the traditional roles found in the masculine writing, but rather are force fields that challenge patriarchal despotism, social-sexual prejudices, dictatorship, and political repression” (919). *THS* is packed with events where Clara is gifted with the magical power of clairvoyance since childhood. She is the principal vessel of magic in the novel. Hart terms magic of clairvoyance in *THS* as magical feminism. Mario A. Rojas calls the novel “neofeminista” (55). As far as clairvoyance is concerned, it has been defined by the people “as the ability to see the future or to read minds” (Hart 38).

This analysis traces some of them in Allende’s text. Clara’s family, her supernatural powers were considered an ordinary phenomenon, when sumptuous dinners were served and parties were thrown, before the guests had taken their seats according to dignity and position, “the saltcellar would suddenly begin to shake and move among the plates and goblets without any visible sources of energy or sign of illusionist trick. Nivea would pull Clara’s braids and that would be enough to wake her daughter from mad distraction and

return the saltcellar to immobility” (8). Her telekinetic ability to move furniture across the room and forecast catastrophe is nothing but an innate flair (9). Hart claims that “the women find other sources of power, such as telepathy, in the absence of access to any other real power” (54). When Clara grew in age and experience her telepathic and telekinetic abilities sharpened, she could set things into motion effortlessly. She could make predictions since the age of six regarding events like earthquakes or any other calamity that is going to occur in the near future that may cause ten thousand deaths (9).

Prophecy also falls in the clairvoyance category (Hart 41). Clara tells Luis about his fall from the horse, which he does not take seriously, and consequently gets his hip dislocated (9). She makes a prophecy regarding the death of her godfather, who has lost hope to revive in the Stock Exchange Market and commits suicide. She also makes a forecast of her father’s hernia. Though empowered with the magical gift of professing, in reality, she cannot avert her father’s hernia and earthquakes. But this magical gift of hers helps the poor and the needy. There is a pack of coachmen, gardeners, storekeepers, and milkmen outside her house who are temporarily benefited through her interpretations of dreams. She identifies the murderer of school girls; she also informs her father that Getulio Armando would cheat and deprive him of half of his fortune in business as she has read his aura. She breaks her silence and announces that she is going to marry Rosa’s fiancé, Trueba, who is at her door to ask for her hand (93).

During her pregnancy, she announces that she would have a baby girl named Blanca (112). She tells her daughter Blanca that Pedro Tercero Garcia is alive; on hearing it, she becomes alive, and her unstoppable tears dry for the following many years (241). During her second pregnancy, she informs us that she has twins Jaime and Nicolas (128). She makes clear premonitions about what exactly happens to her parents how they die, and where the head of her mother lies after a fatal accident without listening to the radio or reading any newspapers (133). Similarly, she announces Ferula’s death with utmost certainty. She has a hunch that Nicolas’ flying machine expedition would fail on technical grounds like the unavailability of a city permit (255).

It is also observed that in the latter part of the novel, it gradually fades away for its

own reasons. Clairvoyance or prescience is employed as a symbol to empower women for their being unskilled or semi-skilled, and it can be synonymous with the old myth of feminine intuition. Hart argues, “Clara uses her clairvoyance as an excuse for non-action; it is used as a metaphor for female passivity, sensitivity, and intuition” (53). Clara’s gift of prescience fails her regarding the death of her godfather in an accident. Though Nivea dreams it before her death. Prescience can be termed as a part joke and part practical. The real magic lies in that it comes into action before the disaster. Clara cannot penetrate through her clairvoyance the mounting tension, prolonged jealousy, and strained relationship between her husband (Esteban) and his sister Ferula, who lives with the couple. In the end, she is expelled and disgraced at the hands of patriarchy.

Similarly, her prediction timer goes off to prevent Tres Marias from turning into rubble in an earthquake disaster. However, she is forewarned that the ominous disaster may cause ten thousand deaths. Esteban Trueba takes it very lightly, whereas Blanca remains unmindful of the prediction of her being completely absorbed in love with Pedro Tercero Garcia. Clara’s clairvoyance also fails to educate her daughter regarding contraceptive methods, secondly in knowing whether Pedro Tercero is dead or alive. Thirdly unable to warn Blanca regarding Jean Satigny’s announcement of their nocturnal conjugal love, and, fourthly, they cannot forecast her marriage to Jean Satigny, whose sexual inclinations start at pederasty that causes her disgust and confusion. Most of the postcolonial societies are patriarchal; therefore, women are subject to suppression and exploitation.

4.3 Patriarchal Oppression and Exploitation of Women

Whitlock argues that Latin American women were “perceived reductively not as sexual but as reproductive subjects, as literal ‘wombs of the empire whose function was limited to the population of new colonies with white settlers’” (95). I contend that for a man like Trueba, sex is a chief source of pleasure. Trueba sees a fifteen-year-old Pancha Garcia as a new prey to his desire. Allende gives a graphic description of her figure in these words:

She was big-boned and had an Indian face, with broad features, dark skin, and a sweet peaceful expression . . . when she smiled her whole face lit up, but that did

not happen often. She had the beauty of early youth, although he could see that it would quickly fade, as it does with other women . . . (65)

Allende's *THS* is packed with illustrations of symmetrical intimacy between postcoloniality and feminism. Pancha Garcia raises questions and answers herself as to why her early youthful beauty and that of many other women like her have faded away. Who is responsible for killing their radiant smile? Why are they in rags, bare feet, and head bowed, and why have their smooth, soft, delicate hands turned into rough and hard hands? Trueba has become a symbol of sexual harassment, which can be defined as "unwanted sexual advances by a man to a woman. Among these are touching, suggestive comments, poking, leering, assault, attempted rape" (Walby 38). Women of colour, in particular, are sexualized female bodies meant to produce as many children as they can. Men sexualize women and dominate them. Sexuality is the medium through which men dominate women. Under the circumstances, women hardly get sexual pleasure. Walby contends that in the United States and Scandinavian countries, sexual intercourse without the consent of the wife is considered rape (128-9). On the other hand, Mackinnon considers that "sexuality is the basis; women are defined as sexual objects by men in all aspects of life; this is not only in arenas such as the family but also paid work, as her analysis of sexual harassment of women in paid work" (103). Men act like hawks that spot and ambush their prey to quench their pressing desire and left them perpetually tormented and withered. Russell defines "an act of intercourse where man used force as rape, whether or not the woman concerned is prepared to use the emotive word rape" (129). The very description justifies the notion mentioned above of their ferocity and violence. Allende states the condition in the following words:

He looked at her from the high in the saddle and immediately felt the urgent desire that had been tormenting him for so many months. He trotted up until he was right beside her He threw his arm around her waist, swept her up with an animal-like grunt, and placed her before him in the saddle . . . Esteban did not remove his clothes. He attacked her savagely, thrusting himself into her without preamble, with unnecessary brutality. (64)

The whole episode demonstrates how Trueba tries to subjugate her in the course of the sexual act. Esteban Trueba self-assumed the role of a colonizer, invader, and rapist who eye women as an object of desire for their being deprived, powerless and vulnerable. At the age of fifteen, Pancha Garcia was raped and had to remain silent like so many other women of her race and class. Garcia is conquered, raped and persecuted by Trueba, like Spanish colonizers. To whom she may complain? The one who claims their 'patron,' or the one who assures them that they are in safe hands, or the one who comes to civilize them, the one who comes with a 'missionary' spirit. She was a virgin, not a slut. She bled and wept because she was hopeless and helpless. And she was at the mercy of a powerful 'patron' who took advantage of her destitution which made her work as a maid and mistress in the main house, as the women of her class had been doing for generations. Allende documents how women are exploited and silenced. He abused Pancha Garcia as a hygienic method to get his tension relieved so that he might get a sound sleep (Allende 70). Trueba's sexual urge let him not rest; within a week, he spotted a new prey, "a slender little girl hanging up the wash on a wire. She could not have been more than thirteen or fourteen years old but fully developed. Just then, she turned and looked at him: she had the expression of a woman" (Allende 70). Allende further states, "Not a girl passed from puberty to adulthood that he did not subject to woods, the riverbank, or the wrought iron bed" (71). This is how Garcia's family has become sexually stigmatized in the most humiliating manner. From the above discussion, it can be inferred that women of colour may be molested; their children do not deserve their surname, birth, and inheritance rights because these women don't belong to their race and class. Second, the women can be silenced and put into non-existence by bribing banknotes or whipping for any demand.

Another tale of rape is the result of those bitter memories, which are spirits that haunt or amuse. Trueba Garcia had terrible baggage of haunting memories that suffocated him due to several reasons: poverty, racial discrimination, marginalization, the rape of his mother, Pancha Garcia, at the age of fifteen, her grandmother entrusted him the responsibility to take revenge on so many other women of his race and class. Esteban Trueba promised that if he told the whereabouts of Tercero Garcia, he would reward him; the promised reward he received was in the form of a slap last time from his 'father' and the injustice of being deprived of inheritance of property. At the same time, the same blood

flows in his veins as in his stepbrothers and sisters. He came to meet Esteban Trueba, shaking with hatred and fright. The moment he came across little Alba, he was overwhelmed with feelings of revenge and hate and sexually aroused.

Rape is like a boomerang. Her innocent granddaughter had to pay back and was knocked down by his grandson Esteban Garcia among the rushes. Roy and Nichols argue that "rape is an act of individual men who have not developed normally. They suggest that this is a product of bad childhood experiences and a disrupted family background" (130). His masculinity is impaired. In this regard, we may say that Esteban Garcia is a part of a greater design. Faris states, "The repetition achieves a kind of poetic justice that seems to be turning the narrator's anger into an unembittered resignation, but it also perpetuates the act of rape, which revives the reader's sense of gendered injustice" (184). It is a never-ending tale of mourning, blood, and adoration. To end this injustice, Alba's subjective agency comes into play. By the novel's end, she states, "It would be very difficult for me to take avenge because my revenge would be just another part of the same inexorable rite. I have to break that terrible chain" (Allende 480). Esteban Garcia harbors hatred and displaces all his anger on Alba.

Apart from sexual exploitation, patriarchy drains women emotionally and psychologically. Walby defines patriarchy "as a system of social structures and practices in which men dominate oppress and exploit women" (20). The way Trueba behaved with his real sister, Ferula, is a perfect example of ingratitude. How could he pay Ferula back when he was a young boy? She sacrificed her attractive youth in the service of her mother and younger brother. Ferula was a regal matron with a curvaceous figure, her moon-like oval face of a Roman Madonna gradually fading into pale; eyes grew dull full of shadows and soul tormented, for no other reason than she was made to plunge into thankless service of her mother. It is taken for granted that women are meant to serve their mothers and siblings. Women are considered carriers of children, husbands, and elderly parents. Ferula had round-the-clock, hectic activities to care for her ailing mother, Dona Ester, who had turned into a block of solid flesh (Allende 47).

Ferula was emotionally attached to her brother; she fostered, bathed, and slept with

him when he was a young boy, she regularly washed and starched his only two shirts on alternative days, did sewing to mint money so to pay his educational expenses, she made all to make him happy, look fresh and smartly dressed, but the day he got muscles and the first paycheck, he made her life troubled and soul tormented for considering her an ominous shadow in his life. This is how she was reciprocated for her devotion and selfless service (Allende 48, 52). I argue that she not only suffered at the hands of her ailing mother and unresponsive brother but also at the hands of people and society. When Esteban fell in love with Rosa, he attached great importance to Ferula and begged her like a little boy for her assistance in getting in touch with Rosa. The moment his objective was served, he became detached and indifferent. This whole situation and the marriage of her brother further pushed her into uncertainty. This all made her life a living hell. When her brother was leaving for Tres Marias, she desperately wished, “I would like to have been born a man . . . And I would not have liked to be a woman” (50). When Trueba came to know that Ferula was bathing Clara, his heart swelled with anger; he suspected the nature of the relationship: that it involved emotional intensity and physical sensuality, probably not genital sex. On seeing her in Clara’s room, he blew out of proportion. He thrust her out of the room, called her “from dyke to a whore, and accusing her of preventing his wife with her spinster caresses and of driving her crazy, distracted, mute, and spiritualist with her lesbian arts, and he accused her of taking her pleasure with Clara while he was away” (147).

I argue that though the relationship was of a romantic and sensual nature, men should take care of women’s emotional well-being. It has been observed that most of the male characters are self-centered and selfish to the core. Ferula adores Clara; she does not want to be separated from her. The time spent with Clara had become the most cherished period of her life. Clara acknowledges in her notebook that “Ferula loved her far more deeply than she deserved or than she could ever hope to repay” (122). She experiences a wave of longing for her. She wanted to bathe her and share the same bed with her. Here, Allende suggestively refers to lesbianism. She further states her tumultuous feelings for Clara: “Only with Clara did she allow herself the luxury of giving in to her overwhelming desire to serve and be loved; with her, however, slyly, she was able to express the secret, most delicate yearnings of her soul” (121).

Social patriarchal pressure urges women to practice heterosexual relationships rather than lesbian perverted forbidden pleasure attached to negativity. Trueba considers that women can derive maximum pleasure through their husbands. He expelled her from the room, lifted Clara from her braid, suspended her in the air for a while, and forbade her to be bathed again. Both the siblings became arch-rivals. He expelled Ferula from not only his home but also his heart and warned her not to be seen, if it happened, he would kill her. As a result, she died in abject poverty. I have further discussed the patriarchal oppression under the following two subheadings.

4.3.1. Shades of Patriarchy and Aspects of Resistance

Generally, women are not represented in a positive light in the patriarchal discourse. Patriarchy reigns supreme and does not hesitate to assert itself wherever possible. According to Helene Cixous, “It is understood that dominant patriarchal authority defines women by making all assumed female attributes negative as opposed to the positive male attributes. This would include, for instance, in our case, the binary around such pairings” (102). In *THS*, Trueba behaves like a typical patriarch. He shows his patriarchal mindset. He recalls Nivea’s campaign for women’s rights and terms women’s demands as signs of mental sickness. Though Nivea campaigns with other women that women should be given the right to vote and protest against their domestication, Trueba states that it’s like going against nature, their roles are predetermined and predefined. He cannot digest their demand “to be deputies, judges — even president of the republic” (Allende 75). He feels that their presence in the public sector is a serious threat to their position. He never allows women of his family to hear radio, as it is for the uneducated class. Allende notes, “Senator Trueba never heard it because he did not allow radios in his house. He viewed them as instruments for the uneducated and purveyors of sinister influences and vulgar ideas” (253). At the time of siesta and cooking, Alba loves listening to songs of the singer who meets on Japanese Garden (Pedro Garcia) on the radio; at the same time Senator Trueba enters the room, the songs on the radio set him on fire. He hits the cane on the radio and smashes it into pieces; this spectacle of rage frightens Alba (309). His demand to handle such women with an iron hand exposes the chauvinist mentality that has generated in him a sense of insecurity and misogyny.

Patriarchy tries to construct women's identity. Trueba is against their modernity; women with hair-cut look like prostitutes. Men like Trueba want that women should look and wear the way they want them to whether they feel comfortable or not. He is equally angry with smoking women who seem like chimneys and the women who stop wearing corsets. He also criticizes the growing role of media that has infiltrated the haciendas and tried to corrupt the minds of young people. Trueba's judgmental nature subscribes to the dominant patriarchal view of women. He does not seem to be acknowledging that we are living in a global world. Clara's statement to the effect that he should develop some room for the modern changes makes him very angry. As he beats Clara, he cannot recognize that his territory, Tres Marias, cannot exist like an island as he wants. In his fury, he knocks down the soup tureen (that Clara brings) with his cane and smashes it into pieces. She picks the pieces with great composure and leaves the room with a kiss on his cheek. Despite all her endeavors, she cannot calm him. It has been ingrained in the minds of women that if a man does not beat his wife, he is either angry with her or indifferent to her, or he is not at all a man. What is happening in Trueba's world indicates his authoritarian mindset. When a man shares his paycheck, fruit, chicken, and property, it is but natural that he is the authority over her. Delphy contends that:

Housewives constitute one class and husbands another. They have a relation of economic difference and social inequality. She argues that housewives are . . . engaged in domestic labor, while husbands [are] expropriating the labor of their wives. These classes exist within a patriarchal mode of production, in a manner similar to the classes in other modes of production identified by Marx. (qtd. in Walby 11)

Delphy's argument is based on the economic exploitation of women. It has been entrenched in the minds of women that they are inferior to men. Man is the family's breadwinner; therefore, he is in charge. On the other hand, a woman cannot perform or share the tasks of a man because "she is born with a wound between her legs and she is without balls" (Allende 75). The moment Blanca tries to discuss financial matters with Jean de Satigny regarding his extravagant lifestyle, which is incompatible with his income, she has a gut feeling that her father must be sending him buckets full of money he is

spending mindlessly. He flatly refuses to share its details on the pretext that financial matters are complex and it is better not to stuff her tiny brain with the matters she does not comprehend. Ironically, Satigny compares a woman's brain to a sparrow's brain (283). Blanca learns a lesson from her own poor, miserable life. She wants her daughter Alba not to suffer the same fate of economic dependency she has already suffered at the hands of patriarchy. She wants her daughter Alba to study and gain an identity as an independent woman. Blanca tells her daughter, "I don't want you to be poor like me or have to depend on a man for support" (334). She feels that a married woman's standard style of living greatly depends on the socio-economic standing of the family's breadwinner. Moreover, this barrier can be bridged if her daughter gains economic independence. Allende states that women's creative impulse is hardly appreciated by patriarchy. She is caught in the web of knitting, marriage, cooking, housekeeping, and rearing children. Esteban believes that "Blanca's destiny was marriage and a brilliant life in society . . . like cooking and religion, was a particularly feminine affair" (Allende 152).

I contend that women have yet to be offered real-life opportunities to prove their worth. Patriarchy kills and curbs the creative instincts of women and children. They may grow emotionally, psychologically, and physically if provided with a conducive and compatible environment. Love is a magnet that holds a heart. Blanca believes that economic independence is crucial to empower women. She realizes that women should be encouraged to learn new trades; their brains are not sparrow brains. They should claim their due share in the socio-political sphere of life to gain recognition and independence. Trueba has become so obsessive that he wants complete control over Clara's body and soul.

Esteban Trueba has a malady to love and be loved on his own terms. His sense of possession makes him realize she does not belong to him; she is under the magical possession of apparitions, a three-legged table, and tarot cards. Lois Zamora has pointed out that the table through which Clara contacts her spirits "serves as the iconic link between spirituality and domesticity: the four-legged family dining table, locus of physical and familiar nourishment, set and presided over by the matriarch, is closely associated with (and sometimes magically transformed into) Clara's three-legged table. So, Allende suggests, the cosmic and the quotidian are interwoven in this house of spirits" (122).

Trueba wants complete possession biologically, sexually, and spiritually over her so that she might not escape a bit of her (Allende 107-8). As Lloyd notes, the presence of angels in the novel represents “the otherness of woman and her part-human part-divine status” (100). Allende states Trueba’s state of mind, “He knew that her body was his to engage in all the acrobatics he had learned in the books he kept hidden in the corner of his library” (144). Unfortunately, a man hardly realizes how the woman feels about the man. Men in the novel *THS* are generally shown as self-centered, greedy, and lusty as we find in the case of Esteban Trueba, Esteban Garcia, and Jean de Satigny. He feels itchy in his abode when he realizes that she has grown increasingly distant, eccentric, and inaccessible. Male domination is not only reflected through discourse but also in his obsession to possess women all through his sexuality. Rich views male sexuality in the following words:

Male sexuality is forced on women through rape, prostitution, pornography and other cultural practices. Women are controlled by force and physically confined by such practices as foot-binding, Women’s labor is expropriated in marriage, their fertility is controlled, their creativeness is cramped with persecution and knowledge is withheld from them. (121)

Trueba is a hard taskmaster; the pride takes a different form after his injury from the earthquake. Men like Trueba consider themselves visionary and superior to women. Here are a few examples that demonstrate Trueba’s imperious nature. He considers women *mentally sick, confused, and creating chaos* in society (My emphasis 75). Sered notes, “It is difficult to generalize, but it seems that the male tone within magical realism is often more visionary, the female curative, these roles corresponding more to the sexes of characters than authors” (186-88). He makes Clara at his beck and call; edibles prepared by anyone else seem distasteful to him. As material objects, women’s bodies are “to be looked at”. Clara was not seductive but a spiritual soul. Ronie-Richelle Garcia-Johnson states:

A house is a place for the feminist struggle against the patriarchal Esteban Trueba, and part of that struggle is to keep it open to outside influences, even if sometimes Clara has to achieve this openness by the way she existed spiritually, in another

space or dimension, and brought the outside world inside the space of the house to her. (185)

Clara wants control over her body rather than controlled by Trueba. This might be the influence of the feminist movement. In Pakistan, we do find women marching on “Aurat March” raising slogans with the placards in their hands “Mara Jism Mare Marzi, (my body my will)” it has raised lots of controversy in Pakistan. Both the opposing camps are not ready to appreciate each other’s point of view. She decides to apply her mind and body not to succumb to his inordinate libido. She tells Esteban plainly that she has the least inclination for the pleasures of the flesh.

It is the magic that has empowered Clara, although it is not a pragmatic strategy yet it has enabled her to survive against patriarchy. This brave show is a kind of resistance against patriarchy. Bennet argues that “through her magic Clara resists being ‘controlled and mastered’ and therefore, avoids being merely a possession of her husband,” and for her daughter and granddaughter, “magic will continue to exist in their matrilineal memory” (362, 64). Moreover, Clara wishes to resist her husband’s advances and seek sexual liberation because she does not wish to face the consequences of labor pains and the trouble of childbearing and rearing and becomes a passionless woman which further offends Trueba. Women like Clara are also oppressed because men like Trueba have no idea of a peculiar women’s experience of her body. So, women’s marginalization is partly because of their reproductive and biological traps and issues which are ignored by their immediate men and patriarchy at large. I have discussed these issues in the next section.

4.3.2. Women’s Reproductive and Biological Issues

Allende, in *THS*, interrogates how a man can truly represent the experience of a woman that he has never experienced. When Garcia Trueba asked Blanca what the matter was with her, she bluntly replied to Trueba that it was none of his business. It warns men not to interfere in women’s issues for their ignorance or pseudo-knowledge. Allende states that “Two hours later Alba felt a warm viscous liquid between her legs and saw that her slacks were stained with red. She was swept with panic” (359).

Menstruation is a terrifying and embarrassing experience for a woman in public. Only a woman like Ana Diaz can appreciate her pangs for being a woman. The man tried to expel women from the male domain for their so-called vulnerabilities like menstruation, abortion, and pregnancy. According to Walby, “Sex is class. Women are disadvantaged by their position in reproduction— pregnancy, childbirth, breastfeeding, child care and so on” (12). The Western feminist movement, in particular, has been trying hard to take control over women by all means. Linda Gordon has demonstrated:

Struggle for reproductive freedom in the West since the nineteenth century has always involved not only feminists, seeking access to these techniques for all women as part of a campaign to control their bodies, but also doctors and eugenicists, pursuing the introduction of these techniques to further their own agendas of professional expansion and population control. (Walby n.p)

Critics are of different opinions regarding the application of medicine. Shorter considers it “liberating”, whereas Ehrenreich and English state it as “an increase in patriarchal control over women” (qtd. in Walby 78). Alba learned from Ana Diaz her tale of woe that she was raped in front of her lover. She wept bitterly, and Alba consoled her and developed a bond of sisterhood. Allende is convinced that women’s bonds of sisterhood are more lasting, trustworthy, and empowering, whereas men are unreliable, unfaithful and a great source of misery; therefore, they should narrate and share their stories because they can only appreciate each other’s problems. They sang songs not only to lessen their grief, but served as slogans of resistance, “Ana and Alba sang with the strength of their despair, and female voices rose from the other cells” (458). Helene Cixous states that “I write woman: woman must write woman. And man, man” . . . “Write your self. Your body must be heard” (877, 80). After this elaborate discussion on patriarchal oppression, I have discussed race, class and gender in the forthcoming section.

4.4 Intersections of Race, Class, and Gender

I have tried to analyze *THS* in the light of my theoretical lens. Magical realism is employed as a device for counter-discourse. Bhabha refers magic realism as “the literary language of the emergent postcolonial world” (Nation 6). Magical realist writers are

concerned with the postcolonial issues of race, class, and gender. The reader keeps in mind wherever and whenever I discuss feminism, it is discussed in the postcolonial background; in other words, postcolonial runs parallel to feminism. As Stephen Slemon points out, “the [political] objective of these texts is that ‘the dispossessed, the silent, and the marginalized of our own dominating system can again find voice’” (422). Magical realism and postcolonial texts try to liberate the dispossessed, the silenced, and the marginalized. Moreover, Slemon states, “The imaginative reconstruction has echoes in those forms of postcolonial thought which seek to recuperate the lost voices and discarded fragments that imperial cognitive structures push to the margins of critical consciousness” (415).

I argue that magical realism is a counterpart of postcolonialism that lends it a symmetrical intimacy. To discuss the concepts of race and Orientals, I argue that the theoretical concepts of Frantz Fanon’s *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952) are relevant. The thought of racism and Eurocentrism in *Black Skin, White Masks*, and his struggle to make white man realize that “the gaze” and “the other” generates in black a sense of inferiority, a pathological dis(ease)— asymptomatic syndrome which affects their performance, efficiency and personality (42). Sartre contends that the gaze of the other is alienating.

Foreman states in his essay, “History and the Magically Real” that “Isabel Allende asserts that magical realism, “relies on a South American reality: the confluences of races and cultures of the whole world superimposed on the indigenous culture, in a violent climate” (286). The issues of race, class, gender, and (mis)representation become quite obvious in the text. The portrayal of Native American people is not presented in healthy colors. For instance, Pedro Tercero Garcia is more known through the color of his skin than the content of his character, so is the case with other characters too. To Trueba, Pedro Tercero is a ‘cannibal’, a dirty little boy, a little shit, an Indian who is a source of contamination. He should not play and mix up with Blanca because he neither belongs to her class nor race, he is nothing but a flea-ridden brat, and his bad manners may be infectious to Blanca’s manner of speech and conduct. Once he was warned by Nana, “to stay with his own class instead of nosing around señoritas” (173).

Through Allende’s mouthpiece, Trueba, the reader is told that men of Native

Americans are irresponsible and alcoholic, for the reason their families remain starved. They have no real sense of hard-earned money when they spend all their hard-earned money on drinking, they bicker with each other. To Jaime, Amanda's exotic outlook was considered a source of distraction and distrust, especially the rattling of her bracelet, black hair, and her nude fantasies that distracted him from his focused studies. She proved her trust and loyalty to her brother Miguel. She guarded him like a lioness and gave her life for him. The sisters and the younger brother seemed marginalized for being orphans and natives. They ate whatever was available; Miguel slept in places like remote corners of the big house where the guard beat the puppies (my paraphrase 257). I argue that the following comment of Nicolas sounds racist and derogatory when he says, "he had assumed that she had a sufficient experience to avoid making him a father at twenty-one and herself an unwed mother at twenty-five" (258). There is no doubt that she had other lovers, too, but not necessarily having sexual relations with them. Amanda insisted on open relations with Nicolas without any constraints or commitments.

I argue that there might be class and race differences that made Amanda think this way, not to burden or compulsion on him and get ready for abortion at her own will. She wants to have control over her own body and does not want to be controlled by someone. She asserts her agency through abortion. She rejects the proposal of marriage on the pretext that she does not love him to that extent; second, she does not want to be pitied and the victim of the patriarchal gaze; third, this idea might sound her like charity, as assistance offered when she is poor, alone and pregnant and above all considered herself an old pessimist soul as compared to young and hearty Nicolas. Nicolas does not have the remotest idea of how she has struggled to escape internalized poverty from people's eyes. She pretended to jingle her bracelet and chant sacred words to conceal her apparent paucity. Nicolas's bond of love was limited to his superficial love, passive strolling, and fleeting kisses. Though she was poor, yet she was spiritual and honest. She had more trust in Jaime because he was her soulmate and, therefore, urged Nicolas to seek his assistance regarding her ailment, menstruation and its irregularity, and abortion. All these pains are for a woman, which a man can hardly understand.

The moment Nicolas disclosed her pregnancy to him and urged him for his

assistance. Apparently, he showed composure, but inwardly, he was shocked and choked and held Nicolas responsible for her present wretched condition. It describes typical features of postcolonial people, for instance, “piercing of cheeks and chest with hatpins and to live practically without eating He did not eat meat, milk, or eggs . . . meals became endless ritual” (Allende 302). This vegetarian approach to the Western reader sounds illogical for its lack of nourishment. It is interesting to note how the overbearing role of the missionary British schools affected native languages and culture and asserted their hegemonic ideology at all levels. Natives were humiliated and embarrassed for their differences in language, culture, and race. In these Eurocentric institutions, readers are told that “Sindbad” and “Robin Hood” are virtuous, whereas Blacks are portrayed as pirates and cannibals (Allende 155). Allende also highlights the issue of class.

Allende refers to one of the events when Clara’s mother takes her to a factory. Clara observes that although she is too young to appreciate the hostile conditions of the female factory workers, she notices the absurdity of the conditions. The class difference is obvious: her mother and her friends are in fur coats and sued boots, whereas working women are in denim aprons, and their hands are red, itching, and burning with inflammation. They are not contented with the charity; rather, they wish their resources and skills should be developed.

Other examples demonstrate how the people and culture of others are othered and ridiculed for their being primitive and postcolonial. We are told that Natives who employ spiritual instincts are remotely disconnected from the scientific methods to explore water. They are well aware of the healing qualities of herbs and grasses but lack a scientific approach to life. Through the discourse of the texts *THS* and *LWC*, Indians are socially marginalized. We read that their women are de-shaped, obese, lame, and illiterate. They are intellectually and academically ignorant and professionally unskilled. They can do only menial work. They are ridiculed in bizarre dresses as if they are to perform in opera. They are stereotyped through “life-size ceramic statues of half-naked Abyssinian Negroes wearing turbans and slippers with upturned toes” (Allende 377). To their heart’s content, they are ridiculed and humiliated for their impassive black faces and can hardly be trusted. They are far removed from any sign of civilization. They are (mis)represented as quiet,

obstinate, and enigmatic folk.

It is taken for granted that their understanding is poor, movement suspicious and sluggish, their language indecipherable, and their culture uninviting. They are mysterious creatures who look alike, suddenly appear and disappear. When Blanca's pregnancy was getting heavy, it was equated with oriental placidity. Jean de Satigny profligate nature was compared to an Arab prince to manifest Arabs as a profligate race (Allende 280). The Indian owner of the boarding house was equally represented in tedious colors. She was "an immense mountain of a woman endowed with a majestic triple chin and tiny Oriental eyes sunk in folds congealed with grease; she wore rings on all her fingers and used the affected gesture of a novice" (257).

Similarly, a derogatory comment is made about Jaime and Blanca's marriage; we are told that mongoloid offspring are the product of an incestuous union. This is how, through imperial discourse, other nations are derided and humiliated. When Nicolas expressed his intention to visit the Indian land of Mahatma Gandhi, Trueba did not stop him so that he may taste the bitterness of the distant land of starvation where nomadic cows are roaming around, "If you don't die of a snake bite or some foreign plague, I hope you return a man, because I am fed up with all your eccentricities" (301). Especially to the Western reader, it has been conveyed that India is a dangerous place to live in and survive because it is a poverty-stricken country and second, in the Hindu religion cow is worshipped as a sacred animal and is desecrated. It also describes typical features of postcolonial people, for instance, "piercing of cheeks and chest with hatpins and to live practically without eating . . . He did not eat meat, milk, or eggs. His diet was the same as a rabbit's, and his anxious face gradually came to resemble the face of animal" (302). Esteban Trueba detests one of Blanca's suitors, whom Allende metaphorically calls "King of the Pressures Cookers", for his being circumcised and having a Sephardic nose and kinky hair. These racist remarks sound contemptuous. He had been a source of discontent for Trueba for his being tough, who had survived the hostile concentration camp where exile, poverty, and disease reigned. The introductory remarks about Trueba Garcia are racist; we are told that his eyes were tiny, like that of an Oriental, and as far as his communicative ability was concerned, it was incoherent. The above discussion sheds light

on how Other cultures, people, and languages are stereotyped as incoherent.

Moreover, through colonial discourse, native Indians and the native people are presented as the ugliest, most hilarious, and most ridiculous creatures. Trueba, even at a mature age, could not come of age. To fill his monotonous hours with sensual pleasure, he used to visit a brothel with his friends. The characters he comes across are black from the Oriental world. When curtains were lifted, he stood in front of an Arabian court. Allende documents, “A huge Negro so *black that he looked blue*, dressed in *baggy carrot-colored* silk trousers, a vest, a *pure lame turban*, and *Turkish slippers*, with oiled muscles and a gold ring in his nose. When he smiled, he saw that all his teeth were made of lead. He introduced himself as *Mustafa*” (emphasis added 349). The Negro standing there is presented as a pimp. This is how Muslim culture and civilization are misrepresented (349). Negro’s blackness carries a negative connotation, it stands for evil, ugliness, naivety, immorality, sin, and wickedness. In Muslim culture, the “turban” is a cultural sign of respect and dignity; the very cultural sign is derided and humiliated. Similarly, with the very name Mustafa, sanctity is attached to it; it is the name of our beloved Holy Prophet (PBUH), it hurts our emotions. Muslims can never think and tolerate the misuse of freedom of speech. Therefore, the West should consider these matters. Said argues, “*Orientalism* as a Western style of writing to dominate, reconstruct and enjoy authority over the Orient. Occident stereotypes orient as backward, evil, weak and ignorant” (3). Through colonial discourse, Muslims' holy places like the mosque are desecrated. A mosque is a place where Muslims worship Allah (Lord). Transito Soto’s brothel is replaced with the name mosque, which is hurting Muslim sentiments. It is interesting to note how the building is compared to the mosque, ignoring the worshipping activities and sanctity of the mosque. Their reference to Alhambra and Persian carpets are termed as “cheap” and “false” respectively to derogate Muslim culture and civilization. Allende depicts the scenario in the following words:

I opened the door of the *mosque* and found myself inside a *cheap Alhambra*. A short-tiled staircase covered with *false* Persian carpets led to a hexagonal room with a cupola on the roof where someone who had never been in an *Arab harem* had arrayed everything thought to have existed in one: damask cushions, glass incense

burners, bells, and every conceivable trinket from a bazaar. (Stress added 462)

This is how, through discourse, other's cultural and religious identities are constructed and misrepresented. Slemon draws parallels between magical realism and postcolonialism on account of the three shared characteristics:

First, in magical realist narrative structures, postcolonial context, themes are embedded, the voices of the colonizer and the colonized are heard, second, the magical and the postcolonial text exhibit "tensions and gaps of representation, and, third, it provides a means to fill in the gaps of cultural representation in a postcolonial context by recuperating the fragments and voices of forgotten or subsumed histories from the point of the colonized. (Slemon 13)

In light of the above definition, the reader finds postcolonial themes convincingly embedded in magical realist texts, which have been comprehensively discussed in the above discussion. Second, the voices of the oppressor and the oppressed are heard simultaneously and distinctively, giving a complete spectrum of the situation. The voices of the marginalized are foregrounded from the marginal position to the center.

The gaps of cultural and historical mis/representation or under/representation are filled in postcolonial texts and context. The perspective of the spiritual, mythic, and superstitious native Indians is presented side by side with Esteban Trueba's scientific, rational, and pragmatic world.

4.5 Exploring Magical Realism

This section attempts to trace magical realist elements in her fiction. I tried to read the text through Wendy B. Faris's definitions serve as a prop to support my argument. The analysis of *THS* attempts to trace supernatural and/or irreducible elements in the novel. The title of the novel implies that the house is cohabited by the spirits and apparitions. The supernatural is a source of solace and inspiration in fiction. Without referring to the Mora sisters, the idea of supernaturalization remains incomplete. It does not surprise the reader because he knows that magic is the norm where monsters, witches, elves, and the Mora

sisters appear as irreducible elements or supernatural beings. Chapter four, “The Time of the Spirits”, is exclusively allocated to describe the phenomenon of supernaturalization. I argue that women need the companionship of spirits because, in the male-dominated society, they feel isolated and othered.

Allende’s statement is included in Gloria Bautista’s, “Reality is so brutal that we need the protection of a magical and spiritual world” (383). Women desperately need to connect with cosmic forces to guard them. Edwin Ardener describes that they embody the “female wild zone”, which is about dominant-male centered culture, and like the spirit dimension hidden within the narrative mode of magical realism, is publically unseen yet powerful” (3). Three translucent ladies with misty eyes filled the room with a fragrance that stayed long after their departure. The critic Philip Swanson interprets it differently and claims that:

Clara’s spiritualism on one level simply represents happy times that are destroyed by natural and political cataclysms. The world of the spirits, in other words, is the sort of ideal place the world should be. In the meantime, the positive force of Clara’s spiritualism needs to be harnessed on a practical and political level. (163)

Mora sisters are spiritually connected to Clara the clairvoyant, as they all are students of spiritualism and telepathically connected in an intimate relationship of astral sisterhood. Rich suggests that “all female bonding is a form of resistance against patriarchy” (631-660). Every Friday, they have a get-together and bring a set of geometrical figures and mysterious tools of their own spiritual inventions, new recipes, and premonitions (Allende 139-40). The extraordinary (Mora sisters’ visit) is considered ordinary in magical realist texts. The extraordinary and the ordinary go side by side, well-grounded with the mundane realities of bringing geometrical figures, other mysterious tools, and the greatest intimacy with the astral sisters. The very idea of spirituality is connected to domesticity and family life. They evolve a system of transmitting energy from their distant residing abodes. Cohen states that Allende’s *THS* opens up female domestic space in several directions: toward the political, toward the passionately sexual, toward the sacred, and (through narrative powers) toward the imaginary (109-14). Trueba is convinced

that it is a non-productive activity, but the best part of it is that it keeps the women within four walls of the big house on the corner and never lets their minds think critically or rebelliously. Allende uses it as a window to give vent to their pent-up feelings. To console them, Mora's sisters visit them. Mora sisters' visit is an attempt to share their grief and, restore their bruised bodies and make them happy through healing conversation (232). Gloria states, "When we live in permanent contact with all forms of violence and misery, we have to look for explanations and find hope in the supernatural. Reality is so brutal that we need the protection of a magical or spiritual world" (308). The supernatural is part and parcel of magical realism. According to Zamora and Faris:

Supernatural is not a simple or obvious matter, but it *is* an ordinary matter, and everyday occurrence—admitted, accepted, and integrated into the rationality and materiality of literary realism. Magical realism is no longer quixotic madness, but normative and normalizing. It is a simple matter of the most complicated sort. (Zamora and Faris 3)

Faris coins the term *irreducible elements*, which means the presence of a supernatural world. Young and Holloman argue that the "irreducible element" is something we cannot explain according to the laws of the universe as they have been formulated in Western empirical discourse, that is, according to "logic, familiar knowledge, or received belief" (qtd. in Faris 7). In magical realist texts, apparitions of the dead do visit. The spirits of the dead and living people keep visiting throughout the novel. For instance, the spirit of Ferula visits Trueba's family while seated in the dining room. Even family members could see the spirit of Ferula, who had been quite removed from spiritual activities because of their English schooling. Allende states:

The family sat frozen in the dining room as if they were in the middle of the nightmare. Suddenly Nana began to shake so hard that the salad spoons fell off the platter. The sound of the silver as it hit the floor made everyone jump. Clara opened her eyes. She was still having difficulty breathing, and tears were running down her cheeks and neck, staining her blouse. "Ferula is dead", she announced. (165)

Allende wants to give the reader an impression that it is not a dream, and as if things

are happening in real, it is not the product of their over-reactive imagination. The reader finds himself in the grip of loss and awe and experiences pity and fear from this tragic, melodramatic situation. However, in magical realist texts, the supernatural or magical elements are considered real in fiction. The episode also reflects that in feminio-centric texts, women are spiritually more perceptive than men. The European reader may take it as an example of fantastic literature. According to Todorov, "The fantastic is that hesitation experienced by a person who only knows the law of nature, confronting a supernatural event. This may be a hesitation shared with the character in the novel or emphasized in the text to produce a theme of ambiguity and hesitation" (25). Similarly, Chanady contends, "In the fantastic, on the contrary, the supernatural is seen as problematical because it cannot be intrigued within the implicit ideological code conveyed by the text. The irrational event or being is described as strange, disconcerting, or problematized" (20).

Allende has produced ambiguity built within the text, whereas characters are convinced about Ferula's dead spirit visit. The three children witness the spirit, which sounds like an ordinary matter, acknowledge and believe in the prudence and materiality of literary realism. Allende describes this supernatural event in great detail and is accepted by the other family members. The third-person narrator accepts the very unusual transformation. However, interestingly, the spirit of Ferula remains invisible to Trueba because of his unjust treatment to her. Memories haunt, even after death. According to Faris, "these irreducible elements are well assimilated into the realistic textual environment, rarely causing any comment by narrators or characters, who model such as acceptance for their readers" (8). In most magical realist literature, or otherwise, we find supernatural machinery at work. Among the characters, Rosa is gifted with supernatural features.

Supernatural is not limited to ghosts and apparitions; it also operates in different ways; for instance, the description of Rosa, her birth, and her beauty make her a supernatural being. The girl was a stunning beauty because she was different in material from the rest of her fellow beings. Her hair was green, and her eyes yellow. When her hair was washed with chamomile, it gave a different hue of old bronze; her skin was translucent, especially the parts of her chest and armpits, where the veins and secret texture of the

muscles could be seen that made her magical as if she was a mermaid. According to Gellely, “[T]he superhuman qualities of [her hair] infuses the narrative with a mysterious charge” (124). Nivea had known that she was not of this world . . . and rumors quickly spread that Nivea had borne an angel” (5). She was an embodiment of Hellenic angelic charm (Allende 5).

Faris states, “[t]he irreducible elements and the defocalized mode cause the reader to feel a sense of contact with an indeterminate and undefinable domain, a feeling that endows the text with the slight and occasional aura” (64). Regarding Clara’s childhood memories, Allende tells us, “She spent this time wrapped in her fantasies, accompanied by the spirit of the air, the water, and the earth” (92). She found pleasure in silence for nine years as the last refuge. I argue that silence is a kind of resistance. In the morning, when she used to get up from her sleep, spirits came to greet her. During her pregnancy, she communicates with her baby. Allende states, “It’s a little girl and her name is Blanca,” Clara had said when she announced that she was pregnant” (112). This is a typical feature of magical realist text where the reader come across “walking-talking ghost, women with green hair and no navels, marvelous worlds” (Foreman 286).

I have attempted to trace all the historical events recorded by Allende in her novel. A well-read reader may connect the dots to the events referred to in the text. *THIS* implicitly refers to Chile's history, which spans around fifty years, starting from the post-World War I period to General Pinochet, who came into power after toppling Salvador Allende's democratically elected government in 1973. It also covers the three waves of feminism.

In a way, the implied reader fills the text's silences, absences, and gaps. Here, the proactive role of the reader comes into play to read the text attentively because it is connected imaginatively. Roland Barthes claims that “realism endows details with an “effect de re’el” (reality effect), which conveys not any particular information but rather the idea that this story is real” (19- 25). Cooper explains that it allows a breathing space for fictional history, “the mysterious, sensuous, unknown, and unknowable are not in the subtext, as in the realist writing, but rather share the fictional space with history” (36). In the phenomenal world, the reader comes across a blend of history and myth.

Second, the descriptions in magical realism detail a strong presence of a phenomenal world (Faris 7). The *phenomenal world* refers to magical events or some unusual phenomena that entail a matter-of-fact narrative presenting magical happenings (Bowers 3). In the phenomenal world, “realistic descriptions create a fictional world that resembles the one we live in, often by extensive use of detail” (Faris 14). It is a suggestive way to imaginatively historicize the events that have occurred at a certain time. I argue that three waves of feminism are located in the Latin American context in the novel.

The events shown in *THS* have their historical relevance. It is an attempt to heal historical wounds (Faris 118). Patriarchy openly proclaimed that women were not warmly welcomed in certain spheres of life, like science and politics. I argue that patriarchy needs to shift its exclusive policy and be inclusive regarding education, politics, and other fields. Allende demonstrates how women gradually gained the right to vote and struggled for equal opportunities and gender equality. It refers to the first wave of feminism:

He [Severo del Valle] knew that Nivea went out at night to hang suffragette posters on walls across the city and she was capable of walking through the heart of the city in the plain light of day with a broom in her hand and a tri-cornered hat on her head, calling for women to have equal rights with men, to be allowed to vote and attend the university, for all children, even bastards, to be granted the full protection of the law. (75)

Women had a strong realization that their subjective agency is curtailed and clipped by keeping them within the four walls of their homes and kitchens. The event coincides with the first wave of feminists that won citizenship rights and made formal inroads for women into the public sphere. It catalyzed to frustrate the patriarchal strategy that was bent to confine women to the private zone of the home. The historic struggle can be traced from 1850 to 1928. It was predominantly a middle and upper-class women’s movement. Nivea (Clara’s mother) belonged to the upper-middle class; her husband wanted to be a leading politician. First-wave feminism was a comprehensive, multi-dimensional, and politically effective phenomenon. Walby refers to numerous critics concerning the First-wave of feminism for its far-reaching effect that put a serious dent in patriarchy and a major push

to women's history:

The first wave of feminism included not only the famous one for suffrage but also those for the containment of predatory male sexual behavior (Christabel Pankhurst's slogan was 'Votes for women, chastity for men'), access to employment, training, and education, reform for the legal status of married women so they could own property, for divorce and rights to legal separation at the women's behest as well as that of the husband (Holcombe), for the collective rather than private organization of meal preparation, among many others. (qtd. in Walby 188 Gilman, Hayden)

The women struggled long and hard for an equal level playing field for themselves. Walby refers to liberalism as "Women's disadvantaged position is related to specific details against women" (4). They raised a voice for all children, including bastards who had been denied legal protection rights. Trueba termed these demands irrational and showed the true colours of a typical patriarch. To him, the demands for more rights sound sickening:

That woman is sick in the head!" "It would go against nature. If women don't know the two and two are four, how are they going to be able to handle a scalpel? Their duty is motherhood and the home. At the rate they are going, the next thing you know they will be asking to be deputies, judges even president of the republic! And in the meantime, they are sowing confusion and disorder that could lead to the disaster. (Allende 75)

Trueba perceives women's presence in the public sphere as a serious threat to male domination. He supports capitalist-patriarchal society. I argue that both the systems (capitalist and patriarchal) are symmetrically symbiotic. Patriarchy provides a system of control, and capitalism empowers to go for profit at the cost of keeping women domesticated. The text unfolds the postcolonial debate between the colonizer and the colonized.

Allende implicitly refers to Trueba, a typical colonizer and capitalist patriarch. Esteban Trueba speaks with authority, declares himself the *Patron* of the estate, and makes it loud and clear to his subjects (tenants/peasants) that he means business. He will not

tolerate lazy bluffers anymore. Now, they have to work hard. He views them as “completely ignorant and uneducated. They are like children; they cannot handle responsibility. How could they know what is best for them? Without me, they are lost” (Allende 72). Alba asks her grandfather a serious question about the acquisition of land, which disturbs his composure. Meyer states, “By structuring *THS* as a double-voiced discourse in which the grandfather represents the internalized patriarchal culture and the granddaughter the newly born feminist, Allende embodies this emergence of polyvocal feminist text which expresses the hope of an ethnically transformed community” (363). Showalter also endorses double voices in the discourse that enables the feminist discourse to register both the dominant and the muted voices, a typical trait of postcolonial magical feminist text (185). Pedro Segundo Garcia (the native peasant) urged Trueba, “We have nowhere to go. We have always lived here” (58). Trueba (the *Patron*) claims that every inch of it belongs to him “from the Pan-American highway to those mountaintops over there” because he ‘bought’ it from the Indians. It reminded me of the forced removal of native Indians who were pushed into reservation/concentration camps, their ruthless killing, slavery, and exploitation of resources, confiscation, and usurpation of their property, intrusion into their language, culture, rituals, and history. The fact is that the land belongs to them because they always lived there for centuries.

Trueba’s revengeful nature is shown at its peak as he takes a half dozen hired ruffians with him to settle the score with those peasants who try to defy and deprive them of their dearly loved motherland. They (Trueba’s men) incessantly hurl curses, knock kicks, and blows. They mimic the history of oppression perpetrated on Native Indians. The tenants and animals are gathered, and gasoline oil is poured and set ablaze. He warns them they will meet the same fate if they are found prowling around his land. The very scene reminds me of Trail of Tears (see John Ehle’s *Trail of Tears: The Rise and Fall of Cherokee Nation* and Green and Theda’s *The Cherokee Nation and the Trail of Tears*) when people are shown “dragging their feet along the dusty road that led away from the land where they had lived for generations” (429). The native peasants were expelled from their own lands like Indians were made émigré. Trueba behaves with a colonizer mindset. The people ‘dancing’ in flames and burning houses are revenge personified, giving him some relief to his heavy-weight sadist soul. More or less the same images are found in Sherman Alexi’s

“One Stick Song”. It is a complete book that contains other poems depicting the historical oppression of Indians perpetrated by the dominant power of America.

At the time of siesta and cooking, Alba loves listening to the songs of a singer whom she meets on Japanese Garden (Pedro Garcia) on the radio, at the same time Senator Trueba enters the room, the songs on the radio sets him on fire, “he attacked the machine, smashing it with his cane unless it was a pile of twisted wires and loose knobs, before the frightened eyes of his granddaughter, who could not understand her grandfather’s sudden fit” (309). Second, he does not want the people of Tres Marias to be aware of what is happening in the world. Through radio, Esteban learns that there is war in Europe, an indirect reference to World War II. The episode paints him not only as a colonizer but a fascist as well, who does not believe in freedom of expression and the right to information.

Foreman claims that Allende deliberately employs magical realism as a literary technique to capture the reader’s attention before presenting her political agenda near the end of the novel. Her novel has more political punch than Garcia and Morrison. She has employed the characteristics of both the writers: historical and magical (7). The novel shows numerous historical and political similarities: the way the ground was prepared and the conspiracy hatched to topple the elected democratic government of President Salvador, who happens to be Allende father’s cousin without directly mentioning the name, the way he was assassinated, violation of human rights, the wave of terror was unleashed in Chile, the victory of the military regime that marks the commencement of dictatorial regime was celebrated. The reader also comes across General Pinochet in the form of Trueba Garcia, Pablo Neruda, a revolutionary poet; his ideas and poetry are discussed without mentioning any name or character, Victor Jara with a fictional name, Pedro Tercero Garcia. In Isabel Allende’s fiction, many other characters emerge from her family members; for instance, Esteban Trueba represents Allende’s grandfather, Clara is an imitation of her spiritual grandmother (McNeese 22). Similarly, in *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, actual events have been fictionalized with the impossible old reality of the horrific massacre of workers in Banana Company: United Fruit Company’s history and appalling news is the return to the chronicle history of Macondo’s death history. Allende seems to employ magical feminist techniques to push the reader into a political-historical text. Suarez-Murias

suggests, “Myths and historical references coexist; they nurture each other” (100).

Hart contends in her book *Narrative Magic in the Fiction of Isabel Allende* that there is a “continuous campaign during the novel . . . to place magical realism in trivial settings” (39). The political cataclysm carries away the very element of magic in the novel. I mention some other historical happenings (socio-economic crises) in the text. The political conflict has torn the country into a war zone. The utopian world has turned into a dystopian one. The women, on the one hand, protested against the shortage of food supplies, and the remaining half of the women were in a desperate attempt to support the problem-ridden government. It seems like some invisible force (America) was in action to destabilize the country. Angry and violent protests were initiated; workers of the municipal committee had stopped working as a protest, garbage was displayed, telephone poles were covered with the anti-government slogan, more than half of the street lights were smashed that, filling the nights with dark covers, these schemes of things were a plan to show that government has practically failed to guard the interests of public and stir a flame of revolt against the sitting government.

The description of the palace is also a good example of a phenomenal world. President decides to telecast his farewell speech on radio to address the nation and take them into confidence. Here is a glimpse of that speech:

I speak to all those who will be persecuted to tell you that I am not going to resign: I will repay the people’s loyalty with my life. I will always be with you. I have faith in our nation and its destiny. Other men will prevail, and soon the great avenues will be open again, where free men will walk, to build a better society. Long live the people! Long live the workers! These are my last words. I know my sacrifice will not have been in vain. (409)

Supporters of Allende respond to him well. They are even ready to sacrifice their lives for the greater cause. Under the circumstances, the situation becomes intense. In the dictatorial regime, human rights violations are at their peak. Jaime’s (a confidant of President Allende) non-cooperation is paid through hard thrashing. He and the others are tied to and bruised with barbed wires and remain starved for a couple of days, “rotting in

their own excrement, blood, and fear until they were all driven by truck to an area near the airport” (412). This example also falls in the category of grotesque. Four generals are shown repeatedly on a TV screen to make the nation realize as new heroes or saviors. After the curfew, people hurry to buy food. To their surprise, stores are brimming with goods and food items as if there has never been any shortage of anything in the market, but the prices are rocket high, and only the rich can afford them. Uniformity was imposed, and a special dress code was encouraged to discourage the rebels with their long hair and beard, and women were encouraged to wear skirts (428). In other words, the non-conformist approach is discouraged, and individuality is curbed. The other themes in the novels are undoubtedly intriguing and capture the reader's interest. The chief objective of writing the novel is to unearth historical facts that have been under erasure in canonical texts. Robert Antoni suggests that “there is a gradual shift in the focalization . . . as the book shifts . . . from family saga (fantasy) to political history.” (22). *THS* is a powerful tale of a political turmoil era in Chilean history.

Moreover, Micks considers “magical realism is a self-consciously historical form” (qtd. in Zamora and Faris 10). The intelligentsia is the eye, ear, and tongue of any society that visualizes life in a novel way. As the novel is a social critique, it highlights the implications of dictatorial regimes on the intelligentsia and the general public. Allende suggestively refers to Pablo Neruda as a poet of the millennium. Allende shows authorial reticence regarding the depiction of Pablo Neruda. His poetry revolves around love, freedom, nature, and politics. He was passing through a critical phase of his health. Soldiers behaved highhandedly; they broke into his home and ransacked his library and his lifelong collection of relics: shells, butterflies, books, paintings, and incomplete revolutionary poems were taken as weapons. He fell prey to their incivility. Neruda observed them shooting people. He was a celebrity and adored by people all over the world. He was suffocating in the dictatorial regime and seized his wish for longevity. Unfortunately, during the last days of his ailing life, he was made helpless, hopeless, and friendless. Renegades and exiles attended his deathbed. Journalists from around the globe flocked to cover his funeral. A handful of people musters up the courage to attend his funeral, experiencing a great sense of twinge, dread, and resentment. They raised slogans, “Here! Now and forever. His funeral had turned into the *symbolic burial of freedom*” (emphasis

mine 430). The workers paid rich tribute to his passing cortege by dropping their tools, lowering helmets, and bowing heads. Even Trueba knew within his heart that he was a poet of international stature and acclaim. As a 'recognition,' the government had to announce "national mourning and people were allowed to fly the flag at half-mast in front of their houses" (432). It was he whose revolutionary poems inflamed in Pedro the value of freedom. He realized that freedom was more precious than anything. Love loses its charm if it is at the cost of freedom.

Similarly, Allende shows a phenomenal world regarding the depiction of Victor Jara, Pablo Neruda, and Salvador Allende in the novel. Especially with reference to Victor Jara, whose songs catch fire and poems take wing, which can stir people indefinitely. The presentation of Jara is an attempt to fill the gap and give him a voice that has been under erasure in official histories. The resemblance between Jara and Pedro Garcia can be felt consciously throughout the novel. They are a blend of real and imaginable. It allows the reader to know the real; he has to step briefly outside the confines of the text. Victor Jara was undoubtedly Chile's number-one protest singer; he gained immense popularity just before the military coup. People followed him blindly and loved him passionately. The similarity between Pedro Garcia and Victor Jara is a wonderful expression of the phenomenal world. His stature in public was that of a legend and a celebrity. Allende maintains the irony; the way the newspaper of the time published a tiny paragraph when Jara died as if nothing serious had happened and he died on the bed peacefully (103). The murder of Jara could hardly be kept secret; "it was known, reported, and acknowledged" (Hart 105). Victor Jara is a symbol of the human spirit. Myths are embroidered to inspire and stand for those who are downtrodden.

When real test time reaches, Pedro escapes to Canada with Blanca, whereas Victor Jara lays his life for his people's pride and dearly loves the motherland. The description of his indomitable spirit is worth mentioning. They cut off his fingers, and sometimes whole hands, and sometimes whole arms and legs. Jara states in her biography of her late husband, *An Unfinished Song: The Life of Victor Jara*:

Jara was captured on the morning of 12 September 1973 (one day after the coup

began) when the tanks took over the Technical University where he was gathered with fellow partisans and students. From there he has marched some six blocks with others to the Estadio Chile, where he was beaten, and denied food, water, or sanitary facilities for days along with some fright-guards took him away on the 16th, and that night some frightened *Poblacion*-dwellers reported seeing his body was dumped with six others in a vacant lot. (243)

Myths are an integral part of magical realist texts; they are the source of pleasure for the reader to counter the naked realities of life. Myths are embroidered to inspire and stand for those who are downtrodden. According to Hart, “the spirit of Victor Jara still lives on” (107). The mutilation of three fingers by Pedro Garcia reminds me of the mutilation of Jara’s hands and arms. There is a marked resemblance regarding the song of freedom that flows uninterrupted. It also symbolizes political overtones. According to Faris, “the ending of Allende’s novel, in which history is recorded and preserved to help contemporary lives, and emotions are partially soothed, is more expressively a cure for social and political ills than Garcia Marquez’s apocalyptic finale” (187). Allende shows her dexterity as a narrative magic writer in the following example.

Unsettling doubts (narrative magic) in *THS* is a shrinking episode of Esteban Trueba that unsettles the reader’s doubts. It is a good example of psychic and epistemological magical realism, as described by Delbaere-Garant and Echevarria. I explain it in my literature review chapter. Trueba’s shrinking sounds more real than magical; when Trueba goes to buy his new shoes one size smaller, he has to get his trousers shortened, and the black hat that used to fit him now covering his ears; he strongly realizes that his brain has shrunk and for that very reason, his ideas and thoughts are withering. The reader finds his doubts constantly remain unsettled, and in the next couple of pages, when he reads Trueba’s statement, “I have shrunk four inches; my shoes are swimming on me, and my hair has gone completely white, but I am not crying any more” (325-26). The matter-of-fact narrative makes the reader hesitate about the real nature of Trueba. The shrinking episode of Trueba is perceived as an absurd departure from the norms of the story. When an enlightened modern man is confronted with an enigmatic event, dismissing the case as if he does not find a rational explanation may be the object of irony and parody.

Alba finds her grandfather reduced to her own height and shrunken in size (322). When Alba endorses that her grandfather has shrunken in size and reduced in weight, it creates hesitance in the reader's mind, further unsettling him. Allende documents that one day, when he encounters Clara, he realizes that "she has lost weight and at first, I think she might have grown because she looks tall, but then I realize it is just an optical illusion, the effect of my own shrinking. Before, I have always felt like a giant to her, but when I lay down next to her on the bed, I see that we are almost the same" (325). Every happening in the story is presented in such a manner that can be elaborated rationally even though it sounds eerie and fantastic, where the hesitation between natural and supernatural persists.

I argue that it can be attributed to numerous subjective psychological reasons: first, he shrunk incredibly in his own eyes for the reason of age; secondly, after his breaking bones in a devastating earthquake he somewhat lost virility, the way he used to lift and swing the native young peasant girls by their waist and enjoy the lust to the fullest by raping against their will. He used to rip off their clothes and bleed them pools for their being virgin, and of humble background. Third, his visits to the Red Lantern were no less than the excursion trips. Though he does not disclose his internalized fear of sinking and shrinking, he seeks assistance from Blanca to fit his clothes to suit his size, making it a perfect example of unsettling doubts. Grief also reduces one in one's own eyes and the eyes of others. The death of Clara made him alone and worried. On noticing his clothes, they were loose from the sleeves; trousers from the legs were lengthy. Furthermore, he lost his weight and pride in his own eyes (202). Faris explains one of the reasons for *unsettling doubts* is cultural beliefs and cultural codes; the reader of modern, pragmatic, and scientific societies may lack awareness of other's cultural belief systems and ultimately feel hesitant and confused. He brackets such narrative events as mysteriously miraculous. According to Todorov's formulation, "when a reader hesitates between the uncanny, where an event is explainable according to the laws of the natural universe as we know it, and the marvelous, which requires some alteration in those laws" (41). At times, they are categorized as a character's dream or hallucination. Faris states the phenomena of unsettling doubts in the following words:

The question of belief is central here, the hesitation frequently stemming from the

implicit clash of cultural systems within the narrative, which moves towards belief in extrasensory phenomena but narrates from post-Enlightenment perspective and in the realistic mode that traditionally exclude them. And because belief system[s] differ, clearly, some readers in some cultures will hesitate less than others, depending on their beliefs and narrative tradition. (17)

Chanady states, “authorial reticence . . . naturalizes the supernatural so that it does not disconcert the reader.” Because the fantastic encodes hesitation, she further argues that it presents an antinomy, “the simultaneous presence of two conflicting codes in the text,” as unresolved. In contrast, the antinomy is resolved because the magical realist narrator accepts the antimony and promotes the same acceptance in the reader (149, 24, 12). In other words, it is an eerie blend of acceptance and skepticism that a reader experiences in magical realist text. It is interesting how Allende applies this very feature of magical realism to her text. She states:

He was the only one to notice that he was shrinking. He could tell from his clothes. It was not just that things fit loosely; his sleeves and pant legs were suddenly too long. He asked Blanca to fix his clothing on her sewing machine, on the pretext that he had lost some weight, but he wondered whether old Pedro Garcia had set his bones backward and whether that’s why he was shrinking. (207)

The hesitation resolves when the gringo doctors (American, who is not Hispanic or Latino) examine him thoroughly and reach the conclusion that “it was all in his mind, that there was no reason for him to believe that he was shrinking, that he had always been the same size, but that perhaps he had dreamt that he was once six feet tall and wore a size-twelve shoe” (272).

Similarly, in *THS*, Allende mentions of “sudden appearance of undernourished monsters in her room, or by the knock of devils and vampires at Blanca’s bedroom window” (83). The reader gets the impression that it is a dream or hallucination. He can neither accept nor discard it completely; he tries to look for the code of the supernatural. The reader finds himself trapped in a limbo of antinomy between natural and supernatural as if reading a mystery thriller. The text presents another example of unsettling doubts

when Blanca encounters the mummies who terrify her (see Allende 285).

For the reader, hesitation is built into the text. Apart from unsettling the reader, the episode has a feminist agenda; suggestively, we are told that women are the victims of hallucination; they are not reliable narrators, which lends the text ambiguity and makes the reader hesitant. The episode also alludes to the colonial mindset, the exploitation of the cultural resources of the colonized. Jean de Satigny's homosexual orientation and his taste for voyeuristic pleasure. The reader gets settled as if it is a dream or hallucination of Blanca, but after some time, he gets unsettled as if it is real; his mind oscillates between real and imaginary, what is real and what is imaginary, the very crack of the dawn dawns upon him that it is nothing but the fruit of his feverish imagination. Faris argues that "the multivocal nature of the narrative and the cultural hybridity that characterize magical realism extends to its characters, which tend towards a radical multiplicity" (25). This causes her (Blanca) to be doubtful about the true nature of the activities. Similar effects could be observed through the popping-out eyes and disturbed composure of the impassive faces of the Indian servants. These activities have troubling effects till the end; the character of Blanca, as well as the reader's doubts, remain un-hushed and unsettled.

However, the very next couple of paragraphs revive the dreadful idea of mummies moaning and laughing that ensures her someone's presence in his photograph laboratory. She wants to know the reality because of her unsettling doubts. Therefore, she makes up her mind to visit the darkroom. Somehow, she manages to open the door. The very studio was the gateway to expose the real character of de Satigny. To her surprise, the walls of the darkroom were covered with excruciating erotic photographs from where her 'husband' used to drive voyeuristic pleasure (My paraphrase 288). The reality resolves the antinomy that causes the reader to hesitate. Now, she was in a position to comprehend the statement he made on the wedding night that he did not incline to married life. The reader is also introduced to an interesting and mythological character, Barrabas.

The description of Barrabas lends the reader indeterminacy. The reader never knows why the family keeps Barrabas dog. It is seen as a mysterious presence in the house, not only accepted but considered unavoidable. The reader finds it something eerie and

supernatural. If such stories are excluded and discarded from the textual mode then the narrative does not fall in the category of magical realism. The stories ensure the presence and fusion of natural and supernatural in the text. At times, Barrabas gets the shape of a sheep. Over time, it becomes as big as a colt, has crocodile claws and sharp teeth that might chop off the head of any grown-up, sleeps with Clara, too sensitive to cold, is a dog that neither barks nor growls, though docile yet inspires terror. The text keeps the reader doubtful about the true nature of Barrabas. Furthermore, there are elements of hybridity and supernaturalization also comes into play as people believe him a cross breed between dog and mare. He has grown wings and horns and acquired the sulfuric breath of a dragon. He never stops growing till butcher puts an end to his existence otherwise he would have reached the size of a camel. The very inclusion of butcher and Rosa's embroidery on the endless cloth gives it a real world setting as the element of real-world setting is involved in its description. Allende further blurs reality when she says a broken China transformed into a wolf when there was a full moon. The reader further gets rattled when he is told Barrabas died of diarrhea and Nana had to clean the house in all directions (22-23). I argue that Barrabas is a mythological or imaginary creature where Clara takes refuge and consolation from her "hallucinating fantasies." Magical realism depicts fantastical events such as levitation. Another example of unsettling doubts is when Clara and Ferula return from Tres Marias to the city. She felt elevated, "I think I'm going to elevate," she said. "Not here," I shouted, terrified at the idea of Clara flying over the heads of the passengers along the track" (126). This idea of levitation terrifies Ferula, but in the same passage, hesitation is resolved when she says she is not talking about physical levitation. The reader sees that she was dreaming, but she was not. The text tempts the reader to co-opt the event and categorize it as a dream.

There are a few more examples of unsettling doubts, such as Uncle Marcos' adventure on the bird machine and his disappearance. The flying bird rose to flutter its feathers and disappeared into heaven, never to return as if he had reached the moon. The unsettling aspect of this incident is the whereabouts of Uncle Marcos; whether he is alive or dead, the reader remains unsettled because different people have different stories; some consider him dead, while others hesitate to accept his death. Severo considered him dead and lost in a Cordillera Mountain range, and Nivea wept bitterly over the loss of her brother,

but a detailed reading discloses he is alive (13-14). The reader experiences unsettling doubts because of the narrative magic.

Moreover, the description of Rosa the beautiful, keeps readers' doubts unsettled whether she is a porcelain doll, a mermaid fish, or a real human being with green hair (4-5). The reader keeps asking himself/herself questions about whether she is a human, a fish, a doll, or a real being with green hair. Can a human being have green hair? In reality, who is she? Is she real or virtual or a blend of both? Similarly, the description of Barnabas is a perfect example of textual hesitation, narrative magic, and plenitude. The reader remains doubtful regarding the true nature of Barrabas. He experiences wonder and awe regarding the remarkable properties of Barrabas. Allende documents:

The dog had a seemingly *unlimited capacity* for growth. Within six months he was the size of a sheep, and at the end of the year was *as big as a colt*. In desperation, the family began to question whether he would ever stop growing . . . and whether he was a dog. (My emphasis 21)

Merging realms blur borders between categories. It begins to “erode the categories themselves because the link between empirically constructed fictional perceptions of reality and realistically constructed fictional discourse means that to question is to question the other” (Faris 23). Chanady underscores the significance of the resolution of antinomy in merging realms. In chapter three of her book *Magical Realism and the Fantastic: Resolved Versus Unresolved Antinomy*, she says, “The magico-realist author creates a convincing worldview radically different from our own. It may be based on Western superstition, such as ghosts and doubles, or it may be based on a culture with a different perception of reality, entirely such as that of Indians of Central America” (114). The best example of merging genre is the thesis of Irlemar Chiampi, Erik Camayd-Frixas summarizes her thesis in the following words: magical realism contains the “coexistence of the natural and the supernatural in a narrative that presents them in a non- disjunctive way, in which the natural appears strange, and the supernatural pedestrian” (15). In other words, magical realism is of the merging realms or hybridity that speak of its plurality and discourse of agreeing to disagreement.

Regarding Allende's *THS*, Faris cites some examples of merging realms from Allende's novel. Clara remains well connected with the spirits, not only during her life but also after her death. Clara says, "Dying is like being born: just a change. She added that if she could easily communicate with those of the Here-and-Now" (322). It is an example of merging realms (hybridity), where ghosts and people, life and death intersect. She has the knack to communicate with ghosts and interpret people's dreams, as she does interpret the dream of Honorio, and after that, it becomes the talk of the town, and people throng to get their dreams interpreted (Allende 85). In the background of political turmoil, Allende employs magical realism for multiple subversive effects. According to Hart, the novel's magical realist events, such as the telepathy/clairvoyance of Clara, emphasize that it is fiction and is not haphazardly linked to the political turmoil. In this way, the political content of the novel is placed clearly in a fictional context, which undermines a reading of the novel as a direct political commentary against the Pinochet government (56). Allende's admission, the novel is based on her family history. She acknowledges that Salvador Allende is the role model of her character *el Presidente*, who is ousted in a coup (69). The conflicting messages undermine each other and produce a confusing context for approaching the text. This is magical realism at work. The employment of magical elements in the text of *THS* dilutes the political implications. One feels that in magical realist texts, the narrator's tone is ironic compared to Postcolonial texts. It reinforces my argument that there is (a)symmetrical intimacy in magical postcolonial text.

Wendy B. Faris is one of my theorists. She uses the term "Merging Realms" for the narrative merges different realms in her essay "Definitions and Locations: *Magical Realism between Modern and Postmodern Fiction*". In merging realms, "we [the readers] experience the closeness or near merging of two realms, two worlds, another aspect of magical realism" (21). She considers hybridity/merging realms to be one of the elements in magical realist texts. Zamora and Faris state in their edited book, *Magical Realism: Theory, History and Community*:

Magical realism is a mode suited to exploring — and transgressing — boundaries, whether the boundaries are ontological, political, geographical, or generic. Magic realism often *facilitates the fusion, or coexistence, of possible worlds, spaces,*

systems that would be irreconcilable in other modes of fiction. The propensity of magical realist texts to admit a plurality of worlds means that they often situate themselves *on liminal territory between or among those worlds* — in phenomenal and spiritual regions where transformation, metamorphosis, dissolution are common, where magic is a branch of naturalism or pragmatism. (emphasis added 5-6)

Clara, in her real-life location, can comfortably converse with the peripatetic souls and the extraterrestrials through telepathy and dreams, and the pendulum she employs for the purpose is an example of hybridity. Allende writes, “Age and experience sharpen Clara’s ability to divine the occult and move objects from afar. An exalted state of mind can easily put her into a trance in which she can move around the room while sitting in a chair as if there were a hidden motor underneath the cushions” (296-297). Moreover, through tarot cards, Clara reads the prospect and invokes the dead spirits and troubling ghosts who terrorize the family and the servants. The cards or the spirits already intimate Clara regarding the abortion of Amanda when she is taken straight from the hospital (270). Amanda exercises her legalized abortion right (as a result of the second wave of feminism) that women gain after a long and hard struggle. Clara sends a message to Alba through one of the Mora sisters that there is an impending danger; it would be good if she could cross the ocean. To some of the (Western) reader, it may sound like superstition or myth. However, the preceding events prove that intuition/clairvoyance is an additional knowledge to the five senses or empirical knowledge.

Moreover, at the time of the election, Trueba was experiencing a wave of anxiety, to get him relieved, he went to Clara to know whether he would win or lose. She nodded affirmatively, “he felt completely relieved as if she had given him a written guarantee” (251). This shows Trueba has complete faith in her prognostication. Clara even knows in advance about her marching death; she initiated preparation and handed her clothing to her servants, arranged the papers and tagged them chronologically, and handed over notebooks and jewelry to Blanca so that she could use them in hard times, which she was anticipating. These examples show merging realms that combine realism and the fantastic. In many magical realist texts, “seeing takes place only if you smuggle yourself in between worlds, the world of ordinary people and that of the witches” (Duerr 109). Merging realms inherit

a hybrid tendency.

Another important characteristic of magical realism is the disruptions of time, space, and identity; it helps the writers break the conventional, linear, and mechanical barriers of time that lend character(s) or situation a new and different identity. Some characters live in a transcendental time and space not marked by calendrical time. According to Leal, “In magical realism, the writer confronts reality and tries to untangle it, to discover what is mysterious in things, in life, in human acts” (121). He further elaborates his concept of magical realist work that contains the following characteristics:

Let us keep in mind that in these magical realist works author does not need to justify the mystery of events, as the fantastic writer has to. In fantastic literature, the supernatural invades the world ruled by reason. In magical realism, “the mystery does not descend to the represented world, by rather hides and palpitates behind it”. To seize reality’s mysteries the magical realist writer heightens his senses until he reaches an extreme state [estado limite] that allows him to intuit the imperceptible subtleties of the external world, the multifarious world in which we live. (Leal 123)

The above definition of Leal helps the reader appreciate the concept and mechanics of magical realism. How the supernatural invades the real to make magical real. Through Nivea’s comment, we came to know that the spirits surround Clara:

It was a world in which time was not marked by calendars or witches and objects had a life of their own, in which apparitions sat at the table and conversed with human beings, the past and the future formed part of a single unit, and the reality of the present was a kaleidoscope of jumbled mirrors where everything and anything could happen. (92)

Flores argues, "Time exists in a kind of fluidity, and the unreal happens as part of reality" (115). Faris calls it a disruption of time, space, and identity. It is one of the important characteristics of magical realist fiction (emphasis is mine 23). According to Fredric Jameson, “the emergence of new space and a new temporality” because realism’s

spatial homogeneity abolishes the older forms of sacred space. Likewise, the newly measuring clock and measurable routine replace “older forms of ritual, sacred, or cyclical time” (374-75). Allende further states that “Clara lived in a universe of her invention, protected from life’s inclement weather, where the prosaic truth of material objects mingled with the tumultuous reality of dreams and the laws of physics and logic did not always apply” (Allende 92). During her pregnancy, she communicates to her baby (112). The birth of baby-girl filled her joys of motherhood. Reich considers, “children to be a major source of joy to women and women and motherhood to be a potentially blissful experience. Motherhood as an institution under patriarchy does give women many problems, but this is due to patriarchy, not to motherhood itself. There is nothing oppressive about children” (n.p). She pressed Blanca to her breast all the time and kept feeding her regularly irregularly. Clara made a prophecy at the birth of little Alba that “there is no need to worry about the little girl. She will be lucky, and she will be happy” (291). The feminists view the institution of family as oppressive and compel the women to rear children and look after their husbands and home. They get consumed with no time left for themselves; in return, they earn the title “angel in the house.”

The researcher attempts to analyze the text through Wendy B. Faris’s lens. The definitions are not limited to magical realism; they encompass other subjects like feminism and postcolonialism. The discussion establishes the fact that there is a symmetrical intimacy between magical realism and feminist postcolonial text. Apart from the definitions, Allende has used other techniques, such as defamiliarization, through which her text can be read and analyzed. Defamiliarization is at its best when describing Trueba’s sexuality. Allende presents it in an unusual manner that unsettles the reader at first.

He began to have difficult nights in which the blanket seemed excessively heavy on him, the sheets too light. His horse played nasty tricks on him, suddenly becoming a formidable female, a hard, wild mountain of flesh, on which he rode until his bones ached . . . Hoping for relief, he would run out and plunge naked into the icy waters of the river until he could not breathe. Beaten, he would feel invisible hands stroking his legs. (62)

The implied reader hesitates whether it is a dream or fantasy that Trueba is going through, but the matter-of-fact description defamiliarizes it and makes it unusual. Allende achieves defamiliarization through the textual process (narrative magic) and gives it a different point of view. Trueba “suppressed” desires take different shapes. Her text seems to cover almost all fictional possibilities. Chanady contends that “the contradiction within the text is intellectualized by the narrator or protagonist himself. It is as if the author were guiding the reader, so that the latter cannot miss the implications of the text. So obvious is this explanation of what the reader could understand himself if he were to read the story carefully” (108). I argue that the reader does not feel distracted or disturbed because he knows the narrative conventions of magical realism allow him to get swayed by its intricacies and fantasies. Magic realism’s goal is to return the reader’s attention to the background of textual reality, its production, and its function by defamiliarizing it (Simpkins 151). Brooke contends that “this epistemological crisis has led to new desires in textual generation, revaluations of textual properties, and a poetics of defamiliarization” (9). She further explains her point of view:

The burden of this meaningless situation being unbearable, we naturally escape, and easily into our more familiar reality, endowed with significance of our desires, whatever it might be, and displace the meaningless situation into a mere backdrop, apocalyptic no doubt, but a backdrop we cease to see. (Brooke-Rose 9)

The description of the earthquake and its devastation has been defamiliarized as if one is watching a horror movie, science fiction, or experiencing a nightmare. Defamiliarization results from an endeavour in art and [literature] “the object clinically dissected, coldly accentuated, microscopically delineated. Overexposed, isolated rendered from an uncustomary angle, the familiar becomes unfamiliar, endowed with uncanniness which reflected far more the monstrous and marvellous within human beings and inherited in their modern technological surroundings” (Zamora and Faris 36). The description of the earthquake and eruption of a volcano and its consequences are very much in line with the definition mentioned above (see Allende pp. 179-181).

The images of crumbling houses, flames, and fumes emerging from furious

dragons, the collapse of buildings like wounded dragons give the impression as if you are watching a highly digitalized Hollywood movie and the earthquake and eruption of volcano remain in the background and the reader is overwhelmed by fear and pity. The statements mentioned above sound overexposed (hyperbolic), monstrous and marvellous. According to Faris, “In magical realism, reality outrageousness is often underscored because ordinary people react to magical events in recognizable and sometimes also in disturbing ways, a circumstance that normalizes the magic event but also defamiliarizes, underlines, or critiques extraordinary aspects of the real” (13). Allende’s fertile imagination has compared the delivery of Blanca to a volcanic eruption. She states that “Blanca's belly erupted in a long, liquid sigh, and she felt as if all the water in the world were running between her legs in a violent flush” (292). Allende defamiliarized and defocalized the pains of women (menstruation) when she states, “[W]ith a river of blood flowing between their legs and his [Miguel] science powerless to stop their life running out of that open faucet” (265). There is another angle to look at things from the male perspective. Because of the construction of their genitalia and their lack of a penis or phallus, psychology after Freud viewed women as inferior to men in their mental and moral development. Because of their reproductive capacities, their pregnant bodies, and monthly cycles, culture marks women as mysterious, taboo, or dangerous (Douglas).

The images of crumbling houses, flames, and fumes emerging from furious dragons, and the collapse of buildings like wounded dragons give the impression that you are watching a highly digitalized Hollywood movie, and the earthquake and eruption of volcano remain in the background, and the reader is overwhelmed by fear and pity. The statements mentioned above sound overexposed (hyperbolic), monstrous and marvellous. According to Faris, “In magical realism, reality outrageousness is often underscored because ordinary people react to magical events in recognizable and sometimes also in disturbing ways, a circumstance that normalizes the magic event but also defamiliarizes, underlines, or critiques extraordinary aspects of the real” (13). Allende’s fertile imagination has compared the delivery of Blanca to a volcanic eruption. She states that “Blanca's belly erupted in a long, liquid sigh, and she felt as if all the water in the world were running between her legs in a violent flush” (292). Allende defamiliarized and defocalized the pains of women (menstruation) when she states, “[W]ith a river of blood flowing between their

legs and his [Miguel] science powerless to stop their life running out of that open faucet” (265). There is another angle to look at things from the male perspective because of the construction of their genitalia and their lack of a penis or phallus; psychology after Freud viewed women as inferior to men in their mental and moral development. Because of their reproductive capacities, their pregnant bodies, and monthly cycles, culture marks women as mysterious, taboo, or dangerous (Douglas).

In *plenitude* there is luxuriance and abundance. It follows no rules or structure. It does not mean beautiful and pleasant but extraordinary, strange, and excellent. Its main aim was to translate postcolonial Latin American culture to American culture. Plenitude can be compared to Baroque. Alejo Carpentier defines baroque as “something multiple, diverse, and enormous that surpasses the work of a single architect or a single artist” (89). He further writes, for most of the people:

The words baroque art refers to a certain kind of very ornamental architecture from the seventeenth century, like that of Borromini in Italy, or a kind of sculpture with extraordinary movement and expansive forms of Bernini, whose most representative work, a definitive and complete baroque work, is the famous “Ecstasy of Saint Teresa.” (qtd. in Zamora and Faris 91)

Esteban Trueba was passionate about being filthy rich and showcasing his riches; he wanted to exercise his power through the palatial mansion he built. It should outshine as a model of prestige, modernity, magnificence, peace, and civilization. Allende expresses the beauty, diversity, and novae riche vulgarities of his big house on the corner in these words:

Esteban Trueba took charge of a team of bricklayers, carpenters, and plumbers who were engaged to construct the largest, sunniest, and sturdiest house imaginable, built to last a thousand years and lodge several generations of a beautiful family of legitimate Trueba’s. He hired a French architect and had part of the building materials imported from abroad so that it would be the only house with German stained-glass windows, molding carved in Australia, faucets of English bronze, Italian Marble floors, and special locks ordered by catalog from the United States .

. . French and British furniture, teardrop chandeliers, large rooms with big walls papered in blue silk, and Turkish carpets were extravagantly displaced. He wanted his new palace should be reflection of North America and Europe. (103)

Through her text, Allende offers multiple examples of plenitude. When Trueba was journeying from city to country (Tres Marias) by train, it filled Trueba with pleasure. His eyes grazed the fanciful vista of “fertile countryside, wheat fields, alfalfa, marigolds, colourful desert, the blue, the purple, the yellow of minerals laying on the surface of the earth” (52). The expressions mentioned above are examples of plenitude. The way Clara was taken care of also smacks of plenitude. Nana takes great pain for bathing rituals to make her a heavenly creature (see Allende 92).

In short, the text is packed with plenitude. A week before the final party, a lavish banquet was arranged to serve the guests from the city. They were served with “half a steer roasted in the courtyard, kidney pie, chicken casserole, various corn dishes, eggfruit, and the best harvest wine” (120). Allende savours the reader’s appetite when she refers to the deteriorating health of poor Blanca when it was the season of mellow fruitfulness she could not relish with “golden peaches, apricots, and young corn cooked with basil in clay casseroles and it was the season for making marmalade and jam for winter” (214). Moreover, hybridity is another typical postcolonial feature where oxymoron is yoked together.

The desire to look authentic and identifiable Other gives rise to mimicry. Trueba tries to become modern by imitating European mannerisms. Allende’s writing refers to “a more Christian and European form of spiritualism and magic, and she does not borrow from the myths of the indigenous population or assume that they are irrational” (Bowers 84). In her writing, the reader observes the colonist effect of settlers in Latin America on the indigenous population. Severo del Valle fully exhibits a Eurocentric attitude during the funeral rituals of Rosa, “they were properly dressed in black, solemn and silent, dry-eyed as befits to the dignity of grief” draws parallels to the European mode of mourning” (Allende 38).

Moreover, the concept of hybridity is important in postcolonial theorizing. It means a blend of cultural signs and practices between the dominating and dominated cultures. This cross-cultural phenomenon produces a mixed impact of the dominant European and native cultures. Esteban Trueba has become a metropolitan hybrid. Radhakrishnan (1996) described the favourite subject of the postcolonial period as hybridity; he defined it in two ways: metropolitan and postcolonial hybridity. In metropolitan hybridity, the subject enjoys immense pleasure and pride in identifying with dominant forces, whereas postcolonial hybridity is painful (159). The reader finds both kinds of hybridity: postcolonial and metropolitan in Trueba.

Allende states, “Seated in their dining room among the battered, antiquated pieces that had been fine Victorian furniture long ago, Estaban Trueba and his sister Ferula were eating the same grassy soup they had every day of the week, and the same tasteless fish they had for dinner every Friday” (45). He finds himself trapped in a postcolonial condition, which is painful. He always dreams of getting filthy rich like some of the Europeans. He wants to feel like them, act like them, and be like them. Bhabha states, “colonial mimicry is the desire for a reformed, recognizable Other, *as a subject of difference that is almost the same, but not quite*” (emphasis original 86). Trueba also seems to subscribe to Bhabha’s concept of cultural hybridity, which involves mimicry. After finishing his meal, Trueba “pick[ed] the whitish fish from the tangle of bones and laid his knife and fork across his plate” (46). His laying knife and fork across his plate mimic Europeans. This act of him is typically Eurocentric. He cherishes the dream of enjoying a delicious cup of Viennese coffee with three honey biscuits in Hotel Frances. Allende states Trueba’s Eurocentric state of mind, “His Viennese coffee arrived far more impressive than he imagined—superb, delicious, and accompanied by three honey biscuits. He stared at it in fascination for a long while until he finally dared to pick up the long-handled spoon and, with a sigh of ecstasy, plunge it into the cream. His mouth was watering” (48). European lifestyle; the luxurious dining room, with its tear-drop chandeliers and stylish furniture of Hotel Frances, impresses him. He wants to achieve material prosperity to translate his dream of a fulfilled life. His train journey fills him with an appreciation for the British. His entrance to Hotel Frances and travel of first-class cars opens the way to conceptualizing multiculturalism or diversity of cultures. It offers a sharp contrast between the colonized

and the colonizer's worlds. This is how the material world affects postcolonial consciousness. Characters like Trueba do not remain the same; instead, they become metropolitan hybrids.

Trueba cannot compromise regarding power and pride because he has heard the British colonizers did in the most distant hamlets of Africa and Asia so as not to lose their dignity and authority. He mimics himself in the same fashion as British colonizers do in terms of dressing, eating, and taste for music. Allende criticizes the Third World through her mouthpiece Trueba that no improvement is made in her country's infrastructure since colonial power Great Britain left the colony. It was not only the town, but also the condition of the national railway station and the people and his own house are equally deplorable. The situation remains the same as it were many years ago when he left the place, "the same dirty windows, the same little shoeshine boys, the same women selling biscuits and candies, and the same porters with their dark caps bearing the insignia of the British crown, which no one had thought to replace the colour of the national flag" (93). The lines show that they do not find the nationalistic spirit; the presence of British insignia reflects that they are still oppressed and colonized subjects. Generally, a national flag is a sign of the national identity of any country, but no change in flag colour shows as if they had no identity of their own. The house where he used to live has turned into a ruin: steps were creaky as if they were not vexed for long, nothing has changed, even the position of the old furniture has lost its lustre, "the broken window panes patched with scraps of cardboard, chipped ceramics pots, wallpaper of flowers had been discolored from the soot of the coal, the fetid smells of urine mixed with food that turned his stomach. What poverty" (95).

The ancient institution is the only building that remains intact after the earthquake; it shows that the material used in the other buildings is of poor quality. The British school where the twins are under study has influenced their language and culture; "they could speak Spanish in Oxford accent, and the only emotion they were capable of expressing was surprise, raising their left eyebrows" (Allende 186). Similarly, Trueba is convinced that British schools are ideal for young ladies' education and grooming. There they are taught to read the Bible, type and play piano, and play tennis. He appreciates Alba learning English and considers English superior to Spanish for its being *lingua franca* and the

language of science and technology. In contrast, Spanish is a romantic and second-rated language appropriate for domestic use. In colonial cultural discourse, the language flows and is embedded in binary opposition; transporting or exporting a language to a new land or imposing a language on the indigenous population may be termed a cultural invasion. Itamar Even-Zohar claims that a dominant culture or a base “source . . . imposes its language [culture] and texts on a subjugated community” (68). It all depends on how we perceive it: an opportunity or crisis. To Howells, language enables us to see, and our vision is grafted the way it is structured (qtd. in Slemon 12). The school has become an isolated island, and the children and the administration remain busy with songs and playing cricket, and the only news from the British Isles reaches there in three weeks. Ideologically and structurally, the difference does exist between the superior and the inferior, dominating and the dominated, colonizer and the colonized.

Mimicry brings indeterminacy and rupture in colonial discourse. This very ambivalence and mimicry transform the colonial subject as a ‘partial’ presence. Bhabha considers partial both ‘incomplete and ‘virtual’. In this regard mimicry is a double-edged weapon that is resemblance and menacing at the same time (Bhabha 86).

Postcolonial societies need to develop a scientific approach to their daily life matters without disturbing their sociocultural norms and values. As the scientific solutions result from long and hard experimentation, they demand to pay heed. According to Chandy, “In some magico-realist narratives, the perspective of the protagonist, in which the natural and supernatural are considered to be the same level of reality, can be explained in a rational manner, as the information given in the story does not contradict a logical solution” (172). Native American culture is strongly criticized and derided for its being unscientific and irrational, especially concerning Pancha Garcia’s death. This example is an illustration of marvelous realism. People believe in their healing traditions, which they dearly love, even at the cost of their lives. They firmly believe that this is how the world runs:

Old Pedro Garcia’s all knowledge was powerless to cure the chicken fever of his daughter Pancha, which had dispatched her to the Hereafter. He had made her eat cow dung, and when that did not produce results, he gave her horse manure, rapt

her in the blankets, and made her sweat up illness until there was nothing left of her but skin and bones. (156)

Allende believes that if we want to survive, modern knowledge is indispensable. Trueba's life is seriously affected by economic and cultural forces. He seems to be incredibly impressed by a system of global capital. According to Ashcroft et al., "globalism is a teleological doctrine which provides, explains and justifies an interlocking system of world trade" (101). Esteban's activities revolve around business affairs, which might be the impact of globalization. He began to speculate in the stock market and spent hours and hours studying the fluctuation of international investment. He committed himself to investing capital, starting new companies, and importing. He is least reluctant to have a joint corporate venture with Transito Soto in running whores' cooperative (Allende 127). He believes in the policy of minting money, irrespective of its source. Money has become his creed.

Not only Esteban Trueba but the whole habitants of Tres Marias seem to be impressed by Count Jean de Satigny for his kidskin shoes, raw-linen jacket, English cologne, puffing Oriental cigarettes, polished fingernails, eating etiquettes, foreign elegance, education, lightheartedness, calmness, and civilized manners. He was also loved and admired for his amicable nature, culinary skills, and a never-ending source of anecdotes. Esteban Trueba is greatly overwhelmed by his financial management and business acumen. Jean de Satigny was in search of a business partner. To Trueba, he was the best option for his socio-economic position. When Jean de Satigny suggested the lucrative business of rearing chinchillas on a fifty-fifty basis, he made inroads into his heart, mind and home. He was adored as a celebrity, and people loved to have him as a guest of honour, but this did not apply to Blanca. The moment Jean de Satigny asks for her hand from Trueba, she gets offended, refuses to join him at the table, and makes him realize that he is an unwanted soul in the house. She also disliked his discreet mannerisms. The very line throws ample light on the moral hollowness of the man when Allende states that "Jean de Satigny had no particular fixation on virginity, and he had not raised the issue when he asked her hand in marriage" (219). He is the same man who is wooing Blanca and asking her hand for marriage.

After earthquake injuries, though he had recovered, his bones still ached; he thought it better to get his bones examined by a foreign doctor as if the local doctors were incompetent and charlatans, so he left for America. This practice is quite prevalent in the postcolonial world. The opulent class takes pride as a status symbol in getting their treatment done in Euro-American countries by foreign doctors. Allende does not appreciate yogi practices, piercing cheeks and chest, not using egg, milk, and meat, walking barefoot on coal, “yielding a voluminous treatise on the ninety-nine names of God and formulas for attaining nirvana through respiratory exercise” (303). Nicolas was forbidden to stuff Alba’s mind with nonsensical pagan ideas. Magical Realism may serve as a socio-political critique and technique when a country is under a dictatorship.

4.6 Magical Realism as a Mode of Socio-political Critique

Allende has employed magical realism to satirize and criticize the political upper class of Latin America. Severo is an excellent example of how politically ambitious leaders (like him) gain vertical growth in their careers. As Severo had a long-cherished dream and desire of becoming senator, for his end, he had to establish social connections, develop friendships, “secret meetings, discreet but effective public appearances and gifts of money or favors made to the right people at the right moment” (28). For Faris, “magical realist texts frequently assume anti-bureaucratic positions, using their magic against the established social order. They resemble the mystic rhetoric charged with oxymora and metaphors” (139). Allende critiques Agrarian reforms through her mouthpiece, Esteban Trueba. To Trueba, reforms did more damage than good. He set things right and made Tres Marias a model estate. He considers himself a reformer, a patronizing figure, a hard taskmaster, a true *patron* who made a difference. He drained all his resources, which pulled Tres Marias from profound misery to a model estate. However, he simultaneously exploits the resources (people/land) and builds a big house in the corner. The features mentioned above justly establish him as a colonizer.

Allende also criticizes the election system and exposes electoral engineering. This time Esteban Trueba’s Conservative Party was clearly winning, therefore, there was no need to maintain law and order situation, as things were shaping well. After becoming Senator,

Trueba's political power, his wealth multiplied and social contacts increased but at the same time becomes detached and lonely from his own family. He has his own political designs to materialize those dreams, he throws grand parties, does political maneuvering: rigging the ballot boxes and bribing the police, developing some kind of intimacy with the peasants, these all-political moves are meant to win the elections and cut the liberals, radicals, and communists into size (my paraphrase 79). Allende critiques not only in strong terms the brutality of Pinochet's Chilean regime but also opens window to the other side of the world to make her point that there is "more than one point of view, to realistic and magical ways of seeing, and . . . respond to a desire for narrative freedom from realism, and from a univocal narrative stance; they implicitly correspond textually in a new way to critique of totalitarian discourse of all kinds" (Faris 180). Through myths and allegory, postcolonial writers develop a counter-discourse to make their point to the Western world and the reader how they had been exploited and colonized.

The cure diagnosed by Mr. Brown is an implicit critique of colonizers' policy of extermination who consider their subject no less than ants. The solution he proposed reflects the colonizer's mind set. He discovered a special product which "would make the males of the species sterile . . . and would bring about a fatal illness in the females, and would put an end to the whole problem" (123). Allende appreciates the mythic account of indigenous life, through her primitivizing gaze, she transfuses the text and confers dignity on that way of life (Faris 149). This example of marvelous realism helps the reader appreciate native culture which is magically real. The colonizer thinks that he has the solution to all their problems is not true. This parable of ants' plague has a message that self-reliance and indigenous resources are the best means to combat their predicament. Invaders cannot be their messiah. The cure of the ants' plague lies within their people and culture. It sounds like a good illustration of myth and meta-fiction. According to Valdez Moses, "Thus magical realism may co-opt and hence distort or misrepresent a people's indigenous mythologies and traditions, but it also preserves them for use by their descendants" (115). Old Pedro Garcia's prayers of wisdom and enchantment to the ants did magic, they begin to disappear as if they had never been there. The very next morning "there were nothing: no ants in the kitchen, none in the pantry, the granary, the table, the chicken coops, and the pasture" (Allende 124-125). To Clara, it all seemed normal and real with

nothing magical. The novel has a strong political punch, Allende condemned dictatorial regimes because basic civilian rights are violated.

Allende also criticizes the arrogant and aggressive attitude of the military regime in strong terms. She critically remarks through her protagonist, Alba that “Soldiers are not to made shine in time of peace” (426). To her surprise, army has literally practiced what they had learnt in barracks on their own fellow citizens: complete obedience, the display, and use of weaponry without any prick of conscience. Allende further criticizes that in most of the dictatorial regimes, performing arts, a culture of knowledge and learning goes into disarray. The regimes seek their muscle through harassing people and disrupting academic culture. Under the dictatorial regime, Alba had to leave her studies, “many professors were fired, arrested, missing, or simply disappeared, in accordance with a blacklist in the hands of the political police . . . The University was filled with spies” (Allende 427). The atmosphere became alarming that generated a tremendous amount of consternation. He had never imagined that his house could be ransacked by the men in white plainclothes who push him into the sitting room (see p. 446). Allende wants to convince the reader through her discourse that democratic regimes are true and legitimate, and have all the right to rule. They can only protect their subjects; in dictatorial regimes, human rights are violated. Allende in this chapter has greatly romanticized and glorified Salvador Allende (in comparison to Pinochet) as a great democratic leader of the people of Chile.

Allende critiques how Indian antiquities and heritage are smuggled to drain its culture. Jean de Satigny (a colonizing agent) came into contact with the priest whom the German government sanctioned to catalog the antiques he gets hold of during digging up the Incan village and hand over to the museum. Satigny was street smart and extracted all the required information from the priest and calculated the historical value of Indian antiquities. The relics which remained unnoticed and unlisted in the catalog were surreptitiously taken away by the teams of the hired Indians who dug the place thoroughly and filled the secret empty spaces of his house with these magnificent ancient remnants with the intention to smuggle them and mint huge sums of profit. This secret mining of historical heritage was a clandestine business conducted under the vigilant supervision of Jean de Satigny. Allende also highlights another important feature, if you want to be filthy

rich, prostitution is the best business enterprise.

In this regard, the one character that impressed Esteban Trueba the most is Transito Soto for her numerous qualities. She was ambitious, enterprising, entertaining, indefatigable, and indeed a true friend, both share commonalities, both wanted to be filthy rich and famous in their own ways. Being sexually drenched, he still wanted to relieve himself in the best-known brothel, Allende ironically writes, “but he was not a man for whores” (77). The second time he met her, he found her wealthier, taller, heavier, and beautiful for his being smaller, lighter, and exasperated. She expressed her gratitude and eagerness to pay back fifty pesos with interest she borrowed once. She convinced him that investing money in her *whoring cooperative* would make him rich that is his prime goal in life. He wanted to relieve himself from the exuberant femininity of Transito Soto. He used racist and sexist language for her. He romantically termed it love, but it was no less than a violent and ferocious rape. He articulated her sexuality in the following words:

I felt I was twenty again, and happy to be holding in my arms this bold, *swarthy* woman who did not fall apart when you go on top of her, *a strong mare* you could ride on without giving a second thought, who did not make your hands feel heavy, your voice hard, your feet gigantic, or your beard too scratchy, but someone like yourself, who could take a string of bad words in the ear and did not need to be rocked with tender arguments and coaxed with flattery. Afterward, sleepy and happy, I rested awhile by her side, admiring the *solid curve of her hips* and the *shudder of her snake*. (my emphasis 132)

To substantiate her point, Allende refers to and critiques the demoralization of the military and political elite. The business of prostitution has flourished to the extent that it has engulfed police and other state operatus. Criminal activities are conducted where police accomplice under the umbrella of political and military protection. Now it is not considered a crime but a profitable industry. Trueba, to fill his leisure with sensual pleasure, in the company of his friends, frequently moves to a red lantern. This also establishes the fact that men are disloyal to their wives. Through the courtesy of Mustafa, the pimp who remarked “Allow me to offer you the best in the house, I am going to introduce you to Aphrodite”

(349). Fortunately, it was none but Transito Soto a mythical beauty. She talked about her great success in the business of prostitution and homosexuality. She gave it a novel look that stimulated consumers' erotic fantasies. She classified the call girls and made them her brand ambassador for her brothel's advertisement. She had the potential to cure him thoroughly through her sexual intercourse and discourse (see 350-52). She pledged Trueba that she would be rich one day, which she did! She had the acumen of business entrepreneurship. She knew how to bring novelty even in the prostitution business. She told Trueba that "the cooperative of whores and homosexuals had done stupendously well for ten years, but that times had changed and they had had to give new twists" (463).

When Trueba goes to meet her, the room in which he stays offers a magical spectacle. The placement of multiple mirrors resulting in multiple images gives him the feel of magical delight. To her, a brothel is an outmoded concept. It needs to be replaced with "a hotel for rendezvous, a pleasant place where secret couples could make love and where a man would not be embarrassed to bring a girl for the first time" (Allende 463). Trueba knows it well that such business cannot be flourished without the support of local administration, political police, and military bureaucracy. When the political police raid the hotel they find a couple of generals in the main drawing-room, after that police abandons to harass her anymore. This is how she manipulates and makes mockery of the whole system.

I argue that the reader may well associate and relate these events to the political, bureaucratic class of our own country, Pakistan where such activities are taking place with mutual consent and cooperation of police and administration.

4.7 Conclusion

It may be concluded that the theoretical concepts of Patricia Hart, Stephen Slemon, and Wendy B. Faris have helped trace postcolonial magical femino-centric discourse in the novel. The analysis of the text strongly condemns women's sexual, emotional and psychological exploitation which has reduced them to mere objects and commodities. Allende has amplified women's voices muffled by patriarchy. Analysis of the text demonstrates that women have patience, acumen, and vision to survive but also have the

potential to handle the challenges in a better way than men. Allende blends historical facts with fiction that makes the reader link the dots. The analysis of the text has been rewarding in many ways: the three approaches—magical realism, feminism, and postcolonialism are subversive that voice the unvoiced. The following chapter deals with the analysis of my second novel *Like Water for Chocolate* by Laura Esquivel.

Chapter 5

A tinkling sensation: A Textual Analysis of Laura Esquivel's *Like Water for Chocolate*

She began to suspect that something extraordinary had happened. Was it possible that she was feeding the baby? She removed the boy from her breast: a thin stream of milk sprayed out. Tita couldn't understand it. It wasn't possible for an unmarried woman to have milk, short of a supernatural act, unheard of in these times.

—Laura Esquivel *LWC* 76

Undoubtedly, when it came to dividing, dismantling, dismembering, desolating, detaching, dispossessing, destroying, or dominating, Mama Elena was a pro

—Laura Esquivel *LWC* 97.

5.1 Introduction

Laura Esquivel uses magical realism in her novel to explore the ways in which traditions and family expectations impact women's lives in early twentieth century Mexico. Moreover, the work examines the power of emotions and their liberating and restraining effect in a patriarchal society. The journey of Tita, the female protagonist, makes a trajectory of self-discovery and empowerment.

Laura Esquivel (1950) is a Mexican fiction and screen play writer, widely known for her debut, bestselling novel, *LWC* (1989), later it was made into an award winning-film in 1994. She also wrote plays for children, short stories, and numerous novels which are based on Mexican settings. Her novels were deep rooted in Mexican culture and history. She applies magical realist/feminist techniques in her novels. The novel, *LWC*, was immensely popular, more than 4.5 million copies have been sold that signature her

imaginative, creative flair. It was translated into more than thirty languages. The novel has biographical elements. The character Tita is conceived after her great aunt whose name was Tita, and she was forbidden to marry and spent the rest of her life in service of her mother. *The Law of Love* (1996) is her second novel which is a blend of science fiction and romance. *Malinche* (2006) third, traces the history of a Mexican mythic woman who served Spanish conqueror Hernan Cortes as an interpreter and mistress. Her fourth novel *Swift as Desire* was published in 2000. Esquivel recently tried her luck in politics and won a seat in Mexico City's Local Council. In 2012, she was elected Federal Administrative for the Morena Party. She had been the head of the Mexico City Cultural Committee and member of Science and Technology and Environmental Committees for the party. Like, Allende, she married twice. Once she married an actor, director, and producer Alfonso Arau and got divorced and now she lives with her present husband in Mexico City.

The novel *LWC* is divided into twelve sections named after the months of the year, starting in January and closing in December. Each part starts with a Mexican recipe. The chapters associate each dish to an event in the protagonist's life. I discuss the summary here thematically rather than chronologically. The novel is a tale of domesticated women, Tita (the protagonist) in particular whose life is confined within the four walls of the kitchen. She is kept away from happiness and marriage by her mother. She wants to marry Pedro but is denied the right straight away due to oppressive cultural tradition that the youngest daughter cannot marry because she is to look after her mother. Apart from love, cooking does all sorts of magic. She is a cook par excellence. She is a healer, nurturer, defender of the young, her career is both claustrophobic and heroic (246). The kitchen occupies the central position in the text. It rattles the reader, on the one hand how it becomes empowering for a woman: a fountain of delightful pleasure, and a place to celebrate Christmas and birthday, while, on the other hand, it becomes a place, where a despotic and overbearing mother consigns her youngest daughter a life of domestication and drudgery because she (Mama Luna) herself had been a victim of unreciprocated love. She had absorbed all the poison over the period but now bent on ruining her daughter's life in the name of tradition.

Sexuality is another dominating theme of the novel. In *LWC*, Gertrudis, another

daughter of Mama Elena, has been presented as a whore; she is all sensual, sexual, and rebellious. She elopes with a revolutionary soldier all naked on horseback; later, she joins the army and is raised to the level of a general. Rosaura concedes authority and tradition. Tita surrenders herself to her mother's will, who is bent on ruining her own life and the lives of her daughters (247). Writers do employ pornographic writing and prostitution for multiple reasons:

Michael Rowe's *Writing Below the Belt: Conversations with Erotic Authors*, contains statements by well-known authors of pornographic/sexual literature who either confirm that they are able to write their texts because they are, for instance gay and male (e.g., John Preston) or they confirm that they are able to write stories of pornographic nature because all they use is imagination (e.g., Caro Soles *alia* Kyle Stone).

Feminists are divided in their views regarding women's sexuality, such as prostitution and pornography; some celebrate it as empowering, while others consider it misogynistic and dehumanizing. Lara Esquivel's *LWC* and Allende's *THS* are packed with passages that contain sexuality and desire. I only refer to them. Women, in general, and women of color, in particular, are thought of as voiceless and marginalized based on racism, sexism, and economic exploitation. Tita, the youngest, is the real character: conflicted and ambivalent. Mama Elena enjoys the absolute authority to call her shots and assign identity, veto power to decide marriage matches, and employs all tools and modes of oppression to internalize terror: gaze, indifference, silence, punishment, and plenty of slaps to subdue her youngest daughter. It also deals with feminist and postcolonial issues of class, race, gender and identity, social inequality, domestic violence, and oppressive family traditions. In my analysis of the text, I have discussed all these issues under the following headings:

- Interbraiding Magical Feminist Elements
- Mama Elena: flag bearer of Patriarchal Thinking
- Affirming Female Sexuality
- The Discourse of Absence and Silence

- Euro-centric Tilt
- Race, Class, and Gender
- Elements of Magical Realism

5.2 Interbraiding Magical Realist/Feminist Elements

Laura Esquivel shows Tita's exceptional insights as far as cooking is concerned. It seems cooking is her passion. She earns excellent appreciation for the minute details she presents in her recipes. I argue that in postcolonial societies, women without good cooking are considered incomplete and worthless. This imaginative cooking empowers her as a way to rebel against her mother. If you want to make an inroad to a man's heart, its route goes through the kitchen. It is one of the most effective tools for a happy marriage. Price speaks highly of Tita's magical culinary skills in the following words:

All Tita's emotions of frustration, anger, desire, and clandestine passions are poured into the dishes that she cooks up with startling results. For the emotion with which Tita approaches each new recipe is magically transmitted to whoever consumes her dishes and all the while the tabooed love that she and Pedro share boils and bubbles beneath the surface. (182)

Culinary skills involve much sophistication. To cook food perfectly, one needs proper time to organize one's activity and complete peace of mind so that the cooked food can be enjoyed to the maximum. Food eating is symbolized as an act of carnal event. For instance, if a rose petal is soaked in blood, it has to be dried up because it may change the taste of the dish or may produce a hazardous chemical reaction. After Nacha's death, someone has to fill the gap as Tita was the last in a chain of cooks, so she was assigned the post of marvelous art of cooking. Nacha shared culinary secrets with Tita. To Zubiaurre, *LWC* is not merely a festive tale of romanticized female solidarity and belonging. It is more secretive, a highly private and individualized affair that openly avoids communal sharing (40). The magical aspect of it is that even after her death, her spirit comes to guide Tita. The visit of the dead apparition is a typical feature of magical realist

text. She helped her remember the “Quail in Rose Petal Sauce” recipe. Her bonds with Nacha were powerful. That is why she plunged into fits of isolation and depression after her death. Tita is Esquivel’s mouthpiece. Esquivel appreciates her culinary skills by drawing a parallel between poetic and jugglery skills. The way a poet plays with words and a juggler with balls, she juggles with ingredients and quantities at her sweet will to obtain exceptionally magical results. Chenchu believes that soup has curative power, both physical and psychological. The Ox-tail soup brought by Chenchu to Dr. Brown’s had a therapeutic effect on Tita and restored her senses from her being insane.

Sampaloesi argues that “the preparation of meals is a science, and everyone has his/her own secrets. Wisdom, certainly, is not given away for free” (141). There is no doubt that culinary skills involve much sophistication like, quality chocolate beans of different types need to be carefully toasted in a metal pan because if the cook uses earthenware, it absorbs the oil the beans give off. It has to be heated at a moderate temperature; if heated for a more extended period, it becomes acrid and indigestible, and if heated for a shorter period, it becomes discolored and distasteful. Moreover, the inexpert chocolate beating of the A-one quality can transform it into a disgusting drink (165). The preparation of candy syrup is another example of maximalism and gastronomic sophistication. It involves a various degree of cooking: “soft thread stage, firm thread stage, soft pearl stage, firm pearl stage, blowing stage, pouring stage, solidifying stage, and caramelizing stage, soft ball stage” (Esquivel 196). I argue that it involves a lot of patience and passion to prepare recipes; otherwise, it becomes traditional drudgery. Apart from Nacha and Tita, nobody qualifies for the ordeal of superior culinary skills.

Laura Esquivel in *LWC* sets “this same female magic of emotionally flavored food at the heart of the story” (Faris 205). It is cooking that does all sorts of magic. The weeping of Tita on the occasion of marriage was why she was forbidden to marry because of the oppressive family tradition that commands the youngest daughter not to marry. Mama Elena, against her daughter’s wish, arranged Pedro’s marriage to her elder sister. As a result, she wept bitterly. While preparing the wedding cake, some of her tears overflowed into the cake. When the wedding guests ate that food and the cake, they began to vomit the cake. When Tita cooked quail in a sauce made from the rose petals of a bouquet gifted by

Pedro, it communicated a different feeling altogether to Pedro; it tasted like “the dish for the gods!” (51). There is another angle to look into the matter, particularly concerning Mama Elena’s matriarchal role. She swaps Rosaura for Tita, reinforcing that women are commodities to be given and exchanged without considering their needs. Esquivel is critical to traditional norms that do not care about one’s feelings. To her, such traditions are oppressive and against human well-being. It generated a wave of longing, a sympathetic erotic upheaval: “It seemed that the food she was eating produced in her an aphrodisiac effect since she began to feel an intense heat invaded in her thighs” (56).

There is another occasion when Tita displays her cooking magic when she cooks for her niece’s wedding, “the food provoked positive erotic longing among the wedding guests, Tita had a system of her own, she was a transmitter, Pedro, Gertrudis and other were on receiving end” (52). Faris states, “Tita’s cooking magic constitutes a variation on the linguistic magic that blurs the limit between words and worlds” (206). The hate for her mother is transmitted in the sausages and can provoke the sausages she prepares to rot without any logical explanation. Similarly, her bad mood permeates into beans, which prevents them from cooking; the magical aspect of the whole episode is that to make them cook, she has to sing to them until they soften (90, 187). I argue that in the subcontinent, there are myths of legendary musicians and singers who could make rain possible, break glass, and set fire through their singing. Culinary discourse is not biologically determined but learned through cultural tradition. The narrative thus questions the rigidity of conventional roles. The extraordinary events are described in matter-of-fact details. Esquivel does not spare much space for the reader’s disbelief. Singing to beans sounds ordinary, natural, and logical in magical realist text. I intend to explore the dynamics of matriarchy and how it affects and traumatizes the emotional well-being of women in general and Tita in particular.

5.3 Mama Elena as an Embodiment of Patriarchal Thinking

Mama Elena controls the ranch and looks after financial matters and family affairs. Tita is not allowed to play with her sisters; if she does, she will get an awful spanking. In this regard, the family becomes a tool of suppression. As a result, Nacha becomes her playmate

and confidant. Mama Elena is a strict disciplinarian and a hard taskmaster who dictates her terms like “That’s all for today” (10). Her command can make her daughters move like robots; no delay or faltering is acceptable. On receiving the command, they all spring into action. The following lines demonstrate that she enjoys absolute authority:

Mama Elena could move them however she pleased, yet she did not know what to do with them, other than knitting. . . She had to get up, get dressed, get the fire going in stove, fix breakfast, feed the animals, make the beds, fix lunch, wash the dishes, day after day, year after year. Without pausing a moment, without wondering if this was what she wanted. (109)

Subjugation through domestication is a tool to curtail women’s agency that patriarchy employs subtly. Stereotyping further weakens their agency. Rosaldo argues that women’s subordination lies in the fact that they are domesticated within the house’s four walls and that their work of rearing and bearing children is less valued than men’s. The location of public and private further isolates them from one another (174). Patriarch expects women to acquire few skills that empower men and weaken women economically, politically, and socially. His concept of femininity is presented through sexuality, cooking, housekeeping, cleaning, and child-rearing. Esquivel gives the pen picture of the girls’ activities such as “collecting the chicken,” “drawing water from the well,” and “collecting wood for the stove” (10). Moreover, in postcolonial society, domestication and beating are considered feminine virtues.

At times, family is another trap that weakens women’s agency. Tita’s right to marriage is denied because of family traditions. Her mother’s ruling overrules her burning desire. In the following words, Esquivel depicts the situation: "Mama Elena threw her a look that seemed to Tita to contain all the years of repression that followed over the family." She addresses Tita: "You know perfectly well that being the youngest daughter means you have to take care of me until the day I die" (10). Though she has the right to love and be loved, the right is usurped. It is given unjustly to her sister Rosaura. Esquivel raises her voice for the silenced and marginalized and protests against oppressive family traditions and Mexican culture. To her, it is no less than curtailing one’s agency.

It triggers a series of unusual questions in Tita's mind to explore their answers simultaneously. The first question that bothers her is who has initiated this absurd family tradition, and second, "[I]f Tita could not marry and have children, who would take care of her when she got old?" and third, what about the couple that remains issueless, fourth, is there any scientific research that proves that the youngest daughter is the most suitable person to serve her old mother and why not the eldest one or the second one. Last, "If she could not marry, was she at least allowed to experience love? Or not even that?" (12). Mama Elena does not speak to her for a week. She, too, remains silent as a token of resistance. Second, Tita responds to one of her mother's questions with categorical no, which astonishes her mother and she has to say that, "Are you starting up with your rebelliousness again?" (12). While listening to the statement, she earnestly apologized by saying "Mami," which calmed her. To her, the word Mama has a disrespectful connotation. She categorically orders her daughters to use the word *Mami*, not *Mama*. Mama Elena realized that as if she had cowed her youngest daughter.

She did her level best to shake off Pedro's idea from her mind, but subtle gestures made her 'uncomfortable' like the very look, following and offering his help. His open confession of his deep love for her and asking her if she feels the same way or if he can expect to win her love makes her uncomfortable. Her response was simple: she did not know what to say. She tried to buy time to contemplate and make a decision. I argue that her response is an expression of an independent mind. When he pressed her hard to get the answer right now, she replied affirmatively that she would love him forever.

Tita's magic emerged from "the enclosed space of frustrated domesticity rather than emerging from shaman's powerhouse connected to the cosmos" (Faris 181). Mama Elena assigned Tita the task of preparing a cake for Pedro and Rosaura's marriage to serve one hundred and eighty guests as a punishment for her feigned headache. Mama took her headache as an excuse to spoil the occasion. She used fear as a weapon to threaten Tita. She warned her not to shed a single tear or even pull a long face so that one might not get the impression that she was a victim of circumstances and her mother's injustice. She had to go through the gruesome experience of chicken castration that made her scream. Sensing her irritation through her facial expression, Mama Elena was enraged. She gave her a

forceful slap and reminded her to beat the cake batter. She had made her eat “the soft-boiled eggs” that she detested while she was a good eater of everything (50). She warned Tita that she was trying her patience. Under the gaze of patriarchy, neither she could complain nor scream. The moment ‘Mami’ left the kitchen she had a sigh of relief, embrace Nacha, and put her head on her shoulder to cry. The cry goes on till she is on the verge of a nervous collapse. I argue that the worst impact of patriarchy on women is that it crushes them emotionally and psychologically.

The marriage celebrations of Rosaura turned into mourning. Mama Elena is determined to teach Tita a lifetime lesson. She gave the severe thrashing that took a couple of weeks to recover the bruises inflicted upon her. It was indeed a monstrous beating, and Tita was interrogated as if she was the chief culprit. It was revealed that only one thing extra was added: “the tear she had shed while preparing it” had ruined the wedding ceremony (41). It made everything bitter.

Mama Elena knew the intensity of Tita and Pedro’s passion but never allowed them space to see, talk, and meet each other. The moment Pedro was about to talk to Tita, he heard Mama’s shout in the background, inquiring about what was happening on the patio. I argue it is no less than atrocious exercise of her autonomous power that never let them breathe a sigh of relief. This kind of ruthless surveillance germinates feelings of sedition. Tita, too, wanted a space where there was no Mama Elena, who had taken away from her the liberty of making love, a place where there would be no rules of her cruel mother who made them apart and made her lost and lonesome. She had internalized fear in her to the extent that she could not utter a single word that lumped in her throat as blood congeals in her veins. On her second shout, she could not pluck the courage to disclose to her mother that Gertrudis had run away with one of Villa’s men completely naked on horseback. She is the only character in the novel who breaks free of societal norms. I argue that it was bound to happen; extremes are always bad. The very dictatorial attitude created a serious vacuum that someone should have filled. Inwardly, she was happy for her sister’s liberation from the repressive charge of her mother. Every year, she commemorates the event by garnishing the quail sauce platter, placing a single blooming rose at the center, and scattering rose petals on its borders. This shows that she cherished the memory throughout

her life, and the platter's embellishment shows her exquisite sense of symmetry and elegance. I argue that the event is of great significance because nothing can be compared to human liberty. It catalyzes Tita's imagination and urges her to listen to the inner voice and break the shackles of drudgery and undue subordination that pricks her dignity.

When revolutionaries tried to break into Mama Elena's house, they had to encounter her with her shotgun in her petticoats. She voluntarily offered to take whatever they liked from corn, the crib, and the stable, but no one was allowed to grab anything from inside the house. It was not mere warning when she saw revolutionaries enter the house. She warned not to set foot in her house; when she saw a soldier carrying chickens in a carefree mood, laughing and joking, she had to raise a gun and shoot the chickens. The air was filled with the smell of bits of burnt feathers. This bold action of Mama Elena made it hard for the captain to meet her stare. Something was intimidating about it. He appreciated her courage and confidence. Esquivel states, "They fell prisoner to a childlike fear of maternal authority" (91). The event proves that she had an authoritarian aura.

Mama Elena's role emerged as a colonizer, a typical dictator. She was quite meticulous about bath rituals and their sophistication. Tita has to be on alert for its preparation she has a long list to crosscheck. The water is heated with lavender flowers and carried to the dark room through buckets to be poured into a large bathing tub. It should be mild: neither too hot nor too cold. First of all, she is to clean her mother's naked body and then her hair with special aloe water preserved in a pewter pitcher. Afterward, she irons her clothes; in the meantime, Mama Elena enjoys the pleasant, warm, and aromatic water of the tub. After being relaxed, she calls Tita, who dries her body gently but carefully and puts on warm clothes quickly so that she might not catch a cold. The door is slightly ajar to cool down the temperature a bit so that she will not have trouble with a sudden change of temperature. When her hair gets dry, she brushes and braids it.

Mama Elena's overbearing role and the departure of Roberto and Pedro have greatly pained and affected Tita's composure and confidence. She tried her best to accomplish things perfectly, but Mama Elena's fastidious and censorious nature had badly shaken her poise. Esquivel notes, "The water was so hot that Mama Elena had burned her

feet when she got in, Tita had forgotten the aloe water for hair, burned the bottom of Mama Elena's chemise, opened the door too far, and finally got Mama Elena's attention the hard way and was scolded and sent from bathroom" (95).

I argue that ferocity is not a form of transmission, but cooking is. These lines best describe the character of Mama Elena. She is the most violent of any of the men in the novel. Perhaps she had realized that the best way to survive the world is to act like a man in the male-dominated world. She has an exquisite talent of cutting watermelon with mathematical precision: with a single stroke against a stone, she may rip it open into a flower-like petal shape. When the above-mentioned terms are deconstructed, they carry negative connotations. The words explain the context and throw ample light on her true character. She is responsible for Tita's desolation and had been instrumental in dispossessing Tita from her true love of Pedro till the last day of her life, even after death, detaching Roberto from the maternal love of her feeding aunt. She has been a catalyst in destroying the family unit of her discriminatory and domineering nature and policies. She is the one who deprived her daughters of their true identity and complete freedom to live as independent beings. She is the one who sowed the seeds of sedition, particularly in Gertrudis and Tita. To prepare chilies and walnut sauce, one needs to crack thousands of nuts without feeling fatigued and bored. Esquivel states that no one can surpass Mama Elena, who could do it at an indefatigable pace. In the following lines, her character is appreciated and depreciated at the same time:

Not only could she crack sack after sack of nuts in a short time, but she also seemed to take great pleasure in doing it. Applying pressure, smashing to bits, skinning, those were her favorite past activities. The hours just flew by when she sat on the patio with a sack of nuts between her legs, not getting up until she was done with it. (230)

It was intolerable for Mama Elena to be blamed for Roberto's death. She was boiling inwardly and could not bear the shock of Gertrudis' elopement. She felt her reins of control were getting loose and weak; therefore, she passed orders not to mention her name in her house. The same order applied to Tita for her disobedience and condemned her for questioning parental authority. Esquivel states, "In the De la Carze family some

things could be excused, but not disobedience, no questioning parental authority” (125). I argue that both the sisters had to pay the price in their own ways: Gertrudis had to work in a brothel, and Tita was expelled from her mother’s house to suffer insanity in a madhouse.

When robbers attacked Mama Elena’s ranch, she was severely beaten and paralyzed, whereas Chenchu was gang-raped ferociously by bandits. To stop her bleeding, she had to be stitched. After some time, the stitches irritated, and the very flashback of the unpleasant memories scared her psychologically and emotionally. Chenchu had to go to Dr. Brown to get them removed. During this period, Tita thought she could fool her mother and fix her meal so that Chenchu could rest. The moment Mama Elena tasted the meal, the sourness revived, and she ordered Chenchu to leave her house on the pretext that she had tried to swindle her. I argue the bitterness inculcated by Mama Elena infused in Tita, worked like a boomerang. Tita exerted her magical power through cooking. After that, numerous cooks were tried, but no one could survive Mama Elena’s overbearing rule and role. Esquivel playfully mentions that the last cook served her fifteen days because he was deaf, but when she made a sign of fool, she followed her predecessors. Now, Tita was her only option left to get fed. Mama took precautionary measures to deal with her suspicions of being poisoned. As with milk, Tita was asked to take some bites before Mama and a few sips to ensure the food was well. Frequently, she felt spasms and violent convulsions in her stomach, and then she took, in addition, “a swig of syrup of ipecac and another of squill onion as a purgative. That did not last long. Mama Elena died within a month.”

(135). I argue that her suspicions, cold-bloodedness, narcissistic personality disorder (NPD) poisoned her. The one who robs someone of peace and pleasure cannot enjoy true happiness. Her own malicious actions sealed her fate. Her death created a breathing space for the oppressed and made inroads for Pedro, Gertrudis, and John to revive their lives. Now I will discuss feminist leitmotif in the novel.

5.4 Affirming Female Sexual Autonomy

Feminists believe that women have the right to take control of their own sexuality. I argue that Gertrudis does not want her sexuality to be controlled by Mama Elena or

anyone else. Gertrudis is too bold to be trapped by patriarchal social structures. She expresses her sexuality in one of her letters written to Tita, expressing gratitude for sending her clothes. She tells Tita that the man who picked her from the field saved her life but could not quench her intense sexual thirst as he had been fully drained. It has usually been a practice that men hunt for women as their 'legitimate' prey for their libidinal pleasure. However, this time, Gertrudis became the hunter and engaged in hunting men for the satisfaction and pleasure of her carnal appetite.

After the death of Mama Elena, Gertrudis returns to the ranch because it does not belong to her mother anymore. The former had never given her or any other child a warm feeling of homeliness and a sense of ownership. Her dictatorial style to conduct the affairs of the house disillusioned Gertrudis. It was the main reason for her elopement. She wanted to exert her sexuality on her own terms. She emerged victorious when she returned to the ranch on the eve of Three Kings' Day bread. She, too, had risen to the level of general in the revolutionary army. Her admirers surrounded her. Esquivel seems a liberal feminist and has shown Gertrudis at par with men. She was replying to the questions posed to her about her heroic role in the revolution in grand style: puffing a cigarette, her posture of ease, cracking tales of fantastic gallantry, and her command to the firing squad amid the battlefield made people open-mouthed. She left the discussion in the middle and began dancing perfectly in great rhythm, which shows her other personality dimension. I argue that her return was intended to show her mother how successful she had become in life and prove that women can perform wonders if a level playing field is provided to them. The title of the general she earned was not merely a chance; she earned it by the sweat of her brow. She fought like mad on the battlefield, as gallantry was in her blood, which was hardly appreciated. She commands respect both in the public and private spheres. She was enjoying the bliss of married life and a success story in her professional life. She demonstrated that women are in no way inferior to men. Gertrudis motivates Tita to exert her own agency. She should marry a man to whom she loves. She should not compromise her life and love for anything. Tita shared all ripen symptoms of pregnancy: swollen belly, pain in breasts, and a strong feeling of nausea. She reveals all this with Gertrudis because she confides in her. Irigaray explains this situation in the following words:

Participation in society requires that the body submit itself to a specularization, speculation that transforms it into a value-bearing object, a standardized sign an exchangeable signifier, a “likeness” regarding an authoritative model. A commodity—a woman—is divided into two irreconcilable “bodies”: her “natural” body and her socially valued, exchangeable body, which is a particularly mimetic expression of masculine values. (180)

Gertrudis inspires Tita to never give up on Pedro. She gives her recipe to enjoy the conjugal pleasures without fear or threat. Gertrudis states that after enjoying intimate sexual intercourse, “use a douche of boiled water with a few drops of vinegar” (202). She convinced her that she had had the right reserved to have complete control over her body. I argue that Gertrudis symbolizes revolt, freedom, and sexuality. She is the first character to gain agency at her life's cost. She restores the pride of her blood. She is the only character who qualifies for all waves of feminism.

Feminist critics are divided in their opinions regarding the sex industry. Some of them hold it as a medium of feminist expression and a means for women to take command of their sexuality. For Esquivel, the role of the sex industry is supportive. She wants to demonstrate through the character of Trevino who shows courtesy to prostitutes. They should be regarded as human beings, even if they work in the sex industry. She states, “Trevino always treated them like ladies; he made them feel like queens” (194).

Now Tita has decided to exert her own identity, agency, femininity, and sexuality. She will not submit herself to others’ dictation. She cannot be silenced anymore or treated merely as an object. She wants to decide her marriage or any other life decision independently and does not want to be influenced by anyone else. She clearly tells Pedro, “You cannot convince me not to do it. I do not care what my daughter or anybody else thinks. We’ve spent too many years worrying about what people will say; from now on, nothing is going to keep me away from you” (237). I argue that she has concluded that life should be viewed and reviewed through one’s own lens and not always through the eyes of others. Self-satisfaction is more critical than self-deception. She had already shown great courtesy and favor to her sister, Rosaura, by keeping their secret (Pedro and Rosaura)

strained marriage relations from the eyes of the public. In exchange, Rosaura consented to share Esperanza with her on two conditions: Tita would take care of her food and education. They might enjoy cordial relations free from suspicion and grumble if the conditions are fulfilled. Esperanza spent most of her time in the kitchen with Tita. She, too, found the place soothing and comfortable. It is the kitchen where the magical occurrences take place. Esquivel shares the power of love, magical culinary skills, and cosmic experiences. In many ways, she was Tita's reflection. Especially when Esperanza told Tita about Alex, how she felt when his eyes fell on her body, she experienced her body transforming like dough being plunged in boiling oil. The very lines remind me how Tita felt at the very look of Pedro on Tita's bosom has transformed them into mature breasts. The similarity of experience ensured her that Alex and Esperanza would marry in the future.

After having the gut feeling, Rosaura made up her mind that she would not compromise and speak her mind. When Rosaura made it loud and clear that according to family tradition, Esperanza was bound to serve her, she was denied the right of marriage. Rosaura is represented as a flag bearer of family tradition. Second, she strongly opposed Esperanza should be sent to school; to her, it was a sheer waste of time. Mama Elena and Rosaura belong to a matriarchal tradition, whereas Pedro and Tita stand on the other side of the line. They stand for liberty and human dignity. They belong to progressive ideology and believe in human development and, individual happiness and independence. Though the youngest, women have all the rights to be happy and enjoy a peaceful life. Esperanza was allowed by her mother to learn piano, singing, and dancing so that she could be a source of man's gratification. Second, these great skills would assist her in vertical social mobility because the upper class appreciates such performances. On the other hand, Pedro and Tita pleaded for her schooling so that she may grow in mind and sensibility. To them, the chief end of education is to think innovatively and critically and draw a distinction between right and wrong.

Tita and Pedro were at Esperanza's back. On the issue of marriage, Rosaura made a great fuss, when she was informed by Tita that Esperanza would marry Alex, Rosaura lost her balance. Esquivel captures her state of mind in the following words:

She fought with everything she had, she fought like a lioness to defend what according to tradition was her right a daughter would stay with her until she died. She kicked, she screamed, she yelled, she spits, she threw up, she made desperate threats The house became a battlefield. Slammed doors were the order of the day. (239)

I argue that the battle between the two ideologies was fought long and hard and won by the feminist group led by Tita Pedro, Gertrudis, and Dr. Brown. The feminist agenda was fulfilled through the marriage between Alex and Esperanza. It was no less than a feast to see her self-confident and cheerful. She was the finest expression of femininity and womanhood. In her wedding dress, she looked gorgeous.

I argue that Esquivel believes in sexuality as it empowers women. After the guests' departure, Tita and Pedro were left alone and now could make love the way they liked; previously, they were constrained and disapproved by patriarchy and other social pressures. They had to take precautionary measures, like their intimate naked rendezvous in the black room so that nobody could spot, suspect, and report. Now she had no worries regarding pregnancy for the use of contraceptive pills; she could derive sexual pleasure and make moans on reaching the height of her orgasm. The availability of contraceptives enabled her to gain and engage herself in premarital sexual freedom and pleasure that imparts her subjective agency. To revive their memories, they approached the dark room that has now been completely transformed. It was no longer a dark room because it was lit with 250 candles. Pedro had secretly made all the arrangements. Esquivel refers to those arrangements as “the brass bed standing royally in the middle of the room. And the silk sheets and bedspread were white, like the floral rug that covered the floor” (243). I argue that she had gained agency and complete control over her body and on others like Pedro (Dr. Brown) through her body and the magic of cooking at the top of it.

Esquivel is critical of why women are socially and culturally constructed through the male perspective. The male perspective in a social context affects women's psychology, as we find in Chenchu's case. After being raped by bandits she felt disgusted and depressed. She felt as if, psychologically, she had been scarred and socially further marginalized. No

one would marry her. She tells Tita, “You know how men are. They all say they won’t eat off a plate that isn’t clean” (134). Women are always expected to be chaste. Though Tita tried her best to console and pluck out her melancholy, Chenchá’s response made her speechless. Tita had developed the feeling if she was forced to stay at the ranch, she would go mad. Her own miserable experience has helped her comprehend her psychological bearing.

Her haunting suspicion greatly perturbed Tita that she was pregnant, and after some time, her pregnancy would become more visible than what people would think of her. She would be socially stigmatized. She was uncertain that she had consummated her love with Pedro and what his reaction would be, which bothered her a lot. She had no idea how to deal with this complex problem of an illegitimate pregnancy. She had little role in it; she was pushed into a condition where she felt herself helpless. Patriarchy stereotypes women.

Moreover, women are stereotyped as talkative. The text of the novel endorses the statement. Esquivel documents, “Gertrudis never stopped talking. She had so many things to tell to Tita that she could talk day and night for a month without conversation” (187). To reinforce the idea, Esquivel states, “Chenchá monopolized the conversation completely, as usual, and broke a speed record bringing Tita up to date on the events in her life” (152). Abarca considers that the sharing of recipes initiates the sharing of women’s stories (124). Esquivel adds that they are equally good listeners, “Tita listened, greatly interested.” In a way, the author suggests that women should share their stories with women (not men because they are unreliable); therefore, Tita too, confides in Gertrudis, not someone else, especially men. The relation of sisterhood is strengthened as men cannot appreciate women’s complex issues even though they make tall claims. She wanted to discuss and resolve the issue of her pregnancy by mutual consultation. She, too, wanted to discuss the deteriorating health and issue of obesity and the smell of Rosaura getting worse daily; she was disturbed about who would take care of Esperanza and what would become of Rosaura if he abandoned her (188). Identity is another important subject of discussion in postcolonial studies.

Identity is not static; it is fluid and dynamic and keeps shifting according to the

context. It transforms, if not completely, but certainly. Tita heroically absorbed Gertrudis's tale of woe, whispers, and left-handed compliments that stabbed her back. She had become a laughing stock, a poor creature. She made up her mind to act in her role with dignity and grace. She cherished those moments, which made her content. She had the mettle since her childhood when she was hardly nine; she dared to compete with boys and went to the Rio Grande and stood first; similarly, when she was hardly fourteen, some naughty boys threw a cracker that frightened the carriage horses, it was she who single-handedly controlled the horses and rescued her sisters that made everyone surprised. Later, she was received by the villagers as an icon of bravery (37). Resistance against patriarchy is also part of the same argument. Hartmann uses time-budget studies to show that husbands were a net drain on the time of a woman, not shares of domestic burdens [. . .] her analysis is that women are caught between the patriarchal exploitation of husbands in the home and that of capitalist employers in the labor (1981a n.p).

Esquivel is basically interested in exposing the ugly face of patriarchy, which has seriously spoiled the happiness and well-being of humanity in general and women in particular. She wants Mexican society to be free from outmoded, oppressive, and so-called traditional norms. Through the characters of Tita and Mama Elena, she is drawn between the binary right and wrong, good and evil, natural and unnatural. The day was bound to come because Mama Elena pushed Tita to the wall. She wants her complete surrender and unconditional compliance.

The death of Roberto hits her like a bomb that shatters her peace into pieces; instead of sympathizing with her, Mama Elena urges her to work and stop shedding tears, which were spontaneous and beyond her control. She could not keep her composure and screamed madly. The discussion mentioned above establishes the fact that Mama Elena is not only stone-hearted but also a sadist woman who derives pleasure to traumatize her daughters and treat them differently, especially Tita and Gertrudis. Her treatment of Rosaura is quite different because she is her blue-eyed child; she finds her shadow in her, the bearer of matriarchy. Now the time has come when she tells her mother categorically, "Here's what I do with your orders! I'm sick of them! I'm sick of obeying you!" On the spur of the moment, Mama Elena picks up a wooden spoon, smashes it across her face, and breaks her

nose. Tita, too, bursts into a rage and says, “You did it; you killed Roberto!” (99). For her aggressive remarks, she had to pay a heavy price, but she exhibits the dormant signs of defiance to exert her own opinion and identity, which had been previously dormant and silenced. Now, she has broken the shackles of leading a life of an object and an abject being.

This episode is the first serious reaction to Mama Elena’s actions. Chenchu repeatedly asks her to come down, but she refuses to obey Mama Elena's orders; it is a revolt against the oppressive patriarchy. I argue that Mama Elena has assumed the role of a colonizer who oppresses and drives Tita to craziness and metaphorically reduces her to a fetus. Mama told her, “I am going to put her asylum. There is no place in this house for maniacs” (100). She calls for the doctor, who finds her naked, her nose broken, and her body covered with pigeon droppings. When she saw Dr. Brown, she rushed to the corner and curled up in a fetal posture. From here onward, the march of agentive subjectivity starts and ends on her complete liberty. The beating of patriarchy dries the fountain of life. Patriarchy has no idea how it affects the souls of the oppressed. A short discussion on the discourse of absence constructed by magical realist novelists would be in order here.

5.5 The Discourse of Absence and Silence

Esquivel employs authorial reticence; the Mexican revolution is discussed dismissively, as it has gone in the background and creates uncertainty in the reader's mind. It allows the reader to see how the event in the text is to be interpreted. I argue that it should have been given ample space because the turmoil generated strong ripples of anxiety and the need for a radical change in the social and cultural values of the country. According to John H. Sinnigen:

The Mexican revolution of 1910, aside from being a massive insurrection against the exploitation and tyranny of a dictatorship, was also, to a certain extent, a rebellion against the modernizing economic policies of the *Porfirato* policies that include the introduction of advanced technologies, foreign investment, economic well-being for a small minority, and poverty for the majority of population. (127)

On the other hand, the reader finds glamour and romance between Gertrudis and the commander of the revolutionary soldiers is foregrounded: the way elopement took place, food served as a catalyst that stormed a wave of longing in her that burned her body to cool it down, she went for a shower. Male writers' discourse not only marginalizes women but also considers them and their writings inferior and peripheral. Walby mentions some of the French feminists who have critiqued Freud and other phallus-centric discourse in her book theorizing patriarchy:

A school of French feminists has attempted, like Mitchell, to critique and develop Freudian thought via a Lacanian interpretation (Cixous, 1981; Irigaray, 1985a, Kristeva, 1986; Marks and de Courtivron, 1981). Irigaray, for instance, embraces the Freudian notion that gender and sexual identity are intimately bound up. She suggests that there is essential femininity that is repressed by patriarchal society. Irigaray argues unlike Freud that "women have a multiplicity of sexual organs, not just a vagina, nor even two lips touching, but all parts of her body. The patriarchal symbolic order, represented by the phallus, is a rational one, whereas that of women is different. Women, then, must completely reject patriarchal rationality, or they will be caught up in a world that is not theirs. Women's experience of the world is necessarily different from that of men. Femininity is seen to have positive virtues and women are not considered, as they were by Freud, as inferior to men. (97)

The common "burning love" metaphor is literalized. I do not discuss the episode at length; the pheromones Gertrudis emits and the fragrance inhaled by revolutionary soldiers, especially commander Juan, went mad; the moment he saw her naked running on the road made him lift her from the waist and disappeared to perform a ritual of conjugal love. Gertrudis is rescued from society's enforced sexual repression. After a considerable period, when the couple returns, by the time Gertrudis is promoted to the rank of general . . . the revolution remains in the background; drink, dance, music, and celebrations take over the Mexican Revolution. Revolutionaries appear in caricatured form and sound more romantic and lunatic souls. According to Helen Price, "From this we may deduce that although the text contains a heavy dose of magic, and ordinary logic is consistently disrupted, it deliberately avoids engagement with Mexican history, politics and social

reality, leaving the second element of the term ‘magical realism’ relatively redundant” (189). The text demonstrates that Mexican people are not politically and socially conscious of the conditions prevailing during the Mexican Revolution. Suppose I were to draw a comparison with *THS*. In that case, Allende has comprehensively discussed the historical events through specific characters, so a well-read reader may comfortably identify them as compared to Esquivel, where the day-to-day realities of the Mexican Revolution are glossed over.

Harmony H. Wu believes that, “magical realism has fixed a ‘frozen identity of Mexican-ness’ and ‘becomes not a challenge to Western rationality and scientific discourse but rather reaffirms their hegemonic position of power’” (188). I have discussed in my preceding chapter that Mexico is a Latin American postcolonial country for its marginal position in relation to America, second, Mexican society does believe in natural medicinal remedies. Text endorses herbal medicine is given preference to scientifically elaborated ones. Pedro’s burns were treated with “egg whites and raw potatoes, turn to magical, natural remedies because these were the best ways she knew to deal with burns” (181). Laura Esquivel shows Eurocentric tilt in her text. I have discussed it in my upcoming discussion.

5.6 Euro-centric Tilt

Dr. John Brown is a European representative of a superior and universal culture. He is an embodiment of all great human qualities. He is compassionate, courteous, and professionally sound. He enjoys good socio-economic status. Esquivel draws the reader’s attention to Dr. Brown’s sympathetic attitude towards Tita. Though her body was outwardly restored from the injury it had undergone, she recovered from insanity to sanity just because of the psychic attentiveness she received from Dr. Brown. After Pedro, Dr. Brown, too, had become a catalyst in reducing her coldness. According to Daly, “Patriarchy is a worldwide system, and takes slightly varying forms in different countries and times, but is essentially the same. Patriarchal beliefs and practices are at the core of all religions, including the contemporary Western world’s equivalent of medical science. In all these ideological systems, or discourses, there is a tradition of domination of women by men”

(101). Dr. Brown touched her soul, and she had to admit that this wonderful man rekindled love and peace in her dampened soul. He proposed to her for marriage, which she agreed to accept out of sheer gratitude. She found him a wonderful soul and a marvelous person.

He epitomizes male scientific progress and spends round the clock in a laboratory for his scientific pursuits. According to Price, “The White American in the narrative stands for science, materialism and reason, whilst his grandmother, representing neighboring Mexico symbolizes magic and myth, as two opposing world viewpoints are placed in juxtaposition” (190). She was in an ambivalent state and felt as if she loved him. His consistent warmth, admiration, and courtesy made her feel strong and somewhat in love. They kissed to seal their engagement but she did not experience the sensations when Pedro stamped on his maiden kiss. When Dr. Brown asks her, if she loves him, her reply shows her real state of mind. She told him, “I do not know,” she did not want to disappoint him, but she had to tell him that she had lost her virginity and, therefore, she could not marry him anymore. He knew with whom she has lost her virginity. He restated his question to determine what line of action he should opt for. He asked her: “Are you more in love with him or with me?” (223). Tita’s reply was equally interesting and reflected her sense of gratitude. She told him she was unsure; in his absence, she felt as if she loved Pedro, but his presence made her calm, settled, and ambivalent. She does not want to hurt him but it seems she cannot marry him even though he assured her she would be happy with him. He tried hard to convince her that he had nothing to do with her virginity and that he would be happy to marry her, but if she insisted on marrying Pedro, he would be the first to congratulate her. Dr. Brown tells Tita “I will be the first to congratulate Pedro and ask him to give you the respect you deserve” (223). Even knowing that Tita is not going to marry him, he still treats her with love and tenderness. Every passing day, he grew in stature in her eyes. She had to admit that he had been an excellent man. Her words speak volumes of his character.

Dr. Brown suggestively alludes that in postcolonial societies, women are oppressed and degraded. As a reader, Esquivel depicts him in ideal colors, but I argue that he deserves a better fate. The best part of the episode is that Tita has gained the agency to decide her marriage independently at her own sweet will. Her preference to marry a man of her own

culture shows her deep-rooted sense of identity. According to Gans, in the American context, race and color play a vital role in identity (870). The motif of race is like a giant in a room that nobody wants to discuss. They are seen and placed in the marginal places and spaces in the novel.

Tita seems to exert her identity and agency; she is no longer an object at the mercy of others. At this point, she feels that no one can dictate to her. She can make her own decisions independently. When Pedro tried to persuade her that she should not get married to John, it would be a terrible mistake on her part. She told her categorically that it was none of his business, and secondly, she did not ask him why he married Rosaura, though it had destroyed her. Now it is time to leave her and let her live in peace. He tried to justify the reason for his marriage: the only way to be near her, but later it proved pointless. His arguments fell flat on her, leaving her infected with his bad temper. She told him categorically, “Pedro, you’re hardly the one to tell me what I should or shouldn’t do” (148). To Radhakrishnan, there is no single identity code; different strands of identity (nationality, race, ethnicity, gender, and sexuality) synchronize and articulate their locations rationally to formulate identity (Introduction xxi). Now, I want to discuss some of the typical features of postcolonialism in the text.

5.7 Alterity, Race, Class, and Gender

Most postcolonial feminist fiction raises questions of gender discrimination, race, and identity. Mama Elena and Rosaura represent Catholic and repressive Creoles who want to perpetuate traditional hierarchies. Mama Elena transgresses social codes by falling in love with a mulatto man (Jose Trevino); a socially forbidden relationship. Gertrudis is the illegitimate end product of a secret love affair between Mama Elena and a mulatto. The way Gertrudis and other characters of color are presented sounds stereotypical. We also find racial and social hierarchy in the novel. Gertrudis, the mulatto elopes with a revolutionary, does the job of a prostitute. Though having the richness of a sensuous soul portrayed as lecherous, she represents a complete transgression of both sexual and gender codes. When Gertrudis returns to the ranch with her lover and his troops, carnivalesque is held in their honor. Her dancing abilities stir while Rosaura remains puzzled about the

source of such talent. Tita knew well who had given Gertrudis the rhythm and other qualities. The ability to dance and her insatiable appetite for sex are associated with the black race, which sounds like a negative stereotypical image of Blacks.

In one of her interviews with Claudia Loewenstein, Laura Esquivel expressed that the three sisters represent three different attitudes and waves of feminism. Rosaura stands to perpetuate the patriarchal agenda but she lacks the strength, passion and determination of Mama Elena. Gertrudis represents the first wave of feminism: revolt against patriarchy and demand for sexual liberty. Tita represents a transformed woman who has the potential to create ripples within the four walls of a house; though she has been confined, she empowers herself through some magical expertise like culinary skills. Esperanza is a new version that stands for women's collective hope (594).

This study showcases how mixed-race and low-class characters are underrepresented. In Sartre's view, the gaze of the other is alienating. The native people are othered in the novel. Especially regarding Nacha, Chenchá, and Gertrudis, who have been devalued for their race and class. Dobrian interestingly notes the kitchen as "a site for production of discourse of the triply marginalized: the Indian, the servant, the woman" (60). Women are seen as a subordinate and marginal class of workers who are exploited in household labor with meager maintenance.

I argue that Tita does not engage and communicate democratically with Nacha. Generally, Kitchen stands for solidarity, a sense of community, and congeniality. Tita mistreats Nacha by interrupting her oral culture that is transmitted from generation to generation and robbed Indian, illiterate people of their long smooth flowing history. I view Tita critically for her being a little racist, a little chauvinist, and isolated to her regal kitchen, only entertaining the idea of marriage and children preparing food as a tool of destruction or seduction. North American women, like Chenchá and seventy years old Katy, are maids. They belong to lower strata and are placed in the marginal places. On the one hand, Chenchá serves in the ranch of the tyrannical matriarch of the De La Garza clan and assists Tita in the kitchen, whereas, on the other hand, Katy is in charge of Dr. Brown's kitchen and looks after Alex, Dr. Brown's son. When Tita was brought by Brown's house

for the restoration of her health, it was Katy who served her food, which was quite distasteful to her. Both the women belong to a poor class and indigenous race as compared to Dr. Brown, who belongs to the upper class and is considered a superior race. In contrast, characters like Chenchá and her husband José have been sent to a dirty room to clean a bug-ridden mattress to sleep on and get the mattresses disinfected on their own (157).

The (white) patriarchy/matriarchy dominates and tries to push women into private spaces; to them, women's strength lies in their domesticity, which is equally applicable to the three texts. Moreover, Chenchá is shown as a scandalmonger, if someone shares a story with her, the next day it becomes the talk of the town. In this regard, she is shown as unreliable and a shallow being who cannot keep and digest the secrets of others; therefore, Tita is extra conscious and shifts the topic when Chenchá observes Tita upset (175). The same Chenchá serves revolutionaries from the crack of dawn until ten at night, hardly realizing how she has been exploited. She refuses to obey Gertrudis' blind orders because she does not consider herself part of her troop. This very reaction of her has significance; she does not consider herself a puppet anymore, and anyone can pull her strings. This is the first time, as a reader, I find Chenchá gains agency from an object position to a subject agent (192).

In one of her fantasies, Tita imagined an eighty-year-old lady of Indian countenance who was very similar to Nacha: "A thick braid was wound round her head. She was wiping the sweat from her brow with her apron. Her features were plainly Indian. She was making tea in an earthenware pan" (Esquivel 110). This is how indigenous characters are stereotypically constructed, marginalized, and subverted through colonial discourse.

There is another postcolonial dimension of the novel. Nacha is shown as an oppressed, Chancha also remains subservient to Tita despite all goodness of heart, selflessness, and sacrifice, in one way she is Tita's savior when Mama Elena's breast dried of milk, and she feeds her. She should have been given more respect as she had dedicated her life to the service of the family, even at the cost of her own family. There is another way to look at things, as if characters of color seem content with their lot.

The research also underscores how native people and their culture is derided and

othered. In *LWC*, Esquivel refers to “The Kikapu” (a derogatory term, instead of using her real name, Mary) who rushes and places her healing hands on Trueba’s wounds, and the bleeding stops. It surprises everyone and lets her stay with her sick father-in-law to cure him completely through herbs, singing melodious songs, burning of the copal, and incense (111). Allende also refers to the instance in Old Pedro Garcia’s prayers of wisdom and enchantment to the ants do magic, and the ants begin to disappear as if they have never been there. The following day, “there were nothing: no ants in the kitchen, none in the pantry, the granary, the table, the chicken coops, and the pasture” (124- 125). I briefly refer to this incident because I have discussed it in detail in my analysis chapters.

Price contends that, “the way Mama Elena simply ‘swaps’ Rosaura over for Tita reinforces the notion that women are commodities, to be given and exchanged, without thought for their needs” (184). Women, in general, and native women, in particular, are easy prey for objectification. Esquivel critically mentions the status and identity of Latin American women who are not assimilated in other cultures for the color of their skin and poor social status. Dr. Brown’s grandmother is an example to support my argument. She belongs to the Kikapu Indian tribe and is captured as booty and brought back to live with him. Though he marries her, she is still not accepted by his proud Yankee family. This is how the native people and clan, and women in particular, are othered and humiliated. Dr. Brown’s grandfather has to keep her aloof from the rest of his family in a room built at the back of his room, where she spends her pastime studying plants and herbs with respect to their curative properties. Mostly, servants and outsiders are kept at the backs of houses or in distant places. She was ridiculed, humiliated, and given the nickname “the Kikapu”, a derogatory term, instead of using her real name Mary, “something most disagreeable to the world” for her being native American (111). Dr. Brown’s grandfather is a good man who marries her. Otherwise, women of her race and class are used as mistresses, maids, or prostitutes. This example is a manifestation of appreciation of the difference between Western and native cultures of the world. It is a fine example of ontological and mythic magical realism or marvelous realism as explained by Delbaere-Garant in her essay “Psychic Realism, Mythic Realism, Grotesque Realism: Variations on Magical Realism in Contemporary Literature in English”. It also throws light on the Kikapu culture, which is presented as non-scientific and traditional, along with the Western culture, which is

scientific and modern.

Magical realism can be appreciated through non-Western culture. Esquivel seems to be caught in a web of ambivalence. She wants to support a native culture that is based on myth, superstition, and supernaturalization. She takes great pride when her great-grandmother, Mary, couldn't cure her husband by employing a modern scientific method of preparing leeches for bleeding. Peter, her husband, was in great pain, and he was screaming. "The Kikapu" rushed and placed her healing hands on his wounds, the bleeding stopped. It mesmerized everyone and let her stay with her sick father-in-law to cure him completely through herbs, singing melodious songs, burning of the copal, and incense. As a result, she became their family doctor among the North American family and was regarded as a magical healer. After getting cured, in sheer gratitude, John's father wanted to build a large room or laboratory where she could conduct a series of experiments with different plants/herbs so that other people could get cured (Esquivel 113). John spent most of his childhood and adolescence under the supervision of her grandmother, but soon, his interest shifted to medicine. Since he joined medical college, he abandoned his grandmother's theories and belief in native cultural knowledge. Surveillance seriously affects one's identity and subjectivity.

Surveillance is Mama Elena's most influential and powerful tool to reinforce her dominance. Tita got the gut feeling that her mother has the ability to read her mind. This very feeling of fear is internalized in her which further unsettles her. Her imperial gaze defines the identity of other characters, especially Tita, Pedro, Rosaura, and Gertrudis, showing their subaltern or powerless position till the middle of the novel. Mama Elena effectively detaches, dismembers, and dismantles in the cases of Pedro, Roberto, and Tita. On a mid-summer night, Pedro was enjoying a slice of watermelon and fantasizing about Tita; exactly at that point in time, Tita was nearly thrilled him with excitement; he became sure through her distinctive fragrance: a blend of jasmine and cooking oil that it was none but Tita. To feed her nephew profusely, she drank beer the whole day. It urged her to go for urination, and he followed her quietly to make the best use of the opportunity. He wanted her to feel him, so he pulled her, and she soon realized that it could be none but Pedro. The very touch and slip of his hand through the neck so that he could get hold of

her breasts and explore her thoroughly. As they were engaged in love-making through the touch of hands and press of lips, Pedro urged her to explore his stiff arm muscles and broad chest to the down where the hot rod exerted tension and throbbed through his clothes. In the beginning, she was reluctant to hold it but later felt settled and aroused. Meanwhile, the very cry of her mother inquiring her whereabouts in the night's dead hour is a good example of surveillance. She suffered the double torture of the desire to urinate, and the burning desire that aroused her remained unfulfilled throughout the very night till the crack of dawn. It has seriously affected Tita's psychology. It entrenched in her a strong fear that shaped her belief that Mama Elena could read the mind; therefore, she could not escape from her surveillance web. Her impression is strengthened because she departed Roberto, Pedro, and Rosaura three days before their scheduled plan (98). After discussing postcolonial features, I have discussed elements of magical realism in the next section.

5.8 Elements of Magical Realism

As the text belongs to the magical realist genre, I have sought the support of specific insights (as discussed in my Theoretical framework chapter) from Wendy B. Faris to analyze the text. It would be interesting to trace the magical feminist elements in the text; for that reason, I have also employed some of Wendy's insights from her essay "Women and Women and Women: A Feminine Element and Magical Realism" to analyze my text.

The incorporation of both female and male ghostly spirits recuperates the narrative powers of magical realist/feminist texts. If observed through a feminist perspective, realism commodifies the female body, and surrealism fragments it, whereas magical realism reconstructs and transforms it as a fascinating text (Faris 212). Magical realism helps postcolonial women writers to incorporate magic that helps them to reimagine territories and reconstruct spirits or discourses. Magical realism is a combination or coexistence of realism and magic which is related to female spirituality that may be termed as "sensible transcendentalism", and Irigaray calls it "la mysterique,": which she refers to what "within a still theological onto-logical perspective is called mystic language and discourse," a type of discourse that she associates with female mode of being (Irigaray 191-202). In *LWC*, *THS*, and *TBR*, reader come across the real and the supernatural characters/apparitions in

the form of dead ghosts of Nacha and Mama Elena in *LWC*, and in *The House of Spirits* Mora, sisters and the spirit of Ferula, and the four walls of *TBR* communicate to the real character Zaib. The narrator(s) adopts the protagonists' point of view and describes the ghost in the same manner s/he would describe any other character in the story. At the time of Rosaura's delivery, there was no one to attend to her except Tita. She earnestly requested Nacha [even after her death] to guide her at this critical juncture.

Nacha's apparition comes to her rescue. She whispered in her ears to perform different steps during the delivery to help her. She guided her on how to cut the umbilical cord because "Tita did not know how or when, not to what length she had to cut the umbilical cord" that connected her mother and the baby (72). Through supernatural guidance from Nacha, she precisely knew what to do for the baby; she knew exactly that she had to cut the "umbilical cord" in the right place at the right time, clean him with almond oil, bind the navel" (73). I argue that through the text, Esquivel attempts to educate and inspire women to get medical (professional) education so that they might become economically independent and socially beneficial for society. This is how women may empower themselves; they should not remain dependent on men who do not know the pains and pangs of women. This would not only develop sisterhood bonds but also make a fair distance from the men when they do not want to be exposed, especially (in Muslim societies) in such conditions as pregnancy and discussing their hormonal-related issues and menstruation.

Sandoval states that "the form would reverse the *carpe diem* in which men use scientific facts of mortal decay to seduce women. Here women use the imaginary fictions of immortality to seduce men". Expressed positively in the context of an intercultural feminist program and reflecting the merging of identities characteristic of magical realism, "cross-cultural and cross-racial loving" can take place (qtd. in Faris 213). Tita is impressed by Dr. Brown (a white man) for his scientific experiments and humane qualities of heart and mind. She strongly realizes that she has been pushed to the kitchen (private space) and has never been exposed to this wonderful public space of science. His healing touch of hand kindled the spirit of love in her dying cold soul. Price refers to Sor Juana Ines de la Cruz, in her essay "Unsavory Representations in Laura Esquivel's *Like*

Water for Chocolate,” who used her:

Relegation to the traditional female space of the kitchen for the acquisition of knowledge via a series of scientific experiments, Tita happily becomes an accomplished cook and reveals in her role of feeding her family. Her magical birth, rather than liberating Tita, as one might expect, merely propels her into a role that reinforces negative gender stereotypes”. (183)

I argue that man’s inclination to science gives the impression as if a man is more rational than a woman. Certain other critics support this view that men and women have their predestined roles to play. Ruskin, in his essay “Sesame and Lilies,” expressed similar kinds of views. Women are intellectually and physically inferior to men, God establishes it in the Book of Genesis. Men can and should seek knowledge of science, philosophy, and theology thoroughly. In contrast, women should be taught elementary or superficial knowledge to assist or sympathize with their husbands’ pleasures. The male establishment makes these hypothetical statements. Ruskin considers Man’s power is active and progressive. He is a doer, creator, and discoverer. He is intellectually reflective and innovative. He is a conqueror and adventurous by nature. Whereas a woman’s power is for the rule, not for battle. Her power lies in order, arrangement, embellishment, and decision. Her place is *a home* that is free from anxiety and terror, where she can protect her virginity.

Similarly, to Hawthorne, “Women are ethereal angelic substances” (5). Women are only appreciated through skin, beauty, and obedience; the remaining qualities of intellect, wisdom, and vision are negatively connoted. A wife is the property of the man, and has the right to do whatever he likes; she is his mistress. She is at the whim of his disposition. In the essay “The Birthmark” by Nathaniel Hawthorne, Georgina’s beauty of soul and sensibility is secondary. A man’s gaze can disturb the physiology and psychology of the woman. Man’s presence is more a source of concern and anxiety rather than happiness. The gaze of a man may change a woman’s rosy cheeks into death-like paleness. To men, women are mere objects. They can go to any extent for their pleasure and satisfaction, even if they have to operate on their hearts to wrench them away (3). The scientific knowledge empowers man as a possessor of magical and spiritual power. Women remain under smoke

screens because men are protectors. They beguile them through their knowledge-power. Man's history is the history of the savior of humanity with the history of female erasure. In the novel, the reader comes across the ghost of the dead, generating a dramatic effect.

In postcolonial societies and in marvelous books, "apparitions are very much part of the human society where they communicate with different characters is considered very ordinary though it might appear extraordinary to the Western reader, as we find Victor Hugo who, "had spoken with Leopoldina's ghost in Guernsey" (Zamora and Faris 86). On another occasion when Rosaura was going through great stress due to her obesity, flatulence, and foul breath. Esquivel states, "It was the night the ghost of Mama Elena first appeared" (170). She had sleepless nights, and the apparition of Mama Elena made its appearance stunned Rosaura. The ghost remained silent. She wanted to share the news with Pedro, who remained indifferent. When Rosaura tried to embrace him, he pretended he was sleeping; later, she heard him moaning and pretended as if she heard nothing. The presence of Mama Elena's ghost is a sign to console Rosaura because she had been very concerned for her in her life, and Mama Elena thought her to be the flag bearer of the institution of patriarchy. In this regard, Mama Elena and Rosaura (Tita's own family) had become the center of repression for the rest of the family.

Wendy B. Faris refers to Young and Hollaman's interpretation of the term irreducible element in her essay, "Scheherazade's Children: Magical Realism and [Postcolonial] Postmodern Fiction," "[T]he text contains as "irreducible element" of magic, something we cannot explain according to the law of universe as we know them" (167). Good and evil apparitions are the shadows of one's soul. Moreover, when Chenchu gets rattled on observing the ghost of Mama Elena, wondering restlessly, Tita gets distracted and terrified; she inquires with whom you were talking, she replies, "What else can it be? Cannot you see it is a ghost of the dead! Dead and still walking, paying for some unsettled score! I do not think it's no joke, I am never going nowhere near it!" (Esquivel 159). The ghost of Mama Elena does not stop to unsettle Pedro and Tita. She knows that her presence is good enough to terrorize both of them. Magical realism is cross-sectional and interventional in nature; it is a blend of two worlds, magical and real, that serves like a "double-sided mirror that reflects in both directions," living as well as ghost of the dead

(Faris 172).

Magical realist texts knit fantastical elements like a phantom of a dead person. As Tita was engrossed in preparing King's cake, a strong flurry of storm banged the kitchen door wide open and staggered Tita. The moment she turned she found herself face to face with Mama Elena with a frowning stare. She warned Tita in a threatening voice not to go near Pedro anymore and charged her that she had forgotten all moral scruples and had no respect for traditional values. She further rebuked her by saying, "You are worthless, a good-for-nothing fellow who does not respect even yourself. You have blackened the name of my entire family, from my ancestors down to his cursed baby you carry in your belly" (173). Mama Elena had forgotten her own past and secret 'legitimization' of Gertrudis' birth. Tita had to be quiet, and Mama Elena had to flee on Chench's entrance. Wilson states in his essay "The Metamorphoses of Fictional Space: Magical Realism," magical realism offers:

Imaging space in which common and uncommon things existed side by side: men died, grew old, had children, were born remembered or forgotten; yet flowers rained from the skies, human persons metamorphosed into animals or angels, ghosts and chimeras abounded, and human psychology lent the structures of its obsessions to the world so that it became, in its reinvention, a labyrinth of emblems. (212)

Similarly, Mama Elena reappeared on the eve when the Three Kings' Day bread was about to be served. Both Pedro and Tita had something to talk about. Pedro was interested in the discussion taking place in the black room, and she also wanted to discuss the consequences of their 'visits' to the darkroom. As the discussion was about to commence, Chench interrupted and announced that the guest, Loboses, had arrived to attend the party, so the discussion had to be stopped, and they moved to the dining room, where she came across the specter of Mama Elena that made her frightened and frigid. At times, the reader gets the impression as if he/she is reading a legend. In legend or fantasy, the supernatural is presented differently from the natural and is located in another realm of reality; evil spirits especially sound strange and terrifying to the residents of this world. On seeing the spirit, the dog Pulque began to bark at Mama Elena's phantom, which made her

run. But repeated visits of Mama's spirit made Tita extremely anxious. The barking of the dog drew everybody's attention. Tita was on the verge of getting faint. In magical postcolonial realist texts, the stories of ghosts are embedded as a normal part of life. Alejo Carpentier says, "[T]he fantastic is the result of the mysterious, the awe-inspiring, and the sacred, rather than the threat to a conventional view of reality" (124). In our society too, excessive barking of a dog is considered ill-omen.

Here is another example of an irreducible element: Tita was obsessed with the concern of her (virtual) pregnancy, and the very specter of Mama Elena's furious gaze and her warning posture startled her. Mama accused her and Pedro of their shameless act. She warned her that if they did not stop their nefarious activities, there would be bloodshed in the house. On hearing this all-nonsensical sermon of morality and decency, she lost her patience and told her categorically, "I am tired of your tormenting me. Leave me in peace once and for all!" (199). She realized that now the time had come to affirm her subjective agency and show Mama Elena her prowess and remind her of her black past for having an illicit child. She asserted her identity which had been defused and confused for a considerable period under constant scolding and smashing. Tita told her categorically, "I know who I am! A person who has a perfect right to live her life as she pleases. Once and for all, leave me alone; I won't put up with you! I hate you; I have always hated you!" (199). She cannot bear her overbearing role anymore. Now enough is enough. On hearing this all, the ghost of Mama Elena realized it would be better to quit and be quiet, and now, from onward, her role is over. The specter fades away into a tiny spark. I argue that Tita has reached a level of self-actualization by now. She has gained her true identity and subjective agency.

According to Faris, in the phenomenal world, "Realistic description creates a fictional world that resembles the one we live in" (14). Moreover, in the magical realistic texts, the writer creates intriguing magical details as the reader finds in the fiction *LWC*, where real departs, and magic makes its inroads. Esquivel mentions that Tita's sobs and cries were even audible to Nacha, (the cook of Amerindian origin), "when she was still in my great-grand mother's belly her sobs were so loud that even Nacha, the cook, who was half-deaf, could hear them easily" (5). The statements sound hyperbolic. The phenomenal

aspect of this episode is the departure of the reality of hard of hearing that turns into hard, long, shrill crying. At times, it became so violent that she (Mama Elena) had to be taken to the labor room for premature birth. And this is how she made her entrance into the world. Moreover, this sobbing and crying is associated with women who are stereotypically portrayed as weak and emotionally imbalanced creatures. Their world is limited to weeping and being confined in the kitchen. For Tita, “laughing was a form of crying” (7). I argue that this statement blurs reality to know the exact nature of her mental state of mind. It shows how good a woman is at hiding her grief! It also reminds me of Charlie Chaplin: I always like walking in the rain so no one can see me crying.

I argue that it is a very perturbing state of mind when a woman laughs through her tears and considers crying as a form of laughing. Her reasons for crying may be attributed to multiple reasons: for instance, Rosaura was picked for the man whom Tita loved, she was confined in the kitchen, moreover, she was forbidden to play with her sisters, she was denied the right of marriage and joys of motherhood for her being the youngest and had to take care of her mother till her death, she was also forced to eat which she detested the most, discrimination and authoritarian attitude of her mother made her weep till her tears dry. However, “she cried without tears, which is said to hurt even more, like a dry labor” (30). It happens sometimes when one cries through invisible tears. As the mourning becomes too solemn. She thinks momentarily as if her fate is sealed for weeping and crying. Although Tita had to face limitations imposed by society and family, in the end, she emerged victorious.

Furthermore, Mama Elena's tragic and dramatic announcement of Pedro's marriage with Rosaura serves like a *thunderbolt* that has transformed the very chemistry of her body. Esquivel documents the impact on her sounds quite phenomenal: “Tita felt her body fill with a wintry chill: in one sharp, quick blast she was too cold and dry her cheeks burned and turned red, red as the apples beside her. That overpowering chill lasted a long time, and she could find no respite” (15). I argue that this coldness is the soullessness of her body. Till now, no candle, caress, word, or sound has ignited her soul. The marriage of Pedro and Rosaura was quite a painful experience for Tita because her sister Rosaura would wed her love. Her emotional and psychological anxiety was transmitted in the preparation

of the wedding cake. Esquivel has beautifully penned the picture in the following words, which is no less than a magical phenomenon:

The moment they took their first bite of the cake, everyone was *flooded* with a *great wave of longing*. Even Pedro, usually so proper, was having trouble holding back his tears. Mama Elena, who hadn't shed a single tear over her husband's death, was *sobbing silently*. But the weeping was just the first symptom of a *strange intoxication* and acute of pain and frustration—that seized the guests and scattered across the patio and the grounds in the bathrooms, all of them wailing over lost love. (emphasis mine 39)

The aphrodisiac food is a catalyst that has aroused a great wave of longing. It is not only men; women feel the same or more urge than men, but this spiritual transmission of the biological need is also an example of the phenomenal world. A woman might be equally active-agentive-subject- not a mere passive object of the male desire. Here are a few examples of the phenomenal world; for instance, the eruption of a volcano is compared to vomit, which sounds phenomenal, implausible, grotesque, and hyperbolic simultaneously but is quite acceptable to the reader in the magical text. The exciting part is that Tita did not taste the wedding cake, escaping disconcerting consequences. She was overjoyed with the feeling that Pedro truly loved her. It had become hard for Rosaura to control vomit. “She spewed out great noisy mouthfuls of vomit, like an erupting volcano, right before Pedro's horrified eyes” (40). The cake bite had a biting effect on Nacha. She was found dead; her eyes were wide open, “medicinal leaves upon her temple” holding the photograph of her fiancé firmly in her hands eclipsed the whole occasion (41).

Here, Esquivel uses authorial reticence to create suspense and awe. According to Chanady, “Authorial reticence is a relative term which applies to the absence of obvious instructions and manipulation on the part of the author” (136). This process of withholding information can be equated to the automatization of the process. The reader wonders why the narrator is silent about essential information. The mystery is left unexplained to the reader to resolve it himself. It seems as if the author has hidden behind the mask of death of the author, and the birth of the reader takes place to give his own insights and

interpretation. The reader does not know much about her family life and love affair. However, we know Nacha, too, had been a victim of patriarchy; being a woman of color and low class, her love story and family history remain under erasure. I argue that the author deliberately leaves the gap to fill and foreground the story from the periphery. The very tragic death shows how the people of her class find themselves hapless and hopeless. They spend their lives in the service of others, but when they need someone's help, nobody stands by their side. Nacha's death is a certified case of her nostalgic death.

Returning to the topic, food becomes a catalyst for transforming Gertrudis's biological and psychological nature. Esquivel states, "On her [Gertrudis] the food seemed to act as an aphrodisiac; she began to feel an intense heat pulsing through her limbs. An itch in the center of her body kept her from sitting properly in her chair" (51). I argue that she has become an intense victim of sexual desire, and the very itching of her body inflames her imagination. She fantasizes that some Poncho man will come and lift her on horseback with her arms clasped around his waist and engage in a romance to quench her thirst for the desire. Esquivel creates narrative magic as if things are happening in reality. The reader gets flustered whether it is real or magical. Gertrudis is on her way to the market, and her exchange of looks with Panhuman (captain of the troop) makes a terrible difference. He, too, wishes to have a maiden beside him, "a woman he could kiss, a woman whom he could hold in his arms, a woman like her. She got out her handkerchief and tried to wipe these sinful thoughts from her mind as she wiped away the sweat" (Esquivel 52). I argue it is surrealist because all strange happenings are more cerebral than the real. Moreover, it might be the expression of her repressed desires.

Price states that "Tita seduces Pedro through her cooking as if it were a sexual magic wand" (185). It is through cooking she develops a communicative system of her own. Magic is associated with cooking. She magically (metaphorically) evaporates, and her very essence enters into the dish. It seems as if it was her out-of-body travel. To Pedro's disbelief, "It is a dish for the gods!" (51). And he had never enjoyed such an exquisite meal. Most of the literary critics have read the kitchen in *LWC*, "as the ideal site for establishing a female community from which to contest patriarchal power" (Abarca 2001, Escaja 2000, Glenn 1994, Lucas Dobrian 1996, Ortiz 1996, Salkjelsvik 1999, Saltz 1995). The magical

culinary powers of Tita stand in a sharp contest to Mama Elena's matriarchal authority. Tita has mythical qualities. Her cooking turns into a system of communication geared towards women's liberty. Cecelia Lawless notes, "food transforms Tita's body into the site of desire to be consumed at the same time that it articulates her desires" (265). She becomes a transmitter. Food eating is symbolized as an act of carnal event. She ignites in him the passion of desire and love through food. The moment the meal (Tita) enters Pedro's body, it transforms into "hot, voluptuous, perfumed, and totally sensuous" (52). Pedro's remarks sound very interesting when he says, "I did not offer any resistance. He lets Tita penetrate the farthest corners of his being, all the while they could not take their eyes off" (Esquivel 52).

Tita's culinary abilities were embedded within her actual physical being. Zubiaurre terms this kind of women's writing as "kitchen tales or table narrative," and the space of the kitchen becomes a magical domestic realm where women reign supremely (30). According to Maria Ruth Noriega Sanchez, "The kitchen is no longer a marginal space but a productive, sacred, magical site where cooking becomes a metaphor for writing" (213). Similarly, Glenn notes that *LWC* has "a constant relationship between cooking and loving or living and between cooking and writing" (45). The erotic literature produced by the heterosexual male establishment carries the image of woman the "edible" woman as a dessert after a sumptuous dinner (30). Therefore, Tita gains mastery in cooking; for Pedro, she is no less than a desert. The very lusty-love gaze of him transformed her breasts, which had been bloomed into a seductive object. Mama Elena knew inwardly its taste, which was excellent, but she declared it salty. The meal produced eccentric results for Gertrudis. I argue that she has coded food into a new, vibrant system of communication that becomes highly effective, mysterious, and soul-satisfying. Zubiaurre further states that "*LWC* remains the cornerstone of an erotic-culinary trend that has become a consecrated sub-genre in Hispanic women's fiction" (30).

Wendy B. Faris's concept of "Virgin Paper": or Inhabiting Female Bodies is relevant regarding *LWC*. She discusses the following lines about *Pig Tales*, but I feel they are equally relevant and applicable to *LWC* when Pedro transforms Tita's breast through his magical look. Darrieussecq documents, "[A]t that point in my life, men in general had

begun finding me marvelously elastic . . . My flesh had become firmer, smoother, plumper than before” (qtd. in Faris 188). To Darrieussecq, male sexualized gazing at female flesh is like enjoying your own body (72). When Gertrudis ate quail in rose Patel, it produced a tickling sensation in the center of her body. The rose-petal sauce becomes an extension of herself. Food is not only self-expression but also a source of communication.

The only thing that kept her going was the image of the refreshing shower ahead of her, but unfortunately, she was never able to enjoy it, because the drops that fell from the shower made it to her body: They evaporated before they reached her. Her body was giving off so much heat that the wooden walls began to split and burst into flame. Terrified, she thought she would be burnt to death, and she ran out of the little enclosure just as she was, completely naked. By then the scent of roses given off her body travelled had travelled a long, long way. (Esquivel 54)

The floating pink cloud and pheromone emitted from her body exemplify magical realism, which is considered natural. Similarly, Pedro's mellifluous words had a magical effect on Tita; it was like rekindling the dormant love that she had constantly been suppressing.

Tita's feeding of Pedro's child, her magical communication through rose petal sauce and fondant icing wedding cake. Irigaray's description of “la mysterique” is strikingly similar to Pedro and Tita's apocalyptic union. The metamorphosis of Tita's breast sounds impossible. However, in magical realist texts, it is probable: “the unmediated focalization of supernatural events leads the reader to accept the preposterous situation described by the narrator” (51). The reader does not question its authenticity; S/he accepts its amalgamation and reconstructs the blend of the real and the fantastic as the protagonist presents. Tita takes union as a spiritual experience, as her soul longs to be united with eternity. It happens in life that certain words, actions, and events transform one's consciousness as Pedro's gaze does for Tita's.

Food and music can also be catalysts that may trigger desire. While Tita prepares mole for her nephew Roberto, her singing rekindles Pedro's desire for her. Her grinding chiles with almonds and sesame seeds become an objectification of Pedro's intimacy with

her. I argue that Tita consciously exerts her identity and agency through own sexuality, and Pedro's voyeuristic view of Tita's topless body changes it from a chaste to an experienced flesh. Esquivel writes:

After that penetrating look that saw through clothes, nothing would ever be the same. Tita knew through her own flesh how fire [the look] transforms the elements, how a lump of corn flour changed into a tortilla, how a soul that hasn't been warmed by the fire of love is lifeless, like a useless ball of corn flour. In a few moments' time, Pedro had transformed Tita's breast from chaste to experienced flesh, without even touching them. (67)

It is the look of him that distracts and transforms her not only physically but psychologically as well. The very last line of the quote carries a magical realist import because the body's transformation without touch is a fantastical phenomenon.

Another exciting example of the phenomenal world can be cited from the text: after Mama Elena, Rosaura suffers the same fate of not having milk in her breasts. It is more metaphorical than real. Both are deprived of milk of human kindness. Price suggests that "The women in the fiction are divided into 'natural and unnatural,' based on their abilities to nurture, feed and love" (186). As a baby (Roberto) was starving and weeping angrily. They tried several things to quiet him, like tea and cow's milk, but all were rejected. He was trying hard to find milk:

The baby clamped desperately onto the nipple and he sucked and sucked. When she saw the boy's face slowly grow peaceful and when heard the way he was swallowing, she began to suspect that something extraordinary had happened. Was it possible that she was feeding the baby? She removed the boy from her breast: a thin stream of milk sprayed out. Tita couldn't understand it. It wasn't possible for an unmarried woman to have milk, short of a supernatural act, unheard of in these times. (76)

Tita is gifted with mother-earth-like qualities. The virginal magical Tita produces milk and breast-feeds the child; It reflects her nourishing role. Fernandez Levin asserts, "It recalls the similarities between Tita and the fertility Aztec goddess Tonantzin. Like this

goddess, Tita exhibits a perplexing duality, for she can create harmony or discord, love or hate, nurturing or death” (114- 16). It becomes irresistible to offer something (food/milk) to find someone hungry. Tita could not believe it. It was simply impossible for an unmarried woman to have milk. Price asserts that “This ‘supernatural’ act aligns Tita with the concept of the ‘eternal feminine’, the naturally mature woman whose role is to nurture and protect” (186). Tita is described as ‘Ceres herself, the goddess of plenty’ (76), which elevates her maternal instinct to the realms of mythology. Because of her physical, emotional, and spiritual abilities, Tita is associated with motherhood.

I argue that this miraculous feat of Tita is the result of Pedro’s look, which has matured Tita’s breast. The narrative of the metamorphosis itself is so matter-of-fact and exhaustive that the reader unconditionally accepts the implausible event. Tita is a material stuffed with biological abilities associated with reproduction and motherhood. As Deborah A. Shaw points out, “temptation to rebel, is motivated by Tita’s desire to conform to traditional notions of femininity where an ideal woman needs to be a wife, mother and nurturer if she is to be fulfilled” (117). The moment he entered the room, she was feeding Roberto till he was satisfied. The very sight of her breasts had a strange effect on him. He could not appreciate the true nature of his emotions: was it “love, desire, tenderness, lust, shame [. . .] fear of discovery” (77).

After the departure of Rosaura, Roberto, and Pedro to San Antonio, Tita lost all interest in life except feeding the baby pigeon by placing it between her breasts. Now as if the baby pigeon has become Roberto's replacement. The magical aspect was that “The milk in her breasts had dried up overnight from the pain of her separation from her nephew” (93). She associates every thought to Roberto, the moment she looks at warms eaten by the pigeon, it reminds her of him who would be feeding him. The thought troubled her so much that she could not sleep for a month. Here, Esquivel employs exaggeration because the statement sounds hyperbolic. Such a wonderful, caring lady had been denied the joys of motherhood, which is paramount to vindictiveness. As Rosaura is her mother's progeny and flag bearer, both devoid of fundamental human core values like love, kindness, and sacrifice, both are assertive and overbearing, having a dictatorial bent of mind.

After the departure of Roberto, Pedro, and Rosaura, and the elopement of Gertrudis, Tita felt isolated and melancholic. Being the victim of haunting memories and insomnia, she was left with no other option except sewing and cleaning. To kill the time of long, troubled nights, she kept herself busy knitting an enormous bed sheet that was so large and heavy that it did not fit in a carriage that Tita had to hold it. Esquivel talks about its plenitude in the following words:

Tita grabbed it so tightly that there was no choice but to let it drag behind the carriage like a huge train of a wedding gown that stretched for a full kilometer. Tita used any yarn that happened to have in her bedspread, no matter what the color, and it revealed a kaleidoscopic combination of colors, texture, and forms that appear and disappear as if by magic in the gigantic cloud of dust that rose up behind it. (101)

I argue that knitting is a web of thoughts that is a woman's "favorite" pastime; the word wedding- gown refers to her dreams and desires to get married and enjoy the pleasures of motherhood that complete a woman. The term kaleidoscopic combination of colors, texture, and forms refers to fantasies associated with conjugal life and all its complexities. Confining women to the kitchen space would rust their creative abilities. It is tantamount to a woman's underutilization of her real potential as if she might pose a serious threat to usurp their public space and male domination. Women pursuing professional careers should be allowed, encouraged, and supported.

There is another example of a phenomenal world that sounds hyperbolic and grotesque and is created through narrative magic. When chickens fight furiously, Tita gets disturbed. To ease the situation, she threw buckets of water; the chicken began to move at a high speed like the blade of a fast-moving fan in a semi-circle that generated a kind of whirlwind and lifted the chickens so high that it destroyed everything and tore apart feathers from their bodies and some of them were reduced to the shape peeled potatoes. The very description reminds me as if we are talking of a helicopter or watching a horror movie in which this very scene takes place. Moreover, it is a good example of hyperbolic expression and defamiliarization. Esquivel states, "She [Tita] found herself being swept

away by the force of the incredible whirlwind, which lifted her several feet off the ground and took her on three hellish orbits within the flurry of beaks before flinging her onto the opposite end of the patio, where she landed like a sack of potatoes” (218). This is also an example of levitation. The rest of the scene paints a mock epic picture of a murderous battlefield and a statement of hyperbolic expression as if some extraordinary event had occurred. The cyclone was so outrageous that it terrified Tita to the extent that she clung to the ground, but she observed the magical aspect of the whirlwind. There is a satire in which the trivial event has been exaggerated to the extent that it has become a mock epic. All examples help us appreciate the phenomenal world. Now, I intend to discuss unsettling doubts.

Unsettling doubts is the byproduct of narrative magic. The narrative technique keeps the reader unsettled, whether it is real or virtual. This research traces the elements of unsettling doubts from the text. Unsettling doubts generate a kind of distraction, contradiction, and disarray for the reader, who finds himself unable to interpret certain events within the framework of the narrative. For instance, Mama Elena's tragic announcement of Pedro's marriage to Rosaura served like a thunderbolt that transformed the essential chemistry of Tita's mind and body. Esquivel documents the unsettling impact on her existence, “Tita felt her body fill with a wintry chill: in one sharp, quick blast she was too cold and dry her cheeks burned and turned red, red as the apples beside her. That overpowering chill lasted for a long time, and she could find no respite” (15). I argue that she is unsure of her true condition; she needs to be warmed or cooled. Moreover, till now, no candle, caress, word, or sound may ignite her soul. It unsettles Tita and the reader regarding her true physical, spiritual, emotional, and psychological condition.

Uncanny is part of magical realism. It may be defined in literature as a category in which the world appears strange and mysterious without the occurrence of a supernatural event (Chanady 12). This is one of the examples of uncanny that exhibits mystery, awe, and eerie, for instance, the exchange of looks and the very look of Pedro transformed Tita through and through as if she was ‘like water for chocolate’. The expression ‘like water for chocolate’ in Latin America, especially in Mexican culture, is commonly used to express passionate emotions or be highly agitated. The context in which the term is used

in *LWC* Pedro's extraordinary love for Tita and vice versa. She was not sure what it was? She experienced some uncanny feelings like "how dough feels when it is plunged into boiling oil. The heat that invaded her body was so real she was afraid she would start to bubble—her face, her stomach, her heart, her breasts like batter, and unable to endure his gaze she lowered her eyes and hastily crossed the room" (16). It made her heart pound, blood reverberating, and blistering veins. Though she tried hard to conceal and control her feelings, her restless eyes revealed her emotional turmoil and wooziness as if she was intoxicated because Noyo liquor, which was served last Christmas, was pretty strong. Paquita, the De la Garza's neighbor also noticed her strange, excited condition.

The thing that further unsettles Tita is that she does not know how to get rid of the gripping sensation of biting cold. She tries to keep her warm; Esquivel states, "First she put on a wool robe and a heavy cloak. Then she felt slippers and another two shawls. No good. She even covered herself with the bedspread that took a year to complete, could not free her from that cold" (19). Through Nacha, the reader comes to know that it was nothing but an "icy feeling of grief." The very realization makes it even more biting that she cannot enjoy conjugal love—the only way to overcome her cold. Flores offers an informal definition of magical realism, which most magical realist writers practice in their writings. Magical realism is a blend of magical- real in a familiar world. To escape from her repressive routine, Tita wants to escape to another world where miracles happen. Tita thought that it was actually happening, "her fingers turning into thin cloud rising to the sky. She prepared to ascend drawn by a superior power" (109). Soon, the mystery was demystified, and the antinomy resolved when she realized it was nothing but an aroma of smoke cloud emerging from a distant land that made her open the window.

Here is another example of unsettling doubts produced through narrative magic. When Nacha was about to crack the second last egg out of 170, Tita screamed because she heard the sound of a baby chick. Tita grabbed the egg from her hand and brought it closer to her ear, and the sound got louder and louder. In the meantime, Mama Elena entered and addressed Tita in an authoritarian voice, as usual, called her crazy for claiming that she had heard the sound of a baby chick from the preserved egg, which was quite incredible for her to believe. The reaction of Tita convinced the reader as if the chicken was there and about

to appear like from conjuror's hat. The doubts got settled and antimony resolved when the egg was broken Tita screamed and closed her eyes but nothing came out of it. Esquivel notes that, "This all might be the result of fatigue, or a hallucination, a product of her mind" (29). The whole event is described in a matter-of-fact narrative, a typical trait of magical realist writing. The matter-of-fact accounts carry away the reader, so he does not have the chance to inquire about the fictional worldview.

Here is another example of unsettling doubts. Esquivel describes Tita's taking a shower as if she were a statue or bathing in reality, dreaming or experiencing a fantasy. The hesitation is embedded in the magical realist texts. The reader remains unsettled throughout the episode. Esquivel writes:

Tita stripped off her clothes, got into the shower, and let the cold water fall on her. What a relief! With her eyes closed, her senses were more acute, so she could feel each drop of cold water that ran down her body. . . . Another stream of water ran down her back and curved like a waterfall . . . flowing down her firm legs to her feet. (154)

The magical eyes were, in fact, the shining dew-drops hidden in the weeds but remain visible through the light of the sun rays. At the same time, Tita found Pedro was approaching with his lusty looks. This whole episode is an example of unsettling doubts (153).

Esquivel gives another interesting illustration of unsettling doubts. Mama Elena sowed the seeds of doubt in Tita's mind with reference to her pregnancy. Tita had come under the linguistic hegemonic magic spell of Mama Elena. She inscribed in her mind and body that she is pregnant. The very inscription of pregnancy transformed Tita psychologically and mythically. Grosz explains a similar idea: "The linguistic magic that is enacted on bodies in some of these magical realist fictions in which flesh is literally inscribed with or transformed by an idea may partially undermine the distinction between mind and body, idea and corporality. That these bodies are magically transformed by histories, technologies, psychologies, past and present mythologies . . ." (Grosz and Grosz 21-22). In a way, Tita is inscribed by Dr. Brown momentarily when he revives her from

the insanity inflicted upon her by the oppressive patriarchal tool. She, being a virgin paper, was completely inscribed by Pedro through his gaze and touch of hand. Tita's body "represents" her love for Pedro by spontaneously generating breast milk for his—but not her—daughter (Faris 194). There is another experience: Dr. Brown already repaired Tita's body from the mutilation it had undergone at the hands of Mama Elena; she was equally cured internally by the psychic attentiveness from him. Esquivel states, "Tita would invent new recipes, hoping to repair the connection that flowed between them through the food she prepared" (69).

Mama Elena cursed Tita and her conceived baby that she was carrying in her belly. In response to her curse, she says "No! My baby isn't cursed. Yes, it is! I curse it and you forever!" (173). Paquita, the neighbor, further unsettled and strengthened her doubts by saying, "I can tell from a woman's eyes the moment she becomes pregnant" (177). Tita was rattled to the extent that she wanted to discuss the matter with her sister Gertrudis because of her swollen belly, with all ripen signs of pregnancy: feeling sick and queasy, it ensured not only the reader but also her sister Gertrudis. Gertrudis consoled her by saying that, "you have no choice but to stand the truth, and tell Pedro you're expecting his child" (190). By now the reader, Tita, Gertrudis, and Pedro are convinced she is pregnant. The unsettling doubts settled, and the antinomy resolved only when she experienced inflammation in her belly and "the muscles at the center of the body relaxed, loosing a violent menstrual flow" (200). Now, she was relieved that she was no longer pregnant (200). This episode of unsettling doubts shows how patriarchy affects the physical, emotional, and psychological bearing of a woman like Tita.

Merging realms where real and imaginary blend together. Tita's domain is confined to the kitchen where she cooks under the tutelage of her maid Nacha. Since Tita is highly imaginative, she and her maid make food items in the form of hybrid animals. They make them hybrid through their imagination. For instance, "the neck of a swan, the legs of a dog, and the tail of a horse pleased her for her innovation" (8). In this regard, the kitchen becomes a place of celebration and creativity.

Here is a merger of appearance and reality, objectivity and subjectivity. Nacha

knew her real feelings when Tita was assigned the task of preparing a “meringue cake” for her sister's marriage, who was going to marry her sweetheart. She has to keep up her appearance even after listening to the comments, which act like a stab in her back. Esquivel describes, “She would put on a triumphant expression. Like a great actress, she played her [hybrid] role with dignity” (37). Esquivel employs a hybrid and multiple planes of angel and devil, which play simultaneously in one single character of a woman. The character of Gertrudis embodies innocence with intense sexual desire that makes her a hybrid being. The very beauty of her face and purity blend with lust pouring out from the very pore of her limb, offering contrasting emotions. So is the case of Juan, who is bold and suffers from the internal conflict of desire to have Gertrudis. The conflict of his internal battle wins, and he gallops his horse, deserting his army to join her without wasting a second. The motion of the horse and the synchronized movements of their bodies help them translate their wave of longing. (Esquivel 55-56).

Mama Elena's selfish motives spoil the beauty of a relationship; she has become her arch-rival. Tita is highly appreciated for her magical culinary skills. Mama Elena does not easily digest these compliments. The mole she prepared was extremely delicious, and everyone was curious to know the secret of her fabulous cooking; she replied instantly that “her secret was to prepare the mole with lot of love,” Pedro happened to be standing there, their eyes meet for the partial of a second while she was bending on grinding stone, Mama Elena noticed, “the spark that flew between them from twenty feet away, it troubled her deeply” (79). The event is described in a matter-of-fact narrative. It is somewhat unsettling for the reader: was the spark real or imaginary? Mama Elena was dead sure through her telepathic intuition that something is going on between Pedro and Tita, and the spark could only be seen through Mama Elena's ‘eagle eye.’ Laura Esquivel passingly refers to the Mexican Revolution.

According to Meacham, the novel *LWC*, is set against the background of the Mexican Revolution, political turmoil in Mexican history (1910-1934), and the Mexican-American border: crossing between countries, cultures, world views, and perception of reality. Tita becomes a victim of circumstances and ambivalent feelings of love and hate. She expresses her regret about why revolutionary soldiers have not done anything to inflict

her mother. In fact, she becomes conflict-ridden: a battle between duty and desire gnaws her. When the revolutionaries leave Mama Elena's house, Tita is filled with rage and gives vent to her pent-up feelings by saying that she wishes that “nothing bad would happen to Mama Elena, but unconsciously she had hoped that when she got out, she would find her mother dead” (92). The desire is the result of her unrequited love that not only allows her to marry Pedro but also robs and deprives her of the pleasures of motherhood. In short, she experiences paradoxical feelings of love and hate simultaneously.

When Mama Elena realized that Tita had become a lunatic after the death of Roberto, Rosaura's son, she called Dr. Brown and asked him to hospitalize her in a madhouse. He, instead of taking Tita to a madhouse, brought her to his home so that he may properly take care of her. We haven't been told much about the eighty-year-old lady (who happens to be Indian and Dr. Brown's grandmother) who welcomes Tita and offers her a very delicious and aromatic tea made up of known and mysterious herbs. The magical aspect of it is that “The woman (Tita and her grandmother) did not speak either, but it wasn't necessary. From the day first, they had established a communication that went far beyond words” (110). The very communication was telepathic and heart-to-heart (110). I also term it compatibility of aura. Her welcoming gesture reflects that Native Americans are hospitable and courteous people. The following episode gives one an impression as if one is reading science fiction. The knowledge of science is merged with mythico magico world. Chanady states:

The real, the imaginary, and the mythical are fused in a coherent magical world view, as the narrator adopts the collective perspective of the “primitive” inhabitants of a small Latin American community. Since they do not distinguish between the natural and the supernatural, the narrator does not present these two worlds as antinomies. (125)

In other words, both the natural and supernatural worlds coexist on the same level and are presented in the same poetic manner. Dr. Brown's grandmother has developed her own philosophy. To her, every one of us has a matchbox inside that

cannot be illuminated or exploded without a catalyst. This catalyst can be of various forms or shapes like: “food, music, event, caress, word, experience, sound, and intuition that engenders the bang that lights one of the matches (115).

At the time of ignition, it illuminates the soul, but over time, it cools down; if someone wants to revive it, some catalyst is required. To know the catalyst is a soul-searching phenomenon because it varies from person to person. I argue that it is not limited to love only. I term it life force (internal fire), which serves as a catalyst that may lead to ignition/ambition, whether spiritual, political, economic, or intellectual, that nourishes one’s soul. The fire is the essence or food of/for life. However, if the catalyst is missing, then life is dead-cold. This very element heightens awareness of mystery.

Through her own experience of life, she makes it clear that “unfortunately her own matches were damp and moldy. No one would ever be able to light another one again” (Esquivel 116). She is aware of the fire that can glow her, it is nothing but Pedro’s look, a touch of hand and press of lips that may transform or ignite or turn her on. Tita is vigilantly observed and persistently protected not to illuminate and explode. Reading Tita’s mind, John advises her, “It is important to keep your distance from people who have frigid breath” (116). Here again, mind reading comes into play, which is a mark of magical realism. There is another example of merging realms. Esquivel has captured Tita’s imaginary but real condition through different material images. Dr. Brown rekindles a spark of love in her through a few seconds of touch, but Mama Elena is bent on extinguishing it through her contemptuous spit. This act of Mama Elena made her feel “smoke was rising into her throat, tightening into a thick knot and clouding her eyes and making her cry” (131). This research also traces elements of hyperbole in the text.

Lara Esquivel employs *hyperbole* as a magical realist technique in *LWC*, it is part of the Latin American narrative technique in magical realist text. According to Gabriel Garcia Marquez, referring to Latin America, “Excess is also part of our reality” (85). I argue that Tita’s tears may be compared to a Tsunami, water spilled over the edges of the occasion (corners of eye/edges of the table) causing a great flood. The statement sounds hyperbolic and mock-epic. A very trivial event is depicted as a great phenomenon. Esquivel

explains this phenomenon through Nacha's words "Tita was literally washed into this world on a great tide of tears that spilled over the edge of the table and flooded over across the kitchen floor" (6). The salty water of the tears was dried by the beaming sun and the salt was gleaned and packed in ten-pound sacks and later consumed for cooking. Now the tears get new unknown meanings, it has become hard to know exactly whether they are tears of joy or sorrow.

A string of words has been used for Mama Elena to highlight her true personality. Esquivel describes "when it came to dividing, dismantling, dismembering, desolating, detaching, dispossessing, destroying, or dominating, Mama Elena was a pro" (97). The fight among chickens and ferocious hurricanes is another example of hyperbole when fighting turns into a whirlwind or tornado that can lift a person into air. Esquivel illustrates hyperbole through another example of bedspread that I have discussed in my preceding discussion under the heading of the phenomenal world. The quilt covers three hectares, the totality of the ranch. Symbolically it represents women's imaginative creativity and craftsmanship. The quilt metaphorically stands for the novel weaving the pieces of magical and real.

The Love-making scene of Tita and Pedro is set in magic realist terms. It is a typical example of magical realist technique hyperbole. The sudden lit of the 250 magical lamps makes the surroundings magical. Both of them (Pedro and Tita) were engaged in love-making; she held her breath to feel the pounding of their hearts, and she realized that Pedro's heart stopped pounding as if he had consumed all the candles that enlightened him to see the far end of the tunnel that would lead him to divinity. He had burnt all his candles and the heat of his body was gradually becoming cold. Tita regretted why she did not light all the candles inside her so that she might also enter the luminous tunnel. She started to figure out some mechanism to get her candles consumed. She wanted some extra fuel in her body to optimize the experience. She ate and chewed all the candles one by one available in the bureau. She imagined Pedro's first touch of hand, the very look of him that matured her breasts into experienced breasts. The very visualization of all these images produced spark and sputter in her. "She closed eyes glowed, and brilliant tunnel appeared before her" (243). The moment they embraced each other, sputtering started, "they set on

fire the bedspread, which ignited the entire ranch. The animals had fled just in time to save themselves from the inferno!” (245), and both transformed into a gigantic fire that consumed everything except the cookbook, loud explosions and volcanic eruption of fire could be heard and seen through distant miles, and it remained for a week to extinguish. This episode sounds good illustration of hyperbolic expression and magical realism. While analyzing the novel, I also found threads of grotesqueness.

Michael Hollington articulates the idea of grotesque in *The Tin Drum*: “grotesque representation of distorted forms . . . challenge our conventional notions of normal reality. The world of everyday reality is ‘made strange’; the strange and the fantastical is presented in a matter- of-fact way as if it were common place” (224). Laura Esquivel has employed grotesque as a magical realist technique in her novel that made the text not only powerful but also generate ripples of laughter. Here are a few glimpses from the text. The castration of the first chicken rattled Tita: her hands began to tremble with fear and confusion, sweating of her forehead and her belly was dropping like a kite on the wind describes her physical and psychological state of mind. Especially at the time of “making an incision over the chicken’s testicles, sticking finger in to get a hold of them and pulling them out” was a gruesome and neutered experience. She found it disgusting and felt like screaming (27).

On another occasion, the bite of the wedding cake embitters Rosaura. She feels strong nausea and cannot control the vomit, being the bride, it is expected from her to remain composed. Esquivel states, “She was swept away in a raging rotting river several yards; then she couldn’t hold back anymore, and she spewed out great noisy mouthful of vomit, like an erupting volcano, right before Pedro’s horrified eyes” (40). She tries hard to keep her wedding dress spick and span. She vomits and rushes to the patio. She slips as the whole place is slippery because of spewing, and every inch of her dress is covered with a gag. Rosaura feels as if she has been a victim of a conspiracy, and Tita is part of the plot that mixes something with the cake. The moment the reader visualizes the whole episode, it creates nausea and humor for the reader because Rosaura is not a likable character; she is the flag bearer of her mother’s matriarchal tradition.

Preparing quail in rose petal sauce is a herculean task for a tender heart because it

involves the killing of six quails that she rears for a longer period. To overcome her fear, she holds a deep breath and twists the neck of the first quail with feeble force. Esquivel depicts the miserable condition of the poor quail in the following words:

She used too little force to kill the poor quail, which went running pitifully around the kitchen, its head hanging to one side. She was horrified! She realized that you cannot be weak when it comes to killing: you have to be strong or it just causes sorrow. It occurred to her that she could use her mother's strength right now. Mama Elena was merciless. (49)

Rosaura's progressive decay and death may also be portrayed in grotesque terms with an emphasis on the scatological. The cracks begin to appear and grow broader since the beginning of the marriage between Rosaura and Pedro due to many reasons: she experiences some serious health issues, which causes her embarrassment. Knowingly well that her marriage is forced, Pedro loves Tita, not her. Second, she suffers from the pangs of jealousy and malice against Tita, which is a clear-cut sign of sibling rivalry. Thirdly, there has been a great difference in their thinking. She is a flag bearer of her mother's ideology i.e., patriarchy/matriarchy. She entertains the sickest idea of binding her daughter Esperanza to stay with her for the rest of her life. In contrast, Tita not only detests the idea but wants Esperanza free from the cruel clutches of the sick idea of her mother. She wants to perpetuate a cycle of cultural suppression. Rosaura expresses her emotions to Tita: "she had not approached her before because of the jealousy she felt. She had thought there was an amorous relationship between Tita and Pedro, concealed, hidden by outward appearances" (170). She is equally poor at cooking but remains a darling to Mama Elena for her known/unknown characteristics. It seems Esquivel employs authorial reticence here. The reader knows that Rosaura is neither as good in looks nor culinary skills, but she prefers her over Tita.

The situation is further aggravated by her serious poor digestive problems like flatulence and bad breath. As a damage control measure and to avoid embarrassment she requests Pedro to sleep separately. She has in her mind that she may fart as she pleases without disturbing Pedro. This smart move on her part does not help the cause; since her

return to the ranch, she has gained tremendous weight, and her body gets de-shaped and flabby. It draws Pedro farther away. He practically avoids and shows no sexual inclination towards her. Blaming him would be unfair because “she couldn’t stand the foul smell. She couldn’t take anymore” (169). Jeanne Delbaere-Grant terms its ‘grotesque magical realism’ and ‘hyperbolic distortion’. I have discussed it in detail in my literature review chapter.

I argue that the way Rosaura’s poor digestive issues are discussed sounds grotesque, hyperbolic, and an example of black humor. As the subject is serious but treated in a manner. When she farts, her unpleasant noises are quite audible, and it seems as if it would remain relentless. Pedro cannot concentrate on the book he is studying under the smelling condition. The following statements sound hyperbolic and ironic when Esquivel writes, “The floor was shaking, the light blinked off and on. Pedro thought for a moment it was the rumble of cannons signaling that the revolution had started again. Might be it was the engine of one of the neighbors’ cars. But the motorcars did not produce such a nauseating smell” (232). These all images cast a poor impression on the reader’s mind. Moreover, the description of her death and funeral makes it worse. The reader feels sorry and repugnant at the same time. To get first-hand information, he goes straight to his wife’s room, where he finds her in a strange condition: “Her lips turned purple, body deflated, eyes wild, with a distant look sighing out her last flatulent breath” (233). The very picture penned by Esquivel shows that she is well-versed in medicine, and the reader feels as if he/she is reading a medical journal. To John, her death was the result of acute congestion. After her death, things became the worst; very few people could attend her burial because of the intolerable foul smell that spreads all around, and it was impossible to stand near her dead body; therefore, she was buried immediately in the grave (233). I argue that the description of Rosaura shows how angry Esquivel is at the institution of patriarchy. Rosaura has been part of the plot in robbing love of Tita; therefore, she is bound to suffer and meet the terrible fate that has been discussed in the above passages.

Blend argues that making tortillas or tamales is associated with women, which empowers them as carriers of tradition (44). Tita is lost in her thoughts and unconsciously breaks tortillas into small pieces for the roaring chickens. They are getting mad as if in a mood to stage a ferocious fight and in a competition to pick the chunk of tortillas in all

directions before falling to the ground. Tita noticed, “Among the whole group, there was one that was in the greatest frenzy, using her beak to peck out the eyes of every hen she could” (217). Tita is shocked to witness this exhibitionism of cold-bloodedness. Bakhtinian carnivalesque concept is that “Grotesque elements are used to convey the anarchic eccentricity of popular tellers who tend to amplify and distort reality to make it more credible” (256). The events mentioned above generate a strong feeling of unease, humor, wonder, and disgust among its readers. This research also looks at the carnivalesque features in the text.

According to Faris, “the carnivalesque side of the magical realism is that in which its realistic fictional language is partially freed from its habitual mimetic constraints. But only partially” (34). It is a literary style of writing that subverts and liberates the assumptions of the dominant mode through humor and grotesque. It is a concept related to a feast that allows people of different backgrounds to dissolve hierarchies and the opportunity to express themselves freely. The family and the Loboses arrive on the eve of Three Kings’ Day bread, and after enjoying a sumptuous dinner, the party begins. Esquivel writes:

When they had finished supper, they moved to the living room and the dance began. The salon was ablaze with the light from a colossal number of candles. Juan impressed all the guests with the wonderful day he played the guitar, the harmonica, and the accordion. Gertrudis kept time to the songs Jaun played, tapping the floor with the toe of her boot. (179)

Uncountable candle lights are lit, the atmosphere is electrified, people’s faces are lit with smiles and laughter and it becomes a festivity. David K. Danow’s description of the carnivalesque in the literature highlights the merging of different worlds: “The carnivalesque makes the extraordinary or ‘magical’ as a viable possibility as the ordinary or real, so that no true distinction is perceived or acknowledged between the two” (3). Another occasion is when Pedro requests the orchestra to play the waltz “The Eyes of Youth,” so both of them may glide and dance on the dancing floor bursting with style. The marriage between Pedro and Rosaura remains for almost twenty-two years, but he never

shows enthusiasm towards Rosaura. On the other hand, Tita is still as fresh as a daisy, as sharp as a razor/tack, and as cool as a cucumber, even at the age of thirty-nine. The very touch of his hand on her waist revives the reminiscence of twenty years when he asked her hand as his wife. At that time, she could not appreciate his seriousness. Since then, he *dreamed of her walking* with her into the church bedecked with white flowers, and she dressed in white among those flowers, which was the prettiest of all. And he wished to have a child with her. She could not resist hearing all this; a tear of joy gradually rolled down her cheeks. Esquivel states that these were the first tears of joy (emphasis mine 237).

I argue that the time has come that women need to replace their tears of sorrow with joy. Their right to claim and possess love should not be declined. It is a basic human instinct. Either it is a source of joy or pain. In the novel, it has been observed that most of the women characters in the novel are tortured and tormented by the pangs of disprized love or prohibited love either by time or family responsibilities. The women in the novel are not empowered to choose a mate of their own choice (if we look at Mama Elena, Rosaura, and Tita) the privilege is denied. Patriarchy/matriarchy should serve as a bridge to make lovers meet rather than serve as a barrier. Gertrudis is the only woman who is sexually liberated and seems happier, raised to the level of general in the army, enjoying a fulfilled life. Esquivel represents sexuality as a tool of liberation and marriage as a trap to control their agency. The novel is written with a feminist agenda. It comprehensively navigates the issues of sex and all the baggage that comes with it. The baggage entails complex issues of shame, body image, and body confusion, along with sexual liberation and repression. It may be said that the hyperbolic distortion and the grotesque generate a sense of defamiliarization that characterizes magical realism and focuses on interpreting different realms.

Characteristics of *defamiliarization* is another feature that comes into play in magical realist writing, which is a highly complex and innovative writing process. The reader comes across several events where Esquivel has shown her knack of imaginative flight in the form of defamiliarization in her fiction *LWC*. According to Cornell, “the subject does not seek to identify or categorize the object but rather let the object be in its difference” (148). I argue that the object does not remain the same; it differs and defers

from the former, as Derrida considers. The following explanation of the function of magical realism clarifies Flores' conception of imaginative writing:

Meticulous craftsmen all, one finds in them [the magical realists] the same preoccupation with style and also the same transformation of the common and every day into the awesome and the unreal. They all will subscribe to Chirico dictum: "What is most of all necessary is to rid art of everything of the known which it has held until now: every subject, idea, thought and symbol must be put aside. Thought must draw so far from human fetters that things may appear to it under a new aspect, as though they are illuminated by a constellation now appearing for the first time. (114)

If I closely read this explanation of Flores, it underscores novelty close to the notion of defamiliarization, the concept developed by Russian Formalist Victor Shklovsky. The dramatic announcement of Pedro's marriage with Rosaura by Mama Elena serves like a *thunderbolt* that has transformed the very chemistry of her body. Esquivel documents the very impact on her sound quite unusual: "Tita felt her body fill with a *wintry chill*: in one sharp, *quick blast* she was too *cold* and *dry* her *cheeks burned* and turned red, red as the apples beside her. That overpowering chill lasted a long time, and she could find no respite" (emphasis mine 15). Scott Simpkins in his essay "Sources of Magic Realism/Supplement to Realism in Contemporary Latin American Literature," states:

To prevent an overwhelming sense of disbelief, magic realists present familiar things in unusual ways (flying carpets, Nabokovian butterflies, mass amnesia, and so on) to stress their magical properties. By doing this, magic realists use what the Russian Formalists called defamiliarization to radically emphasize a common element of reality, elements are that are often present but have virtually invisible because of their familiarity. (150)

The scene of Rosaura's delivery is compared to a volcanic eruption. Allende also depicts the same kind of images in her novel *THS*. The blood flow is compared to a red river, and Tita sister's opening of flesh to make a way of life is described unusually. While analyzing the text, I feel as if French feminist theorists' ideas are embedded in the text for

discussing women's experiences and issues regarding sexuality. Julia Kristeva highlights the reason for constituting a discourse that interconnects borders of postcolonial feminism to give voice to women's issues, as well as maternal and spiritual aspects. Magical realist technique tends to defocalize narrative as "the inherent suggestion of the ineffable, then it might be aligned what Julia Kristeva terms a semiotic or hidden and unconscious form of discourse that relates to a connection to the material, and the spiritual, rather than with the symbolic kind of a speech, which is allied with the father, patriarchal society, and the rational thought" (21-30). Therefore, discussing these critics and theorists becomes imperative as my primary texts are femino-centric and deal with the themes of sex-related issues and other women's experiences. Irigaray states, "not one," and to begin to erode a dualistic mode of thinking that draws clear boundaries between self and others, an erosion that has been associated with some strains of female writing" (23-33). I argue that the description painted by Esquivel regarding women's menstruation and delivery is quite unusual as if some monstrous event has occurred. This femino-centric event may only be appreciated by women writers, sound eccentric, and keep men ex-centric. Elaine Showalter terms such texts as gynocentric because they deal with women's experience, body, language, psyche, and culture. How faithfully a problem that has nothing to do with men may be talked about.

On another occasion, when Chenchu breaks the news of Roberto's death to Tita. It produces a heart-wrenching impact. The reaction is natural but the way it is presented sounds supernatural. She is the one who assists during her sister's delivery, first of all, Roberto comes into her hands. She feeds and rears him like her own son. She is the one who is even more excited than her real mother at the event of baptism. And similarly, Roberto fills her emptiness and makes her feel her existence. Esquivel has masterfully penned down her sorrow in an unusual manner. She states that "Tita *felt* the household *crashing down* around her head. The blow, the sound of all the *dishes breaking into a thousand pieces*" (emphasis mine 99). I argue that the dishes have metaphorical significance, as if they symbolically stand for a heart that has been broken into uncountable pieces. This invisible breakage (of the heart) is only perceived through the ears of the heart. Tita defied her command; while busy chopping onion and garlic, a spontaneous flow of tears erupted, which alarmed Dr. Brown the moment he entered the room. He saw the water

flowing from the stairs. He was about to leave the room as if he had interrupted, but for the first time in six months, Tita requested him to stay. “John! Please don’t leave” (125). I argue that the event is described as a matter-of-fact narrative; the reader experiences suspension of disbelief when he finds the three of them (Tita, Mama Elena, and John) were cleaning and drying the stairs and floor as if it happened in a real-world setting. Esquivel depicts Tita’s everyday familiar sorrow in a new way makes which defamiliarizes the event.

Similarly, Tita’s pregnancy germinated a chain of thought processes which is an unusual example of language. The doubts created by language in Tita’s mind are internalized. Esquivel states Tita’s condition in the following words:

A deep flush suffused her face and no matter how she tried she could not find a place for her eyes to rest. Paquita saw that something was bothering her, and with a look of great concern, she asked: “That liquor is pretty strong, isn’t it?” “Pardon me?” You look a little woozy, Tita. Are you feeling all right?” “Yes, thank you.” “You’re old enough on a special occasion, but tell me you little devil, did your mama say it was okay? I can see you are excited—you are shaking—and I’m sorry but I must say you’d better not have any more. You would not want to make a fool of yourself”. (16-17)

Esquivel refers to several edible items: “kernel or seeds of rice, beans, or alfalfa, without considering how it feels for them to grow and change form so radically. Now she admired how they opened their skin and allowed the water to penetrate them fully until they were split asunder to make way for new life” (198). I argue that Tita imagines her pregnancy and draws an analogy to those of seeds that develop from the embryonic stage to later stages. She envies the seeds that have the right and will to develop their own, and nobody raises a question and has no social pressure whatsoever. The ordinary idea is given a new philosophical way to look at things. In her essay, “Magical Realism, New Objectivity, and the Arts during the Weimar Republic,” Irene Guenther argues that to defamiliarize an object, it has to be “clinically dissected, coldly accentuated, and microscopically delineated. Over-exposed, isolated, rendered from an unc customary angle,

the familiar becomes unusual, endowed with an *Unheimlichkeit* (uncanniness) elicited fear and wonder” (36). However, social and family traditions have denied her the right to have a baby in her way. And the internalized fear she had of Mama Elena, seeds are at least free of any matriarchal/patriarchal fear, and they do not have to follow the rules and dictates of someone.

The conversation between Tita and Pedro throws ample light on both the characters. Through Tita’s magical hands and the application of tepezcohuite, he recovered from his burn wounds to a greater extent but mentally got distracted and irritated due to John and Aunt Marry’s visit to Tita’s for their wedding. She was occupied to entertain them; Aunt Mary was eager to meet the fiancée of his favorite nephew. When she couldn’t give time to Pedro he got annoyed out of jealousy. He tried to pick quarrel for nothing but to tease her. He pressed her hard to tell John that she was pregnant with Pedro’s child and was not going to marry him. Tita showed the height of courtesy that at present she did not find the right time to share this news with him because she owes to him. But he was bent to behave like a child and throwing tantrums. I have to give the details to the implied reader to have a fair idea of the background knowledge of this analogy. Esquivel metaphorically employs as if “his smoky brain was producing these black thoughts, turning his usually pleasant words into awful ones” (211-12). He yelled at her never to come again and just take care of her guests. He transformed into a monster of egocentricity and misgiving.

The following paragraph is an example of a hyperbolic statement. I argue that sexual activity has been presented as one of the most irresistible passions in the human race. It makes the reader laugh and embarrass simultaneously. Once the desire arouses it makes one helpless to fulfill the very wave of longing and one becomes mad to make passionate love even at the cost of his prestige. The chilies in a walnut sauce prepared by Tita does the magic and arouses a strong surge of longing for sexual intimacy in all those who come to attend the marriage ceremony of Alex and Esperanza. They relieve themselves through innovative multiple positioning. For instance, some traditional conservatives drag into each other by pulling legs and arms after stopping their cars on the side of the road. When the madness of love overpowers them, the first thing they look for is the secluded place wherever it is available: “in the river, on the stairs, under the washtub, in the fireplace, in

the oven of the stove, under the counter in the drug store, in the clothes closet, on a treetop” (Esquivel 242). I argue that there is a tinge of playfulness, humor and irony in this very episode. Apart from that, the reader feels as if he is reading a pornographic magazine. I further argue that the element of pornography is used in fiction writing as a marketing strategy. Esquivel documents that “Necessity is the mother of invention. That day it led to some of the greatest creativity in the history of human race” (242). To bridle this wild passion, one needs a giant effort, otherwise, in the general drama of life, one gets easily swayed by the erotic impulse.

So is the case with Pedro and Tita, their sexual activity is presented in a highly romanticized and glorified manner that makes it unusual. One gets the impression as if one is watching an erotic movie for voyeuristic pleasure. Pedro’s gentle caressing, his constant amorous gaze, removing every piece of cloth from her animated body, and the very penetration and the release of his desired passion filled her with a boundless passion that had been contained for long. The very wild ecstasy of conjugal love produces a strange impact on the perception of the couple. They hear the guttural sound of striking of the brass headboard against the wall that coupled with the sound of free-flying doves. They fantasize as if the other animals like the cows, the pigs, the chickens, the quails, the lamb, the horse all fled from the ranch with the fluttering flock of doves (243). I argue that flee of animals from the ranch and flying free of the doves symbolizes freedom from all kinds of coercion. Mere existence is not enough, freedom is the quintessence of life. Moreover, Esquivel gives vent to her imaginative impulse and a desire to desire which is considered taboo for a woman. I have summed up the above discussion in conclusion to avoid repetition.

5.9 Conclusion

It may be said that Esquivel incorporates magical realist elements in her feminio-centric text. She makes phenomenal use of magical realist techniques like hyperbole, hybridity, grotesque, authorial reticence, unsettling doubts, fantasy, surrealism, defamiliarization, telepathy, and carnivalesque in her novel. The appearance, reappearance, and disappearance of Nacha and Mama Elena’s apparitions lend the novel a supernatural character. It also discusses how women are stereotyped as irrational creatures through

phallogocentric discourse. Patriarchy considers that they have their predestined roles. Man is active, progressive, and intellectually reflective, whereas woman's place is home. Women are supposed to remain under the smoke screens of patriarchal protection. She is an "Angel in the House" and is appreciated through beauty, skin, and obedience. Esquivel art lies in interbraiding her feminist stance with her magical realist narrative techniques.

Esquivel's *Like Water for Chocolate* begins as kitchen tales and ends as a magical feminist version. She shares the power of love, magical culinary skills, and cosmic experiences. Her text navigates feminist history in Mexican society. It blends magical feminism, postcolonial elements, race, class, gender, love, sexuality, food, culinary recipes, love story, elopement, revolution, matriarchy, and remedies for broken hearts. In analyzing this novel. I have found that Patricia Hart's theoretical lens is appropriate for tracing magical feminist elements in *LWC*. The researcher analyzed the text and traced elements of magical realism/feminism, postcolonialism, and other elements like defamiliarization, hyperbole, grotesque, and carnivalesque. I also trace how women of color and lower class, in particular, are misrepresented, stereotyped, and silenced in the text. My analysis also considers how the culture and race of the Kikapu Indian tribe are othered through colonial discourse. Moreover, the institution of patriarchy is criticized and condemned in strong terms because it strangles the lives of its victims. It would be instructive to say that matriarchy, like in the case of Mama Elena, also parallels patriarchy in terms of oppressing women. In suppressing women, Mama Elena acts as a proxy of patriarchal oppression. It disturbs their psychological and emotional well-being. The text foregrounds two role models through the characters of Tita and Gertrudis. It lets the readers decide which of the two options they prefer: a professional woman or a homemaker.

In the following chapter, I have analyzed Nafisa Rizvi's fiction *The Blue Room*.

Chapter 6

[W]alk-talk club: Nafisa Rizvi's *The Blue Room*

The family shared an extraordinary trait that had been passed down to them through the generations . . . They did not sleep, without suffering the tortures of sleep deprivation.

—Nafisa Rizvi, *The Blue Room*, 6.

Zaib had evolved into epitome of clairvoyant erudition, or figure how she knew so many things about the family and the world around her.

—Nafisa Rizvi, *The Blue Room*, 20.

6.1 Introduction

In her novel, Rizvi underscores women are vulnerable and isolated in a male-dominated society. Through the protagonist Zaib and her interactions with apparitions, the novel infuses a sense of magical realism and mysticism that captivates the reader. This research critically examines and condemns oppressive social structures like marriage, family, and religion.

Nafisa Rizvi, born in 1963, grew up in Karachi as the only child. She did her Bachelor in English Literature from Karachi University and worked for many years as a copywriter taking a sabbatical to gain a diploma in advertising from University of California, Los Angeles, USA. Nafisa taught at Indus Valley School of Art and Architecture in Karachi while continuing to write on social and cultural issues. She lives in Karachi, Pakistan. *TBR* is her first novel, published by Sama Editorial and Publishing in 2009.

Nafisa's *TBR* fits into the concept of magical feminism. The novel has a tinge of a thriller. It shares the themes of magical realism, black magic, cultural and religious

malpractices in Pakistan. *TBR* is a family saga that moves around Zaibunnissa, who is lovingly called Zaib. She is the protagonist of the novel. She is a precocious and clairvoyant child endowed with magical powers. Nafisa Rizvi has beautifully incorporated the narratives of the spirits that used to cohabitate with family members especially in large houses or havelis that lend this novel a supernatural environment. These tales are very much part of Pakistani culture. Whenever Zaib gets tired and wants to have a sigh of relief, she used to retire to the blue room. There she begins hearing voices around her. Gradually but surely, she could understand those voices and started communicating to the talking walls, to whom Rizvi called “wall-talk club”. Each of the blue room’s walls has eyes, ears, and a talking tongue. They serve as her mentor. Another magical feature that Zaib’s family enjoys is that they do not sleep at night without suffering the torture of sleeplessness.

Rizvi highlights and exposes religious exploitation and other malpractices such as black magic and fortune-telling prevalent in postcolonial societies and Pakistan is no exception to it. It also shares numerous stories, fables, and myths. Feudalism is another theme of significance that has been discussed critically. The system forces people into bonded labor. It establishes a relationship between the colonizer and the colonized. In the novel, there is a clear-cut difference between the worlds of haves and haves-not. Feminist themes weave their threads throughout the novel. According to Rizvi, patriarchy, most of the time is bent upon spoiling happiness and shakes the confidence of the subordinate, especially women. In most postcolonial cultures, women are hardly consulted about their important life decisions like education, marriage, and career. Domestic male violence is another important theme of the novel. It is a common feature in most postcolonial societies. Not only women but children also fell prey to domestic violence because of their being vulnerable. Male use violence as a tool to control and clip women agentive subjectivity.

Rizvi draws the reader’s attention to another important issue of migration, as the small towns are not catering to needs for future demands. They lack educational facilities, career opportunities, and other amenities of life, as a result, people have to migrate to the cities. Rizvi also talks about its impact on one’s individual and family life, and how it affects one’s identity. I have analyzed the text under the following headings:

- Magical Feminist Features
- Zaib as a Clairvoyant
- Patriarchy
- Femino-centric Elements
- The Postcolonial Factors
- Hybridity
- Marvelous Realism
- Black Magic and Fortune Telling
- Fables and Myths

6.2 Magical Feminist Features

Through magical feminist text, Rizvi highlights various issues that women have to face in their lifetime. She suggests a solution to the problems. The protagonist Ziab serves as a role model who liberates herself from the cold harsh clutches of patriarchy. Rizvi subtly criticizes early marriages when she refers to Qurut-ul-ain and Jahanara, who got married when they were in their teens, “[M]arried women have a world of their own, the family, into which they can disappear when discarded from production” (Beechy 57). Though Qurut-ul-ain and Jahanara are outsiders but duty bond to take part in the nighttime meandering with their husbands and children. They have to surrender their sleep freedom for the service of their families, it encourages the idea of an “angel in the house” and marriage is considered as bondage. Latin American and South Asian societies are traditional and patriarchal in nature where home occupies a central place. Women are expected to look after their husbands, sons and daughters. As a result, they develop their own female domestic culture of sewing, cooking, myth-making, gossiping, and ‘home’ turns into a cage of married life. Walby too considers marriage as bondage slavery, “It is cheap because women as housewives do this for no wage, merely receiving maintenance

from their husbands. Thus, capital benefits from the unequal sexual division of labor within the home” (4). In phallogocentric discourse women are generally considered emotional creatures, they lack reason or logic. For that reason, most of the important decisions (identity, marriage and choice of a career) are made by patriarchy. I elaborate the point in my forthcoming discussion. As a counter argument, Rizvi refers to Qurut- ul-ain as a rational being rather than merely as a sentimental creature.

In Pakistani society, it is generally assumed that the relationship between mother-in-law and daughter-in-law is not an ideal one, there remains an inherent ting of tension and conflict. Rizvi interrogates this stereotypical assumption through her characters. There exists an ambivalent relationship. She argues that it is not always necessary that mother-in-law is always wrong and daughter-in-law is always right or vice versa. Rizvi illustrates this ambivalence through her characters (Qurut-ul-ain and Jahanara, Jamila and Zaib) in the novel. Qurut-ul-ain surprises everyone, when her eldest son Qasim married Jahanara, she not only welcomed her but loved her like her own daughter Zainab. Rizvi talks about this relationship in a magical way:

Qurut-ul-ain in her wisdom recognized the boundaries her daughter-in-law drew and learned to live within them and respect them without viewing them as an affront to her authority. From this feeling of mutual respect grew to love and understanding and it was said that two of them frequently talk to each other at length without speaking a word. (26)

In postcolonial societies like Pakistan, the birth of a baby girl is not welcoming. If there is a chain of baby girls, in-laws and relatives pass remarks that hurt one’s feelings. On the birth of the second girl, Raania, Rizvi suggestively asks Murtaza’s reaction “if he was disappointed at another daughter and would have preferred a boy” (355).

Rizvi attempts to represent Zaib as a typical role model for the reader. She wants to see these qualities in Pakistani women which she has incorporated into her personality. The novel has a bildungsroman quality. Rizvi presents her as a typical damsel of Pakistani culture with long, strong, thick, black, and silky braided hair and her soft dusky complexion was like setting sun in the desert. She also enjoys the beauty of mind, character, and the

very mesmerizing grey eyes. Zaib is petite in structure but great in stature and assumes the role of a surrogate mother. She has a great passion to learn something new from the talking walls. In general knowledge, she is not far behind. She expresses her yearning to excel in human psychology and the history of human philosophy. At times she gets frustrated because the terms and thoughts are complex and beyond her comprehension, the moment she grasps those ideas, to her it is no less than a spiritual epiphany. She is a precocious child who had learned so many things at so tender an age of fifteen whereas, people of ripening age lag far behind in terms of knowledge, wisdom, and vision. Rizvi seems to work on the feminist agenda, whenever Zaib's male cousins find themselves trapped in some predicament, they seek asylum in her company which is quite unusual in our patriarchal culture. The following lines best describe her character:

She had become far more magnanimous towards everyone. She was willing to overlook, ready to tolerate and understand, never judgmental or critical or condemning. Zaib gained wisdom beyond her years. (19)

Zaib through her wisdom, vision, and service emerges from the object position to the agentive subject position. She has the wisdom of a thinker and the compassion of an angel. She has evolved into an epitome of clairvoyance (my paraphrase 20). The way she selflessly serves her ailing, disabled, and choleric mother-in-law (Jamila) is a good illustration for women to move from the margin to the center. Service is one of the greatest gateways that opens closed doors. She serves her nourishing food and suggests the need for a physiotherapist to get well soon. I have divided this part into three subheadings: "Zaib as a clairvoyant", "domestication of women", and "femino-centric elements".

6.2.1. Zaib as a Clairvoyant

The reference to Clairvoyance in the magical realist fiction is not haphazard, there is a method to link it with Zaib's vision and ability to sort out matters and lessen the domination of the male world. In the recent past, there is an increase in female magical texts reflecting the decolonizing potential of the mode. Zaib is a clairvoyant, has the ability to read the mind or aura of characters. Her siblings have a gut feeling that she can read their minds with perfection. She knows exactly what is going in their minds. She can read their aura

through her intuitive mind and distinguish between good and bad intentions as she does in the case of a distant maternal cousin Adeel. In magical texts, the elements of aura and clairvoyance contribute as a decolonizing factor. Rizvi supports intuitive knowledge at the same time she encourages and appreciates the application of reason and logic.

Rizvi draws the reader's attention to an important social issue that young girls are not safe in their own families. It serves as a social critique. They may fall prey to their cousins and relatives because they are vulnerable. Considering the young girls' easy prey, negative people seduce them to fulfill their lust. The incidents in Pakistan are taking place on regular basis with growing intensity. ³Rapists are psychologically deranged. Child sexual abuse is a serious offense. Zaib reads the filthy mind of her distant maternal cousin, Adeel who pulls her towards him as she comes forward to greet him, before she knows he puts his hand on her firm backside to pat her. As the room is packed with relatives who are engaged in talks and silly laughter, therefore, no one notices it, but she feels his lascivious hand burning her body. She makes her mind to teach him a lesson. Rizvi explains how she is empowered through her magical piercing look in the following words:

Zaib imagined a scorpion crawling over her face. Then he met her look. Adeel's hand fell away involuntarily and suddenly he felt as if he had been bitten by a poisonous creature and the fiery venom was coursing through his veins and burning the tissue, muscle, and bone in its path. He turned blue, unable to breathe, and clawed at the air as if to escape from the inferno within him. (8)

The moment she removes her stare from his eyes he is completely drenched and exhausted and about to collapse on the floor, his wife catches sight of him and rushes to support him before he completely falls on the floor. The doctor comes to examine and asks him what has happened, he is speechless and down cast. Generally, the readers are conscious of male-gaze but Rizvi inverts the discourse from male gaze to woman's gaze

³ The abduction, rape, and brutal murder of an innocent girl named Zainab on 24th February 2017 was done by her neighbor Imran in Kasur, such cases are reported/documented in print and electronic media (Tribune.com).

which can be more threatening. I argue that the male gaze is destructive but a woman's gaze may be reformative and productive in constructing a healthy society, especially with reference to *TBR*. It proves to be one of the most terrifying experiences of his life and he gives up his fondness for fondling little girls, although his irrepressible sexual desires lead him to dark places that proved to be his final destination. Rizvi suggestively tries to educate parents that they should sensitize their children of good and bad touches and wants them to make conscious of their surroundings.

Zaib is gifted with a magical gaze to encounter the very look of the male desire. The moment, Zaib's (intuitive) eye (aura reading ability) sets on Jalal's hands she has uncanny feelings that the hands are of a murderer, Jalal realizes her stare and spontaneously his hands start moving uncontrollably. She warns her father that, "this man has the smell of a grave digger. He reeks of dead bodies rotting in damp earth" (65). Whereas, Jalal attributes it to the fertility of her imaginative mind. When Qasim tries to grill her, if she has any evidence to prove her claim, he would immediately expel him from the house. Zaib has self-belief, she tells her father confidently that first, she is not in his court room, second, she believes in her *intuitive perception* (clairvoyance/prognostication) that guides her that the presence of this man would bring nothing but disaster to this home and family. Zaib also has read the minds of the two boys of Jalal who fix their eyes on Mehar and Laila as she has read the mind of Adeel and the aura of Jalal whose hands are red with blood. She is exasperated and upset over Jamal's gaze of desire for Zaib as if he is feasting her with his lusty ogle. She catches hold of his sight and reciprocates, "through her eyes, she pierced his body with searing hot lances until he started groaning and writhing in agony. And the heat of rage Zaib's scorched his veins like molten lava charring everything in its path" (58). This makes him helpless; her anger is still soaring high and she is relentless to fix her gaze on him, but the timely intervention and pleading of Jahangir and Mehr makes her uproot eyes from him. As a result, Jamal collapses on the floor in a state of half-consciousness. He is terrified to the extent that he never dares enter the ladies' chamber. It shows that Zaib is gifted with clairvoyance and magical gaze to counter the very look of male desire. It is equally interesting to note the socio-economic conditions that shapes Jalal's personality.

I argue that Jalal is a typical representative character who has been dropped from the mainstream and has no professional and vocational knowledge and skill, moreover, social injustice, and indifference perverted his psychology. He takes no interest in religious education his chief interest is to create trouble and chaos in the class as a result his religious education remains superficial. When such people grow in age, they cannot become productive members of society. After the sudden death of Imam Mosque, he grabs the opportunity and assumes the charge of the Imam Mosque. He starts delivering Friday sermons and enjoys authority and influence over his followers through his shallow and superficial knowledge. The central idea of his lectures revolves around “sins of adultery, fornication, promiscuity, and lust” without referring to humanity, the goodness of heart, and social and moral values that make life beautiful and balanced (53). Rizvi employs magical realism as a social critique.

Rizvi’s fiction is a social critique that tends to expose Jalal’s malpractices and exploitation. His sermons do nothing but embarrass the concerned quarters and show as if women are morally inferior. In Muslim postcolonial societies like Pakistani, covering the head is a gesture of respect to patriarchy (elders, and religious people). Jalal makes everybody at toes about pointing a tainted soul; he closes his eyes and mutters softly, as if reciting a mantra, impulsively making wild gestures to nominate misbegotten soul. His hard stare goes straight to Zaib as if she has been caught red-handed in a crowd, the remaining heave a sigh of relief and Jamila’s face glows with happiness on pointing to Zaib culprit. The fake cleric can hardly scan the patriarchal oppression of Sheikh Ameer Ali and the vindictive behavior of Jamila but instantly point out the presumed evilness of Zaib. The words of “Pir Sahib” ignited Murtaza, when “Pir Sahib” said that “I see that she has much to hide from the world” (216). The reaction of Murtaza surprises everyone, he asks Zaib that they should leave the house immediately and he cannot tolerate her humiliation anymore. The composed and calculated response of Zaib gives a new turn to the situation. She said, “they are not going to leave the house as it belongs to the family, and more importantly she has done nothing wrong, having said, Pir should peep into his own heart, whether he is kind or cruel to his own family before blaming others”. The very eye contact and the words hit the bull’s eye. Rizvi depicted that “The Pir Sahib’s mouth fell open, and he turned red, then purple, and then a shade of bilious green . . . He collapsed in a heap and

went into convulsions and his limbs began to jerk violently. Then he stiffened and passed out” (217). To revive, water was doused at him, when he came into consciousness, he uttered a few incomprehensible words as if he was saying, I never told anybody, how did she know. After revival, he was powerfully gripped by some invisible fear and he went to the police station and made a confession to police that he had killed his mother and buried her body in a green plot behind the shelter. This is how the reality of fake Pir Sahib is exposed and the magic of Zaib worked. This very extraordinary feat of hers is considered normal in magical realist text.

Rizvi urges women to empower themselves against such odds. There is another illustration of magical feminism when she rescues her father from the cruel clutches of a feudal lord Sultan Murad. The whole incident is described in a matter-of-fact narrative style. Rizvi wants to establish the fact that gender has nothing to do with power. If you are powerful, you are, irrespective of the gender. Zaib emerges as a savior of the family at every critical juncture. There is another critical time when Zaib exercises her magical power to rescue her father. Her father is kidnapped by Shah Sultan. As all family members of Shahi Manzil are under the spell of melancholy. They are trying hard to trace his location but all efforts fail. She assures her uncle (Chacha) Asad that she would be able to communicate with her Baba through telepathy with a hope it works. She sits in a room for hours staring in a direction, suddenly, her body jerks but eyes fixates as if she has become unconscious, Asad asks the maid to fetch a glass of water, her face is wiped with a wet towel so that she may revive her consciousness. She speaks meekly, “her voice sounded dry, croaky and weak, but her eyes were bright. I saw him Amma (mother), she said triumphantly to her mother. He is all right” (94). The way the whole episode is described with such a graphic accuracy makes the reader unsettled and hesitant either to accept or reject it.

Zaib through her magical power (telepathic) recaptures the very setting of the disgusting room where her father is confined. It is rat-ridden which is scurrying around in all directions and the amount of suffering he is experiencing there pains her a lot. The moment her father sees her he smiles but does not utter a single word as if the magic spell may not break. She visualizes that one of his left armrests and left leg is fixed with weighty

chains to the wall. The magical aspect of the whole episode is that where her father is wounded those bruises are transferred to her body. Rizvi mentions Zaib who points to “her forearm where a purple mark like a fresh bruise began to appear and darken, ‘and here,’ she pointed her ankles where they could see welts were rising on her delicate white skin . . .” (95). Rizvi emphasizes that spirituality is powerful where science and all other resources of pragmatism fail at times. These things portray the marvelous/magical aspect of postcolonial societies. The people do believe them more than real.

I argue that the magical text has an inbuilt tendency to make the reader feel unsettled whether things are happening in reality or cerebral/telepathically. The writer deliberately weaves tension in the text. The reader remains under the impression as if things are happening in reality because he employs suspension of disbelief. Somehow the other, Zaib manages to talk to Sultan Murad and finds him in an awkward situation. She had a different mental picture about him but he looked sick both physically and mentally, “his mouth drooling and his pillow stained with regurgitated food” (Rizvi 98). She engages in a dialogue with him. He looks frightened to see her and wants to scream but his voice gets hoarse. She tells him not to get frightened and release her father. He inquires about who is her father. She mentions her father’s name and tells him that she is neither a devil nor an angel. He thinks that she is responsible for his (Sultan Murad) present wretched condition and subjected him to this most shattering pain that he has been enduring. He tells her that as if his belly is being consumed by hell fire. He is thoroughly examined by the doctor who says that there is nothing wrong with him.

I argue that this result further unsettles the reader and creates curiosity in the reader’s mind that has become a battlefield. Here Rizvi tries to establish authority and superiority of mythical knowledge over science and logic. This all happened to me after I locked your father. Could you guarantee me, if I release your father, I would be free of this unbearable pain that is wrecking me? At that moment she realized she had done enough to jostle him inside out. She assured him if he let her father go and she would pray that his sins be pardoned. The whole event gives the feel to the reader a matter-of-fact narrative. He strongly realized that there was a strong connection between his present state and the custody of her father. If the situation is to ameliorate, he has to be released with immediate

effect. During the experience, all her energies were sapped which made her eyes close. The narrative magic of Rizvi keeps the reader's doubts unsettled, whether it is dream or fantasy, reality or myth. According to Leal, magical realism is an attitude towards reality . . . that does not create imaginary worlds in which we can hide from everyday reality. (121). After a few hours, the whole family was thrilled to hear the news that Qasim Ali Shah has returned home. Inwardly, the whole family is convinced that the miracle becomes possible because of the magical powers of Zaib. Domestication clips women's agentive wings and confines them within the four walls.

6.2.2. Domestication of Women

Another parallel that make the reading of *TBR* with *THS* and *LWC* crucial is women's domestication. It suffocates the protagonists and compels them to become loners and talk to walls and spirits, and isolate themselves inside the kitchen. Euphemistically, the term "Angel in the House" has traditionally been used for the oppression of women. Virginia Woolf has urged women in her essays, "Profession for Women" and, "The Death of the Moth". This *Angel in the House*, Woolf suggests, needs to be killed if women want to be writers. She explores the same idea in her polemical work *A Room of One's Own*. What makes my selected texts contiguous with one another is the common concern that women need to empower themselves through reading and writing. Though Coventry Patmore popularized the term through his poem of the same title, Virginia Woolf criticized this construct in her essay "The Death of the Moth". In *TBR*, Rizvi emphasizes that women should devote themselves to reading and writing. In *THS*, the reader finds Alba busy in writing the family saga and fifty years history of the country. Similarly, by the end of *LWC*, Esperanza, finds the cookbook that contains recipes and the love story (Esquivel 245).

Domesticity is one of the feminist themes in postcolonial magical feminist texts. It is through domestic space women's agentive wings are clipped. Women in most of the postcolonial societies are engaged in household chores like sewing, embroidery, or concerned with their beautification and embellishment. They are traditionally expected to do more work at home than outside. In *TBR*, Mehr is busy making the material and applying it on her face to avoid the concentric circles, Laila is embroidering her shirt, and Zaib is

the only girl who has developed some literary taste and busy in composing a poem. Shopping is another favorite pastime of the women which make them happy otherwise boredom is their eternal fate.

Jahanara's role is of a typical South Asian woman. She works like an ox. Being a housewife, she is confined to kitchen most of the time to serve her children, husband, and in-laws and offer her prayers besides other rituals. On every Monday morning, she has to burn agarbattis (incense sticks) to keep the house secure from the evil eye and is exclusively allocated for niaz with kheer and puri (typical Indo-Pak dish). These all activities lift her spiritual aura. I term it marvelous realism. Rizvi tries to establish a point that postcolonial societies are spiritual. In the Pakistani context, patriarchy encourages domestication.

Walby defines patriarchy, "as a system of social structures and practices in which men dominate, oppress and exploit women" (20). Jirga is a pre and postcolonial institution that provides justice to the villagers and settle issues of mutual disputes among them. It constitutes elderly and influential people who command respect, integrity, and authority irrespective of their material possessions i.e., size of land. Rizvi contends their patriarchal approach as we find in the case of Khuda Baksh, whose crops are destroyed by Fida Hussain on the pretext that he refuses to give the hand of his daughter for marriage. When the matter is brought to the jirga, it concludes after hearing all the witnesses and relevant people that "Neelo should be given to Fida Hussain as his wife, but in return, Khuda Baksh would be compensated twice over for the loss of his crops and be exempted from having to give dowry to his daughter" (80). I argue that women are treated as a commodity for exchange by patriarchy. Mitchell draws on the "anthropologist Levi-Straus to suggest that women are essential as objects of exchange in a civilized society, as that this exchange of socially significant objects is central to psychic structures of the human mind" (96). Patriarchs do not take into consideration a woman's likes and dislikes, she *is* to be silenced in the matter of marriage, whereas, religion grants her the right of her own choice which has been denied either by father or institutions like jirga that represents the ideology of patriarchy or matriarchy. In this particular case, a woman is used as a tool/commodity to settle a man's mess. The position of the woman/family is determined regarding the class/social stratification of her father or husband. As the women don't contribute in terms of

material/economic resources, therefore, reduce to insignificance and treated as a commodity.

To Rizvi, and some feminist critics the institution of marriage needs to be interrogated. It seems as if marriage is an oppressive institution. Most of the couples in the novel are leading unhappy or compromised lives. The complex family structure in Pakistani society makes it further complex and compromised. Zaib has the intuition that something bad is about to happen that may change her life forever. Her father informed her that she would marry within four months without seeking her consent and expected her to accept happily without giving any details about whom she was to marry. She does not show any reaction but inwardly she is numb, shocked, and dismal. She is confused and does not know how to register her reaction. She is well aware of the fact that in her family at her age (seventeen) she ought to have a child at least. This very sudden news makes her miserable as if a tumultuous sandstorm raging within her. The way things unfold, makes a poor impression on her, she realizes that marriage is a kind of bondage, a legalized kind of a system to have a mistress in the house. It is a kind of accommodation and appropriation to enjoy patriarchal power. The following lines truly depict her inner feelings:

Zaib's heart sank. She did not incline to leave the comfort and security of her home and go to another house and put up with different rules and in-laws who could be nasty, not to mention a husband she had never met or may not turn out to be the devil himself. It would be bondage she could never hope to escape. (115)

I argue that the objective of marriage is to give a woman sense of protection, fulfill her physical, emotional, and financial needs. She needs to be treated with love and respect. If she wants to be a career woman, she might be encouraged and supported.

Moreover, the cultural comparison may be drawn, in West one cannot understand how a person can marry a person whom s/he does not know. Here largely we have a culture of arranged marriages, parents and elders go for match-making of their children. In postcolonial patriarchal societies, reproductive power empowers a father to name his daughter (product), and treats his issues and his wife or wives as his property (chattels). This is how exploitation starts as we find in the case of Zaib. Women are exchanged because

they are commoditized, consumed, circulated, and exploited to sustain the socio-cultural life. In such societies, their productivity is valued, recognized, and rewarded through men. Firestone argues that, “reproduction is the basis of women’s subordination by men” (qtd. in Walby 66). When they are bought, their payment is made to their fathers and brothers, not to their mothers. Women are tucked into the class of their father or husband which results in inequality and discrimination. So, they are objectified like commodities and are passed from one man to another, from one group of men to another as a mode of the transaction (Irigaray 171). How butchering is on the part of patriarchy that such a souvenir of the family (Zaib) is not consulted in this most crucial decision of her life.

Under these conditions, Zaib plucks the courage of asking her mother to tell something about the person with whom she is supposed to spend the rest of her life. Instead of briefing about the person, she advises her daughter “You just need to teach yourself to bear anything that comes your way” (120). I argue that she is taken as a commodity to settle/swap their family debt without taking into consideration her own will. The family of Sheikh Babar Ameer asks her hand for marriage, Qasim Ali Shah’s family is neither in a position to pay the debt nor refuse the proposal. Men make commerce of women with men not with women because it involves wealth. Irigaray states that, “The economy—in both the narrow and broad sense that is in place in our societies thus, requires that women lend themselves to alienation in consumption, and to exchanges in which they do not participate, and that men be exempted from being used and circulated like commodities” (Walby 172). As far as Murtaza Ameer (future husband of Zaib) is concerned he is a widower whose wife dies a few months ago. Zaib has no picture of Murtaza but she visualizes him as a “fat, self-involved old man, having to put up with his drunken sexual advances, bear his numerous children and grow old before her time” (121). She also ponders over her fate what would happen if she failed to produce a male issue (a typical Pakistani mentality, general expectation of the in-laws), and then she has to live a wretched life under the growing shadow of her husband’s future wife. These haunting nightmares are good enough to disturb the composure of her life. Moreover, sexual relation is considered patriarchal and patronizing to control women’s subjective agency.

Patriarchal discourse is another common thread that runs through the texts of Rizvi,

Allende and Esquivel. The texts advocate that patriarchy undermines women's agency. It hardly allows women to develop feminist consciousness; it rather creates a sense of insecurity and oppression. They are victims of sexual harassment and abuse. Men look at them as sexual objects doing the reproductive work. Allende and Rizvi validate the point through exposing Trueba and Khan Saadat's sexual adventures in *THS* and *TBR* respectively. Especially the native women of lower social status are victims of men's lust. Both Trueba and Khan Saadat share similar mentality and approach towards women.

The circumstances mentioned above compel Zaib to seek refuge in the blue room. She wants to know the background history of why she is asked to pay a heavy price for this *deadly deal*. She is told by the reluctant walls that she has to pay the price for her paternal grandfather Khan Bahadur Ali who owes a debt of gratitude to the family of Sheikh Muhammad Ameer, another landlord. Khan Bahadur Ali's brother had a profligate brother Khan Saadat Ali who was a few years older than her father, Qasim Ali Shah. She was told that Khan Saadat Ali was physically frail but sexually robust. I argue that Rizvi employs the technique of maximalism to share his life history. She has depicted his inordinate sexual passion. She states, "By the time he reached puberty, his hormones raged like a bush fire and he would grab every servant girl he could lay his hands on. He would threaten them with expulsion and even death if they ever told anyone and the poor girls would try their best to avoid his constant advances" (133). This event finds a parallel to *THS*, where Esteban Trueba behaves similarly. Patriarchy and the feudal system take undue advantage of their position to exploit the silenced.

A similar situation can be compared to Allende's *THS*, where Trueba's sexual exploits are fully exposed. Rizvi also shows the typical mentality of a spoiled landlord whose rape culture thrives in the texts. Money and land empower such landlords and turn their heads. Occurrences of sexual profligacy are prevalent in most zamindar families. Most servants' quarters are crowded

with children bearing the blood of nobility (134). They use their power of the purse to control and exploit marginalized people, especially women, and make them silenced. The problem with such activities is that they cannot remain unnoticed. Khan Saadat impregnates

a girl of fourteen and her mother complains to Quurut-ul-ain, Khan Sadat's mother. She tells the whole story to Khan Bahadur who is morally upright and cannot tolerate Saadat's licentiousness and calls for an investigation. When the confession is made, he spansks him brutally with his walking stick. He finds himself in a conundrum about resolving the untoward situation to avoid further embarrassment for the family.

Through these lines, Rizvi wants to expose the typical feudal mentality. She strongly criticizes its social implications. To Khan Bhadur's disbelief, Khan Saadat's fragile body transforms into a healthy muscular frame and the very sexual appetite alters after a few years and takes a new shape and ragging passion for power-play over the poor and the weak. He becomes an audacious hunter and a hard-horse-rider. His mannerism grows crude and cruel. "Sadat learnt to be cruel and unforgiving towards anyone inferior in class or standing. He learnt to whip the servants no differently than the way he whipped his horse" (Rizvi 134). He becomes equally violent, aggressive and abusive in language. Further parallels may be drawn between the two Latin American and South Asian novels.

There are thematic parallels between Allende's *THS* and Rizvi's *TBR*. Cultural rituals and social compulsions sometimes make women uncomfortable. Rizvi critiques prolonged marriage rituals because, at times, these rituals become tiresome for the bride. When the bride reaches the groom's home, the room gets overcrowded. All the eyes ogle the bride that startles her. The heavily worked dupatta (veil) that is firmly pinned to the bride's scalp causes a lot of inconvenience and pain, especially in summer heavy bridal dress and overcrowded, poorly lit and ventilated room, with lots of noise emerging from all corners, bothers the bride. Moreover, the sarcastic remarks of relatives fill her heart with grief, making her wedding an event of depression.

Similarly, Allende is critical regarding traditional dress corsets. She states, "A bone in Nivea's corset snapped and the point jabbed her in the ribs. She felt she was choking in her blue velvet dress, with its high lace collar, its narrow sleeves, and waist so tight when she removed her belt her stomach jumped and twisted for half an hour while her organs fell back in place" (7). Also, the long hours of rituals made Zaib tired: "she felt her back would refuse to support her frame anymore, she was allowed to go into nuptial chambers but not

until another ritual of soaking her feet in goat's milk had been performed with due diligence" (156). Unfortunately, Zaib has to experience all these misfortunes when she enters Murtaza's house.

She senses gloom, shame, and villainy, her heart twitches to see this all. After passing all the ritual tests she is allowed to enter into her nuptial chambers when she gets exhausted and has no room for conjugal pleasure. Her first sexual experience is not a cherished memory. Moreover, the antagonistic environment of the in-laws makes it more awful for a newly wedded bride. She has an uphill task to grapple with. She makes up her mind to tackle the issues with fortitude and patience. Jamila, her mother-in-law, Farkhanda, and Hameeda, her sisters' in-laws are posing serious challenges to shake her composure. They enter her room without taking into consideration the element of privacy and decorum. Her mother-in-law was looking for a blood-stained sheet spread of the wedding night which Zaib smartly washed. It causes her mother-in-law disgruntled. The two daughters are porcelain-painted puppet dolls in her mother's fingers. Despite the difficulties, she manages to display a brave show and keeps a smiling face with tight lips.

I argue that the above-mentioned problems show how a woman goes through socio-cultural oppression. There is a glaring difference between the Pakistani and Latin American family structures and systems. In Pakistan, we have an extensive joint family system, and a young new bride must look after her husband and his whole family. In *THS*, Clara was to look after Ferula (sister of Trueba), whom Esteban Trueba had expelled. In Pakistan, family structures are more complex and demanding than in Latin America.

Firestone argues that, "when women are dependent on men, as they must be given their vulnerability due to reproduction, the love experience is corrupted by power play. This is both because women are trying to catch the best husbands, and because men's emotional development has been stunted by their upbringing in a patriarchal family" (66). Patriarchy has been instrumental in making the lives of their dependent (especially women) miserable. Women are being exploited for their economic dependency, social insecurity, and vulnerability to sex. Ayesha, Baber Ameer's wife, is a victim of patriarchal oppression suffered at the hands of her husband. Zaib finds Ayesha a troubled soul, during lunch, most

of the time she fixes her eyes into emptiness as if looking for nothing and has lost interest in life. Zaib observes, “in her a drooping flower that had once been pink and bright” had lost its freshness. Rizvi introduces Ayesha’s only child Mumtaz interestingly. Zaib mentions her as, “the bright cheer of a sunflower tossing its head in the breeze, completely out of place in the putrefying surroundings” (160). She has read the aura of two men their eyes reflect they have seen a lot of bloodshed in their lives.

Sheikh Baber Ameer has squeezed Ayesha’s life through his hard gaze and reduced the house for her no less than a detention center. Knowing the true relation of Baber and Ayesha, after her shifting to Qasr-e-Zaib, Zaib offers Ayesha to leave Baber and come to live in the city. On having this great offer, she burst into tears and replies:

There probably hasn’t been a day when I haven’t wished that I could leave my present life and find happiness for myself and Mumtaz. But do you think Baber would let me go easily? He would search the end of the earth if I tried to hide and I would not escape him, no matter how hard I tried. And not out of any love for me or our daughter but for the fact that I am his possession and he wants me locked on a glass shelf. (338)

This is how patriarchy suffocates the lives of women. Mustafa also glares at his wife Bano that makes her wretched. The patriarchy of “the house thinks that the foundation of the house stood solidly on the belief men must keep their wives on a short leash with the help of fear and subjugation” (Rizvi 181). This approach transforms the house into a living hell. Patriarchal oppression won’t let people grow and glow to their full potential physically, intellectually, emotionally, and psychologically. I consider it a form of internal colonization. They remain fear-ridden, scared throughout their lives. As we find in the case of Murtaza who had been mishandled since his childhood, he complains to her mother, “I stopped growing. I remained a midget” (347). Although the house has been materially rich yet it is spiritually shallow, emotionally, and morally hollow. Rizvi condemns this kind of patriarchal approach that robs the family happiness and the well-being of its members.

Patriarchy is threatening and has the potential to internalize fear among its victim. Most of Sheikh’s family (especially the male members) gets the art how to suppress women

and no women of the family could pluck the courage to utter a single word in their presence. According to Walby, “Radical feminism is distinguished by its analysis of gender inequality in which men as a group dominate women as a group and are the main beneficiaries of subordination of women. This system of domination is called patriarchy” (3). Patriarchal institution is based on male domination, feminist interrogates, who does the house chores, and who dominates or interrupts the conversation. In patriarchal/matriarchal discourses, language is patriarchally structured. Zimmerman and West found that men dominate 98 percent of intermissions in mixed-sex discussion (105-29). Male members of Sheikh’s family remain indifferent to Zaib while enjoying rice dishes, roasted lamb, and kheer (a local dessert). After having lunch, Sheikh Ameer embarrasses Zaib by saying that you look quite older than your age. Furthermore, refereeing to Saadat, her grand uncle, was a man of peculiar characteristics; we were kept in dark about him. You are the chip of the old block, “He would not sleep. He said it was a family trait. So, are you infected too?” This shows their approach, they are talking to a new bride and it is their first encounter that gives the reader a fair idea of how discourteous they are to embarrass the newly arrived bride to bridle her. Their attitude is not only discourteous but contemptuous as well. It seems as if they are deliberately trying to irritate, and test her patience by their nonsensical remarks. For instance, “She is an ice-maiden, how old she looks or maybe she is a witch, she hardly smiles” (Rizvi 160-61). Her mother-in-law accuses and taunts her that she has not treated her guests well. Zaib is disillusioned by Sheikh’s family, to them, she is ugly and rude. Murtaza’s mother asks Zaib in a commanding voice, “Why are you not pregnant yet? It’s been a year since you got married. What’s wrong with you? Are you barren?” (209). She did not reply to any of the remarks but listen with a brave heart and patient smile. Rizvi wants to demonstrate that women need vision and wisdom and their mind and visualization should work more than their tongue.

Zaib has inkling that her mother-in-law’s behavior is a kind of displacement; she might have had a terrible time in the house when she got married a few decades ago. To soothe her injured soul and hush her past ghost she is giving Zaib hard times. During her stay at in-laws, Zaib herself observed, “Jamila nursing a purple eye and once bandaged hand” her mother-in-law purple-black eye and one her bandaged hand” (169). I argue that she has led a life of a compromised marriage but does not dissolve it. She becomes a

hostage of economic dependency and the fear of children that he (husband/Sheikh Ameer) might take her sons from her becomes shackles not to leave the violent marriage. The feminist agenda urges women not to become passive victim survivors of domestic beating. They need to register their protest (verbally and physically) against male violence and don't become its passive recipient. It can neither be tolerated nor legitimized. It needs to be curbed and fought against. Divorce is a legal battleground to fight against male violence. But generally speaking, the women of the third world are neither economically independent nor conscious of their legal rights; as a result, they are left with no option except to lead a compromised unhappy life. Walby mentions some critics who argue that "there are differences between radical feminists over the basis of male supremacy, but often this is considered to involve the appropriation of women's sexuality and bodies, while in some accounts male violence is seen as the root cause" (Brownmiller, 1976; Firestone, 1974; Rich, 1980).

Male-folk sails under the false fancy notion that he has got the license to kill women's ego and confidence through domestic violence. Pizzey argues that "men who beat their wives do so as a result of disturbing childhood experiences in which they saw their fathers beat their mothers" (131). I contend this argument regarding Murtaza, he is a living example, belong to the same family but does not believe in beating. He loves and adores his wife. On the other hand, his brother Sheikh Baber Ameer beats his wife Ayesha and affects the life of his daughter Mumtaz and made their life a living hell. The study conducted by Gelles's work shows that "not all men who came from a violent home went on to batter their wives" (173). This vicious circle of patriarchal/matriarchal violence remains unchecked and this displacement of frustration goes on and grows like snow ball effect. The only way to counter this vicious circle requires man's cooperation and pro-feminist approach. I argue that men should understand that men and women are two wheels of a vehicle their imbalance would affect its pleasure ride. For a wholesome society, man needs to encourage and boost her confidence so that he may reap the fruit of a healthy and productive society. When Murtaza's mother provokes him to bridle his wife, he expresses his inability by saying, "she is a grown-up woman and he cannot give her instruction as if she were a child" (170). Rizvi critiques domestic violence which is the root cause of family disturbance. It generates and internalize strong vibes of insecurity and unhappiness. The

chicks (children) feel that any time hawk (patriarch) may pick them. Parents in particular should make their children feel safe, secure, and blessed. Rizvi urged to strike a harmonious and balanced relationship between man and women. Zaib becomes Murtaza's savior.

I argue that via media is the best, extremes are always bad. Neither a man should be a misogynist nor a woman misandrist, both complement each other. Men and women should not be viewed as competitors, they may live in peace and harmony to make this world a worth living place. Murtaza has developed a routine to relish tea with Zaib. He wants to spend most of his leisure time in her company. This change is noticed by everyone, especially female members of the family who feel jealous about it. Farkhanda and Hameeda (sister-in-law) even throw tantrums to see their cousin Mumtaz and Zaib absorb in happy conversation. He finds a magnet in Zaib. She has become his compass. Moreover, when Jamila finds that her son spends most of his time with Zaib, it troubles her, she says, "but, men don't spend their valuable time with their wives, for God's sake. It's not as if you're friends! Why do not you go and join the men inside?" (191). The stereotypical statements made by patriarchy/matriarchy are meant to other the weaker sex. Zaib transforms him in so many ways. He drives pleasure, peace, and happiness in her company. He realizes without a woman, like her, the home turns into a dry and barren place. She helps him in making a real man. He is the same person who has been repeatedly told (by his parents) that he can never do anything right and is a day dreamer. The way he handles the affairs of Shahi Manzil after the death of Zaib's father (Qasim) surprises everyone. He too couldn't fathom the transformation that has taken place to the level of his disbelief. He expresses his feelings towards Zaib, "It was not until I met you that I felt *a strange light entered my life* and a dark cloud lift from over me and disappear" (emphasis mine 254).

In postcolonial societies, patriarchal/matriarchal roots are too deep and strong. Patriarchy develops a reactionary attitude in its victim; it is like a syndrome that remains there for a longer period, at times it remains dormant and at other times it becomes active as we find in the case of Khan Bahadur who has established himself as a Supreme Court judge of great repute. He too remains a victim of patriarchy, he was *pushed* into the legal profession by his father (patriarch of the family) without taking his consent. The dye was cast at the time of his birth that he would join the law profession and earn repute as a lawyer

of par excellence. Though he gains the heights and reach the status of a judge of Supreme Court due to his sheer studiousness, superior professional competence, and acumen. The very sentence demonstrates how patriarchy affects one's life. Rizvi states that "Bahader Ali lived his life under the *compulsion of his father* and continued to do so for many years till the death of his father. One day he wakes up wondering why he was *suffering all the stress and strain* for a profession that he did not care for" (emphasis mine 22). Patriarchal dictates serve something like to make someone eat onions when someone strongly detests it. The real Bahader Ali realizes that he lived a life that was detestable to him but under compulsion, he had no other option but to comply, one fine morning he realizes that he should live a life of his own, the life of a free man, free from patriarchal dictates, and free from stress.

I argue that he had a feeling of being colonized. Those who spend their childhood under patriarchal oppression become reactionary at the later stage of their life as we find in the case of Khan Bahader Ali, who shuns his robes and gets detached from a very promising career and status he gained after a long and hard struggle. He had sufficient money and resources to enjoy life. He assumes the role of a Nawab, spends most of his time enjoying sumptuous dinners and A-one quality of the wine. He practically demonstrates an epicurean style of life i.e., to eat, drink and be merry tomorrow you will die. I argue that if his father had taken his consent the reaction might have not been that strong, his repressed feelings got manifested in such a Bacchanalian way of life that even surprised his wife Qurut-ul-ain. She finds herself helpless but at the same time, she observes in him the happiest and fulfilled soul that he had ever been before.

Rizvi gives a few more illustrations of domestic violence that have a snow ball effect on society resulting in intolerance that breeds further violence. In postcolonial patriarchal societies like Pakistan and Latin America domestic violence is a common feature as shown in the texts. Another important outside factor involved in this beating is alcohol, as drunken men love to beat their wives. Once Baqir revives his senses after intoxication, he starts to retaliate with greater strength. His beating gets stronger and harder that makes Zainab bleed. Rizvi delineates the situation with great accuracy. She states:

He caught her arms, threw her to the floor, and then kicked her hard in the ribs. She heard her ribs crack and the pain was so intense that Zainab's strength ebbed away. After that, she was like a rag doll being punched and kicked and slapped until she finally lost consciousness. (42)

Zainab is properly stamped and gets man's signature to be recognized as a wife. The unending pain, muddle sight for her swollen heavy eyelids reminds her that she gets a masculine husband, the very reminder makes her unconscious again. When she recovers a bit, she cannot recognize her face, her cheeks are swollen and her left cheek has a scar that looks like a *stitched cloth, purple welts on her nose*, numerous injuries are visible on her forehead, bruised puffed lips, this all gives her a grotesque look. This is one of the typical manifestations of how women survive in a male dominated world. She becomes a victim of private patriarchy. In private patriarchy, it is a man who exploits/misuses his position/authority as a husband or father and becomes an oppressor to subordinate women. The house becomes a site of patriarchal oppression. Men like Baqar do not take themselves by the collar, this lack of self-critical and myopic chauvinistic approach leads to the path of complete (self)destruction. Under the pressing condition, Zainab is left with no option except to move to her parents to save her life and the life of her only son.

Rizvi foregrounds the issue of domestic violence, especially in postcolonial societies. Women and children become most of its victims for their being weak and vulnerable. Though the laws are there but their implementation is a serious question. Recently in media, several cases of domestic violence are being reported especially of working girls of younger age in the houses. Children who undergo domestic violence result in emotional imbalance and psychological trauma similar to the children who fell prey to parental harassment. Rizvi throws ample light to demonstrate its social, psychological, and emotional impact on the individual level as well as collective. Rizvi is a strong advocate to liberate people from oppressive patriarchy and educate society to observe the principle of live and let them live. Now in the following discussion, I intend to read the text as a social critique of the feudal system.

Murtaza compares his father (Sheikh Muhammad Ameer) to a hurricane that

destroys everything which comes in its way. This episode of Murtaza's suffering throws light on how it affects the psychology and the physiology of a child (Murtaza) in particular. Murtaza is taken as a case study in the novel. Rizvi shows how he gains agency from an object position. Murtaza is called by his father, when he comes his face is reddened and he is sweating. After some time, his hands begin to tremble violently, "he fell to the floor and his body stiffened as his eyes rolled back. His eyes turned blue and the color drained from his face" (172). Patriarchy scars and traumatize.

Rizvi documents another event to make the reader aware of how it hits Murtaza hard throughout different stages of life. And again, Zaib comes to his rescue. The maturity, wisdom, and vision of Zaib rescues the poor soul. I argue that she works as a psychologist. She inquires about the burned scar of his palm; the answer of Murtaza startles her. He tells, when he was a young boy of ten years old since then he had been experiencing these fainting spells. Second, I argue that he has also been a victim of sibling rivalry. The very episode substantiates my argument. He tells Zaib that his father has beaten him black and blue on the pretext that he sets fire to the dry bushes that engulf the house to ashes. He further tells her that it was not him but his brother set the father, while he was a mere an on-looker. His father not only hit him on the palm with a thin firm stick, when his anger did not appease, "he took a red-hot skewer and branded his palm that he should never light another fire. He remembered the pain of it today. He did not flinch of cry he knew if he had, the punishment would have been far worse" (176).

The remarks of his mother add insult to injury. She tells him that he should have borne this with courage and behaved like a man. After this very episode, his fits had become a regular feature. His family members, especially his parents never thought of their unfair and repressive attitude towards him, rather they thought of him as a fragile, and coward. Zaib listens to this all with pain and patience. She suggests him that they should consult a neurosurgeon because it is a purely psychological problem. Zaib has been instrumental in breaking the shackles of patriarchy/matriarchy by giving him regular sessions of therapeutic cure. This is a typical story of many Pakistani families, children who have been a victim of domestic violence, as a result, internalize fear that haunts them for the rest of their lives. The vacuum of cowardice, insecurity remains throughout their lives.

Numerous stories convinced Zaib, patriarchy is a monster that sucks and robs one's peace and happiness. Zaib realizes that the problem is not merely psychological, it has a history of unimaginable torture and mental agony. To her, Murtaza is a typical case of domestic violence that has internalized fear and at times it gets manifestation in different forms and shapes like an epileptic spasm and emotional trauma. Zaib strongly feels that she has to have a series of sessions with him to uproot his internalized scar and inculcate a surge of confidence in him that might enable him to lead a fulfilled life. A couple of incidents would suggest how unreasonable and immoral his father had been! It was a sheer chance that Murtaza saw his father humping a maid instead of feeling embarrassed, he got hold of him and "put a match to Murtaza penis, a reminder that he must never trespass on someone's private sex life" (194). Instead of rectifying himself, he abused his authority.

Murtaza gets disillusioned with his brother Mustafa for his selfish, and contemptuous attitude towards him for avoiding him like a plague whenever he suffered from fainting spells. Now he begins sharing his visions and revisions with her, she has become his confidant. To bring him back to normal life was her chief objective and challenge. Zaib tries hard to study the case critically and dispassionately as if she was conducting a research project. Moreover, the way she handles Pir Sahib (Jalal, the fake cleric) emboldens Murtaza, he knew that she had something special that revealed her the dark-secret of other persons like Pir Sahib, Jamila, and how Ayesha's family was deceived into marriage. She reassured him to the extent that he should be ready to face the severest challenges of life with optimism and cheerfulness.

Zaib's style of investigation is quite similar to Freud's psychoanalytic theories that examine closely the unconscious drives that stimulate people to proceed in a certain fashion. She encouraged Murtaza to share his life [hi]story. She realized that the stage has reached where they have developed a report and can communicate without any formality. She asks him how he spent his childhood. Rizvi documents, "she [Zaib] first coaxed him into talking about small meaningless occurrences from his childhood, like when he played cricket with the street children when he was supposed to be at school or when he flew kites from the rooftops" (193). He recalls consciously/unconsciously) his past when he used to borrow books from the school library, one of the books contained sketches of da Vinci

including drawings of the fetus in the mother's womb. Jamila caught sight of the sketches and burst into fury as if he was involved in pornography for voyeuristic pleasure. He was ordered to abandon all types of sports of liking that transport him into a happy being, his parents, especially his mother was bent to kill his childhood happiness: eating pink gola ganda and playing guli danda and cricket was put to halt because he was playing with servants' children. I argue that the sense of class is ingrained in childhood impressionable periods of one's life. He could not appreciate the reason why he is being denied the harmless pleasures of life, while these pleasures won't hurt her, a child cannot understand the issues of race and class at this point of age and time. Zaib had a hunch that his mother Jamila had never enjoyed a pleasant childhood and married life. Her attitude was like a displacement or projection if we speak in psychoanalytical terms. Zaib gave him the explanation and rationale for her reaction by telling him that "your mother grew up being reprimanded for hundreds of little harmless travesties so she thought she should do the same with you" (193).

The comment of Murtaza throws ample light on the true oppressive and disgusting nature of patriarchy. "It is a sad thing for a child to know that his parents are the most, spiteful and malevolent people to set foot upon the earth" (227). I argue that the presence of his father generates in him a good sense of insecurity and he feels as if a hawk is hovering over his head that is about to grab onto him. The house literally becomes a detention center a haunting house. To him, school time was fun. He regrets that why he couldn't pluck the courage to run away from a despotic father who does not appreciate his emotional sensitivity. Patriarchy scars life, it becomes a haunting shadow that never lets you peaceful. Zaib transforms Murtaza from a midget to a confident young man. He visits the prison with the intention to rescue his father. The threatening tone and aggressive mood of his father hardly terrifies him anymore but it certainly disillusioned him. He makes it clear that he had been a subject to patriarchal repression. He tells his father that parental love should be unconditional. And he had never been able to give or get love. In his last meeting with his father, he jumps to the conclusion that, "the umbilical cord had finally broken away and he was parentless now" (354). Rizvi demands that women should be sagacious and have the ability to penetrate into the psychology of the people who surround them. I have also traced femino-centric elements in the text.

6.2.3. Femino-centric Elements

Femino-centric means something that focused on the condition of women, physical, or psychological. Rizvi attempts to keep men ex-centric in her novel by exposing their abnormalities. It is men who are responsible for women's unhappiness and psychological scars. Rizvi's *TBR* throws light on men who are suffering from numerous abnormalities. Most are professionally sound but psychologically sick, emotionally imbalanced, and sexually perverted. Bahadur Ali Khan himself has been a victim of patriarchy who is denied all kinds of pleasures. After his father's death, he shows his true colors and becomes involved in sensual and sexual pleasures. His son Qasim suffers from a morbid desire to wash his hands continuously for some unknown guilt or repressed sexual desire. Rizvi employs a technique of maximalism with reference to a description of his washing hand time and again. He is upset because of his habit but finds himself helpless and cannot exchange a look with his wife who looks equally depress. Rizvi captures his psychological state of mind in the following words:

The orgasmic sensation of the soap gliding over his palm and between the web of his fingers . . . were Qasim's happiest moments of the day . . . And then would come that sliding, sinking feeling in the deep pit of his stomach that would wash over him like a tide of guilt and remorse at his inability to defend himself against this insidious obsession with as much alacrity as he defended his clients. (25)

Asadullah Khan, son of Khan Bahadur is a doctor par excellence who may cure everything except death. Patients and the impoverished always crowd him, his treatment and generosity finds no parallel in the family but Rizvi suggestively and interestingly refers to him as a chronic bachelor, and his familial relationship extends to all humanity. The statement subtly shows his sexual homosexual orientation. He is also sailing under the false notion of Messiah. The self-claimed role further frustrates him and the family has to hide him so that he may not be stabbed by someone.

Similarly, Faridullah Khan is an irrelevant, timid, and non-person. He remains under the over-protective shadow of his brother and iron-willed mother. Rizvi presents him as a day-dreamer and a procrastinator. He is obsessed with the idea of breeding home

pigeons. To make them fly, as high as possible is his chief delight. He is reluctant to marry on two grounds either he does not want to shoulder the responsibility of another being or he is impotent. Under the pressure of patriarchy, he has to marry but the very thought of consummating the marriage makes him panic. His wife Samar, who is well versed in the art to counter the situation, calms him. That moment he enjoys the experience and feels delighted that he gets another crutch to bank upon. To compensate for his weaknesses, he deliberately closes his eyes and remains indifferent to his wife's infidelity (33).

Another character is Shah Baqar Mirza husband of Zainab, a landlord, whimsical, self-proclaimed poet, and a lewd person. Rizvi states that, "Shah Baqar Mirza had neither the patience nor the inclination to put up with his wife, let alone a bad-tempered one" (34). This line throws ample light on both the characters. Zainab's mood swings dramatically. On the other hand, her husband is indifferent to his family responsibilities. His days are spent in reciting poetry and receiving "appreciation" from his sycophant friends and spends most of his nights in a brothel to be entertained by his favorite artiste Lali who is a lady of modest beauty but enjoys immense attraction and poise. Baqar Mirza has developed intimate relations with Lali, she has a great appreciation for Baqar's poetry, his views on politics and literature. So, their intimacy is not limited to insatiable sex but extends to the intellectual level. Being a pragmatic woman, she knows her limits and power of influence. She poses serious threat to Baqar and Zainab relationship.

After giving birth to Ayaz, she is overjoyed and remain busy with him for a week. She is faced with the problem of feeding baby as her milk dries. To feed and soothe the crying baby some wet nurse has to be arranged. Gradually, she loses interest in her baby and remains in a state of anxiety and depression. I argue that her indifference is a kind of displacement. These sentences of Rizvi aptly explain Zainab's emotional and psychological bearing "Ennui enveloped her like a death shroud All night she would pace the room, watching the stars, her body restless but her mind numb so that she could not even bother to analyze her situation" (39).

Jalal's family life is equally frustrating for the Qasim Ali Khan's family. Jalal hurls a tirade of abuses to his son Jamal when he was told about the penetrating look of Zaib, he

calls him ‘harami,’ [bastard] fool, and ‘ulloo ka patha’ [owlet] (60). Jalal considers that Zaib has been transformed into an evil witch. Jalal’s wife though lethargic yet has a fair idea of her husband. He is an opportunist and hypocrite and knows how to act and materialize his ulterior motives, “when he saw the life style of the haveli, he salivated at the prospect of somehow pegging his future to this house and never having to work again. Ah! What a life that would be” (61). Rizvi argues that looks are deceptive, the appearance of Jalal, and his simplicity, the very meditative prayerful look was signs of deception. Zaib exposes the religious hypocrisy of fake clerics. He requests Qasim that he may kindly be allowed to preach religion to the poor, illiterate souls who have gone astray and know nothing about their religion. In line with the argument of this study, I also trace elements of postcolonialism in the text in the next section.

6.3 Elements of Postcoloniality

Identity is one of the key concepts in postcolonial theory. The place gives one’s identity. Rizvi compares migration to “a migrating bird that is lost without its flock, even if it is the leader of a flock” (258). When she discloses the news to the patriarch (elders of the family), they reacted, “as if she was Zeus hurling bolts of lightning at them from Olympus. Rizvi lends her text mythic Miltonic touch. The patriarchs of the family could not appreciate the reason(s) for her decision while they were leading a perfectly normal life. They express their deep concern and emotional outburst over the decision of moving to the city. To them, it would be difficult for them to live without children. They felt hurt and showed their displeasure over the decision that has been made without seeking their prior consent. They felt as if their patriarchy is challenged. This is the first concrete step to encounter patriarchy. I argue that postcolonial texts are aggressive and revolutionary in their tone. They found it hard to swallow especially the matriarch of the family stated that “if you cut yourself off from your roots, you will bleed! Your children would wander on the earth not knowing where to build their homes or bury their dead” (277). The place gives one’s identity and sense of belonging. The decision is not an easy one while making the decision she too experiences push and pull, for instance, Rizvi states that “when Zaib stepped out of the front door of Shahi Manzil to head for the railway station, she felt her muscle tear from the bone” (289).

Migration is never an easy choice. Lots of events take place in one's absence. When Zaib migrates from Shahi Manzal to Qasr-e-Zaib, a couple of deaths took place that suck the cheerfulness of the family and made them gloomy. It is Zaib who lifts the disconsolate spirit of the young club by saying that there is another angle to look at things. The youth mark their name in different professions and groom well academically, professionally and economically.

I argue that migration brings tears of nostalgia and tides of prosperity and opportunities. At the same time, the decision to move to a big city creates ripples of unknown fears among the family members. It is like breaking the family. The home becomes quite a graveyard. When you stay at your place for generations people know you, but when you abandon your place, it causes serious crises of identity. Numerous reasons may be attributed to migration. First, it may give them better exposure to grow vertically socially and academically. Second, in our culture, the living of son-in-law with in-laws is hardly appreciated. Zaib does not want Murtaza to stay in Shahi Manzil. Third, she is convinced that if the youth is to grow and glow, they need to migrate to city for better opportunities to meet future challenges because Shahi Manzil has exhausted its chances of future further growth. Fourth, she is sick at heart and wants to lead a normal life with human errors and learn from them. She wants to strike a balance between freedom, happiness, and responsibility. She does not want to play the messianic/colonizer/patriarchal role anymore because she herself had been a victim to it. She wishes she enjoy a life and home where she may have peace of mind. She has a strong feeling that her life she lived at in-laws was a living hell because of the joint family system at times becomes too demanding to cope up with.

Zaib had a strong realization that youngsters will not be able to grow to their full potential under the deep and dark shadows of patriarchy. Zaib could hardly forget what patriarchy did to her, especially her father did not bother to take her consent regarding marriage. And the treatment of Murtaza's parents further disillusioned her. She has a strong feel for the youngsters have no future at Shahi Manzil. They would be internally colonized. I argue that she wants a transition from coloniality to modernity where one may enjoy peace of mind, educational, professional, and economic growth. She makes it clear to the

members of the youth club that there are “No evil designs, no conspiracy, no stab in the pack” (264). She infused in children a wave of confidence and ask them to decide on their own as they are now grown up. No patriarchal decision would be imposed and superimposed. In the beginning, they were slightly reluctant, but later sanity prevailed and realized that this all is done for their better prospects. Zaib is a pragmatic, and forward-looking woman, she had realized that the family had reached a saturated point in terms of economic prosperity and with the passage of time they would be on the decline, before things move from bad to worse the decision needs to be taken, the only way move forward.

This passage establishes the fact how migration enables Ayaz to join a prestigious law firm specializing in criminal defense to protect the poor from cold-blooded rapists and murderers (like Jalal) in the future. But he soon realizes that the things are not in black and white. He had personally experienced that many innocent people got convicted because of the political influence exerted by influential persons. He turns his mind to corporate law that suits more to his disposition. It is city that offers Jahangir the opportunity to specialize in general surgery which is demanding and lucrative at the same time. Majeed also joins college of architecture, after completing his degree he renders his services to an established firm. It is the city again that offers Laila to get enrolled in veterinary medicine because it was her vocation and passion. She has made the house a little zoo (301). All of them follow the dictates of their own minds, there is no pressure from patriarchy to push and nudge them to a field that is distasteful to them. They can trust their own instincts. The only way to stop this influx of migration is to provide basic amenities and facilities of life in rural areas. Rizvi criticizes and condemns feudalism for its socio-economic impact.

Feudalism is another theme of significance in postcolonial literature. It breeds social injustice. Rizvi exposes feudalism through a typical character Sultan Murad Shah who enjoys the authority of the State (aristocrat). He happens to be found beating a man named Sardar Sirajuddun (a proletariat/commoner) for raising his voice against his bonded labor, it makes Sardar (feudal) uncomfortable because he is directly involved in it. The timely intervention of Qasim Ali Shah rescues him, but Sultan misuses his authority and forcefully abducts Qasim Ali Shah and imprisons him in his private cell to make him a living example. Though the lawyers and the judges register their protest and complaints against

him he used his administrative and political clout as a preemptive measure to cocoon himself into his safe haven (havali) where police cannot invade. The feudal lords think of themselves above law. Rizvi captures the situation. When Qasim was blindfolded and taken off, he found the room pitch dark, putrid smell of human excretion caused him nausea. Apart from Qasim, a couple of men were also put in that decrepit room. The rats were scampering around, he poorly fed: one roti (tortilla) with some mush, three cups of brackish water to drink and wash his hands, and a cup of tea throughout the day to sustain his soul. Two men pulled Qasim, “he was clipped on heavy rings tied to thick chains on to his left ankle and left wrist” (87). He couldn’t sleep there because he thought if he got his eyes closed the rats might nibble his toes or fingers. Later, the two men were taken away and silence gripped him which was killing his spirit more than physical torture. Zaib takes the photograph of Sultan Murad from the newspaper to reach and read his aura and she finds him an ugly and evil soul. She finds it quite hard to communicate with his soul because it was protected by a malevolence that is quite removed from human goodness.

Through the episode, Rizvi throws light on the mindset of feudal lords, how they treat and exploit their tenants. It also gives the reader a fair idea how Sheikh Ameer Ali and Murtaza are different, how patriarchy damaged Murtaza. Murtaza told Zaib that her father displaced a tenant who worked on his land since he was a child, he asked for the loan which was given, when he was asked to repay, he couldn’t. He was not only deprived of from the humble abode but also asked to get lost, otherwise, his younger daughter would be abducted. Murtaza took pity on him and gave him a place from his own share of a property to stay with his family for two reasons: first, throughout his life, he served his family, and second, being poor, he had no resources to relocate himself. On knowing this all, his father got offended and asked him to explain his position. The very idea of being answerable to his father made him miserable and old pain and burning of the thrashing on his palm revived as if he has gone back when was ten years old (177). It reminds me of Gabriel Garcia Marquez, *One Hundred Years of Solitude* where the block of ice was kept on the hands in childhood that burned troubled the child for the rest of his life. The section is further divided into two subsections: the postcolonial factors and religious malpractices.

Alva states that “Colonialism’ is not just something that happens from outside a

country or a people, not just something that operates with the collusion of forces inside, but a version of it can be duplicated from within” (12). This type of postcoloniality is observed in *TBR* where the poor and the marginalized class feel oppressed and traumatized with a pressing need to emancipate themselves from internal colonization. The discourse of haves and have-nots does not establish that the bourgeois internally colonizes them (have-nots). Foucault theorizes discourse:

A system of statements which the world can be known. It is the system by which dominant groups in society constitute . . . As a social formation, it works to constitute social reality not only for the objects it appears to represent but also for the subjects who form the community on which it depends. (42)

Zaibunissa belongs to an influential family of Jahangirabad. The people who reside there in those mansions belong to the aristocratic class. They formed a state of twenty-six families in that small agricultural town named Dera Murshid. They socialize with each other on different occasions like marriage, feuds, births, and deaths. I argue that Dera Murshed can be taken as Pakistan at the micro-level, a place of gentry and their general attitude with the lower class. It is interesting to note that Women of the affluent class are domesticated whereas, the women of the lower class are engaged in public labor. The women of the lower class serve their masters. The servant quarters were flooded with people. Rizvi explains that there is a battalion of cooks enjoying different hierarchies:

From the head chef to the sous-chefs, to the assistants and helpers down to dishwashers. A family of launderers was housed in the quarters whose only job was the washing, starching, and ironing of clothes for the entire household. Besides the regular staff of sweepers and cooks and washers, a boy was employed for the sole purpose of running errands from one part of the haveli (mansion) to another. (6)

Through discourse, Rizvi describes their living condition. Assadullah feels the pressing need to cure the ailing boy therefore, he gets up and picks his stethoscope and his first aid bag, and rushes towards the servant quarters. It gives the reader a fair idea of how they are marginalized:

Asadullah walked to the quarters where the servants lived, past a row of dense shrubbery. There was a row of small brick houses that had been the stables for the horses [. . .] He walked in and took him a few minutes for his eyes used to get used to the darkness inside. Before he could see anything, a raw putrid smell attacked his nose and his head reeled with its fetid pungency. (29)

Rizvi wants to make the reader conscious of the fact that there is a glaring contrast between the worlds of haves and have's not. To substantiate her point, Rizvi narrates another episode that speaks volumes of their poverty and lack of exposure to the basic amenities of life. When Qasim was requested to head a Jirga (tribal meeting) and assist in resolving some conflicts between the farmers and some tenants, he planned a trip to Hashimpur. He took with him Farid, Asad, and the three boys Ayaz, Majeed, and Mehdi. They reached there in an entourage of cars: the Opel, the Austin Seven, and the horse carriage followed with the luggage. How Rizvi has described this trip reminds me of the relationship between the colonizer and the colonized. The village of Hashimpur is crowded with the poor people who expressed their wonder at the spectacle of beautiful shiny speedy automobiles which are covered with dust by now, the village people are lined up and anxiously waiting to welcome Qasim Ali Khan and family.

Rizvi depicts the socio-economic condition of the people who lived on the margins of poverty. They are sunk in the quagmire of filth and illiteracy. The heaps of garbage were quite obvious on the street. Rizvi states their living condition in the following words:

Open gutters flowed outside the doors of the one-room hovels that people called home. The stench of the urine mixed effectively with the smell of despair and deprivation and inadequacy to form a pall of emotional pollution that hung heavy over the lives of people, disengaging them from any hope of betterment. Those who survived the mines had memories laden with stories of the 'pits of hell.' (4)

The postcolonial novels offer a social critique. Rizvi exposes how the poor are exploited they find themselves internally colonized. Moreover, she condemns religious exploitation in the strongest terms. The following discussion is the extension of this idea.

6.4 Religious Malpractices

Most of the postcolonial societies are religious and orthodox. In my previous discussion, I mentioned that postcolonial societies tend to be more superstitious than Western societies. They fall victim to religious malpractices. In this way, religious malpractices are related to the postcolonial factor. The factor that makes Nafisa Rizvi's novel crucial to this research is her focus on the religious hypocrisy that is also highlighted in Allende's fiction. Both the characters, cleric Jalal and Father Restrepo fail to honor their religious duties for Islam and Christianity respectively. Father Restrepo considers that it would be an open defiance of the law of God if bastards and civil marriages are legalized. It would pose a threat to the family system, the Church and, most importantly, "put [. . .] women on equal footing with men" (Allende 4). Similarly, Jalal's sermons revolve around "sins of adultery, fornication, promiscuity, and lust" without referring to humanity, the goodness of heart, and social and moral values that make life beautiful and balanced (Rizvi 53). Both Rizvi and Allende seem to indict the clergy and religious community in Islam and Christianity. In postcolonial societies, religion is used as a tool of exploitation. Jalal is a typical representative character who is spiritually hollow, religiously fake, morally corrupt, and intellectually shallow. He has no ethics. He is aggressive and abusive. He is cheat and evil incarnate. He abuses religion and employs it as a tool to threaten, harass and humiliate people. Islam is a rational religion; it does allow a woman to work if it becomes inevitable as in the case of Salar's mother. To Jalal, if a woman is to stay pure, she has to be within the four walls of the house. This is the only option to escape from the eternal flames of an inferno. Furthermore, he stated that "The wrath of God is upon all fornicators and His anger is scorching for all women who enjoy the pleasure of flesh" (53). I argue that he did not mention what would be the punishment to the men who get involved in the pleasures of flesh and killing of innocent people. Moreover, men sought to control and dominate by excluding women from the public sphere and confining them to private or employing them on low wages and grades to the level of exploitation.

It seems society, marriage, religious forces, patriarchy, and the state push women to the margins. In the whole novel, most of the women are confined to house; when Zaib along with the 'young club' migrates from Shahi Manzal to Qasr Zaib, Lila is the only

person who gets herself enrolled in veterinary medicine otherwise rest of the women or girls are somewhat domesticated. Rizvi draws the reader's attention to another important issue of religious exploitation that remains under the rug.

Rizvi unmasks the hypocrisy of the so-called cleric Jalal. His sexual orientation and preference towards boys. I argue that implicitly the reader may get the impression that religious people are homosexual, it not only distorts the image of religion but also its followers. Jalal's sermon is interrupted by an extremely good-looking and fair-haired boy who recently settles in the vicinity tells him that her mother is a single parent and has to work in a garment factory to feed the family as his father has abandoned them. He assures him, his mother is a pious lady. He couldn't resist asking a question without disturbing his composure while he was burning with resentment. There is a pin drop silence and nobody can expect that someone may interrupt Jalal. Instead of replying to the question, he embarrassed him by saying that "I can see what the absence of a father has done to you. Your mother has not cared to teach you how to behave amongst elders and that too in the *sanctity of a mosque*" (emphasis mine 54). He feels disgraced and annoyed as if his authority has been challenged by a boy in front of his followers who come to seek spiritual guidance from him. As Jalal is a man of vindictive and selfish nature, he has his plan to settle the score. Rizvi mentions that Jalal had numerous experiences with other boys as well but the beauty of Salar charmed him the most, and he had a raging passion to devour. He asked him that he should visit him so that religious education may be imparted. Salar being young and innocent couldn't appreciate his malicious design, one winter day he was sitting with him in his hujra (a small private room), he secretly locked the door and started to move his hand on his thighs, the boy looked confused and upset, Jalal asked the boy to take off his clothes, the boy felt frightened and helpless:

When the cleric entered the boy from behind, he saw the boy stifle his mouth quickly before the scream of agony could escape his lips and saw him writhe with pain. But Jalal's pleasure was too intense for him to care. Salar did not move. Warm tears start rolling down from the corner of his eyes to the pillow as Jalal got up and fixed his clothes. (56)

Rizvi contends that at times religion is used as an oppressive patriarchal tool. Generally, most postcolonial societies are religious and traditional. Pakistan is considered an orthodox and fundamentally religious society in the eyes of the West. She exposes the corrupt practices of so-called religious people who do not even care about the sanctity of religious places like mosques. The filthy man (Jalal) encouraged him to come again with the hope to enjoy the party. Salar was shocked and disillusioned to see the real ugly face of the so-called Maulana (religious title used for scholars) Jalal. He felt utterly disgruntled and disgusted wanted to commit suicide because he couldn't pluck the courage to face anyone especially, his mother. His mind was bursting inside to calm it down he poured liquid rat poison to quiet it forever. In the beginning, it was considered as a murder case but later "physical signs of forced entry on the boy's body were also proof of the rape" (57). Rizvi, directly and indirectly, throws light to expose the real face of the fake cleric. At times looks are deceptive. In postcolonial societies, especially, religion serves as bait, a camouflage and deceive naïve people. Zaib was bent to unmask Jalal's mantle of "simplicity and goodness", and his meditative prayerful-look; on the other hand, he too had developed an ambivalent relationship with her. He considered "her a sorceress but found her enticing. Jalal dreamt of how he would caress her lithe body and her small breasts if he got hold of her" (67). His fantasy was troubled by spoiled brat Peru who accomplice with him now blackmailed him to extract more money from him to buy firecrackers otherwise he would spill the beans. His fantasy shows his bisexuality. Such incidents not only bring bad names to religion and religious people but also, they lose faith in both. Now I intend to read the text as a postcolonial magical realist text.

6.5 Postcolonial Magical Realist/Feminist Technique as a Social Critique

Magical realist/feminist postcolonial text is considered a social critique. Rizvi draws the reader's attention to an important issue that is eroding moral authority from Pakistani society. I argue that people display their ill-gotten wealth as their trophies. The distinction between legal and ill-legal is fading fast as a result, society is degenerating. People are getting filthy rich and working on the principle "must-see-must-be-seen." The moral, cultural, and other social values are getting at the background and their wealth is being foregrounded. Wealth roars! As a result, the middle class is shrinking day by day and

nouveau riche has gained grounds that made the society a smelting pot. In match making (marriages) other factors need to be taken into consideration. Jahangir develops liking for a girl, who happens to be the daughter of his patient, her name is Nusrat, but the problem they came across is that “the family is not just rich, they are fabulously rich”, Samar visits their house and finds, “the life they live in the most splendid house with the most expensive unsightly furniture you can envisage. All gilt and glass with everything upholstered a bright strawberry pink. It made me shudder and I felt completely out of place” (358-9).

As emotions are blind, Jahangir was adamant to marry Nusrat, irrespective of economic and cultural disparity among the families. If there is a single discordant note in the chorus it spoils the whole beauty. Nusrat proves to be a discordant note. Her interest, life-style, means of entertainment were different from Jahangir’s family as a result, she felt herself out of place. After six months Jahangir declared one day that he was going to live in a separate house it further shocked the family. Rizvi hints to one of the dilemmas of the modern age is the disintegration in families. This event further cracked the concept of family and the inclusion of characters like Nusrat catalyze to disintegrate the family. Zaib was the one who suffered the most, this event further shattered the concept of family and home. The best advice came from Murtaza to cope with this anguish and anxiety is to “set people you love free when they are ready to fly . . . You cannot glue the family together” (364, 371). It is a natural phenomenon. Life keeps going. Majeed tried to explain the phenomenon to Zaib, “Adolescents grow up, leave home, get married, and then eventually they come back to their roots and ties, later in their lives” (376). The very idea internalized a sense of fear in her, if all children start leaving the home one by one, she would be left alone. Now she felt strong pulls of Shahi Manzil, the blue room walls, and the urge to talk Asad Chacha. She realized the city swallows up relationships fast (369). Once you grow in age, you realize you come alone and leave alone. No one stays forever.

6.6 Tracing Magical Realist Elements

David Young and Keith Hollaman describe, “The “irreducible element” is something we cannot explain according to the laws of the universe as they have been formulated in Western empirically discourse, that is, according to “logic, familiar knowledge, or received

belief” (7). Belief in spirits, like in other cultures, is a part of Pakistani culture. The episode of talking walls is a good example of an irreducible element. The event is accepted but not explained. The walls enjoy omniscient status. The episode of talking walls casts a magical spell on the reader. The reader wonders as if he is talking to the spirits or walls. Chanady argues that “In magical realist texts, the reader can never forget the presence of the supernatural, although the story is narrated in the most realist manner” (66). The motif of the supernatural is introduced from right of the beginning of the novel. Rizvi states, “*Walking shoulder to shoulder with her were four old men who walked briskly in spite of their years. They had long white beards that hang to their waists and were dressed in blue robes, the color of the summer sky. One carried a staff*” (stress original 2). The reader experiences a condition of suspended belief. In magical realist text, the implied reader is conditioned to accept the perspective of the narrator or supernatural reality without questioning the alien world view presented in the text. It becomes imperative for him to accept it both in magical realism and the fantastic. Chanady discusses fantastic comprehensively in the following words:

In the fantastic, the dominant world view of the text is very similar to our own, and the laws of verisimilitude coincide largely with ours. Against the background of this logical world, the narrator introduces a level of reality that rational man cannot accept. This is the world of superstition and myth, which contradicts the world of reason to which we are accustomed. The occurrence of the supernatural is often seen as a breach of the normal order of things. (8-9)

The presence of the talking walls is no less than a fantastic element in fiction. The walls enjoy omniscient status. The reader feels lost in time and space. In summer, when Zaib gets sick of sweltering heat and wants to enjoy moments of relief, she sneaks into the cool corners of Shahi Manzil. While sitting in the room, she experiences herself in a grip of a transcendental aura. Rizvi notes:

Zaib began hearing voices around her———imperceptible whisperings at first and then louder though yet incoherent. Then garbled words became comprehensible phrases then sentences . . . When she heard her name, Zaib’s already pounding heart

thumped deafeningly. Don't be scared. We're friends spoke a soft, baritone voice.
(12-13)

Rizvi called the talking walls a “*walk-talk club*” (15).⁴ According to Faris, “these irreducible elements are well assimilated into the realistic textual environment, rarely causing any comment by narrators or characters, who model such as acceptance for their readers” (8). I argue that these sages of ages may have triggered Rizvi to evolve the concept of talking walls. In our culture, the common reader may comfortably relate to the talking walls. During the whole discussion with the walls, she becomes comfortable and starts to communicate with them. In short, she has become a member of “*wall-talk club*” (emphasis original 15). The way the whole episode is presented may be termed a good example of irreducible elements. The description of the talking walls is presented in a matter-of-fact style that the very supernatural phenomenon transforms into an ordinary event. The example is an excellent demonstration of the “naturalization” of the supernatural in magical realism. Chanady argues that “the narrator can adopt the point of view of a focalizer with a specific identity. If he [she] is the primary narrator, his/her account is not perceived as unreliable, because it represents the only point of view.

The narrative is perceived as the description of the thoughts and attitude of a certain character” (116). The narrator presents the protagonist (Zaib) as a precocious child; therefore, her account cannot be easily dismissed and is considered reliable. The leitmotif of the supernatural is advanced exquisitely and persuasively throughout the narrative. The question of belief is central here, this hesitation frequently stems from the implicit clash of cultural systems within the narrative, which moves toward belief in extrasensory phenomena but narrates from the post- Enlightenment perspective and in the realistic mode that traditionally exclude them” (Faris 17). I argue that communication with talking walls is no less than an epiphany for her. Her happiness is reciprocated as the walls are equally eager to meet her because they find her listener interactive and attentive. She also enjoys their cross-talk. This gives the reader a feel as if real conversation is taking place. Chanady

⁴ In Pakistani culture, it is generally said that, walls have ears, so speak softly and it is also talked about that, in times of crisis one should consult with walls.

contends that “the more the reader can identify with the fictitious world, the more strongly he will react to the supernatural events in the text, which are not merely dismissed as symbolic or imaginary by the reader of the fantastic [magical realist text] because they are presented in a convincing manner” (74). Now I discuss another characteristic of magical realism that is *The Phenomenal World*.

In magical realist texts, “the natural and supernatural are inextricably inter-woven in the fictitious world, there is no hierarchy of reality. Haas argues that the “objective reality” of the reader does not determine his reaction to the supernatural events described in the text, only the underlying fictitious world view provides the criterion of what is to be considered as natural or supernatural” (343). The supernatural events are not perceived as part of a dream, and thus belonging to a secondary level. They are just as valid as the realistic framework of the reality” (Chanady 118). Shakespeare writes, “Sleep is the balm of hurt minds” (Scene II, Macbeth). It is a great blessing; sleeplessness leaves a vacuum in our lives. The reader experiences the presence of the phenomenal world in *TBR*. Rizvi notes, “The family shared an extraordinary trait that had been passed down to them through the generations . . . They did not sleep, without suffering the tortures of sleep deprivation. (6). Zaib further explains to her husband Murtaza, “We don’t feel sleepy. During the day, our bodies shut down for a few minutes while we are working at something trivial or doing chores. That’s enough. We’re refreshed after that” (164). The reader gets the impression as if he is reading a science fiction or watching thriller movie. This sounds phantasmagorical. Roland Barthes claims that “realism endows details with an “effect de reel” (reality effect), which conveys not any particular information but rather the idea that this story is real” (19-25).⁵ Now I have moved my discussion to the *Merging Realms*.

In merging realms, the reader experiences “the closeness or near-merging of two realms, two worlds [the real and the magical]” (Faris 21). Rizvi demonstrates it through the birth of Zaibunnissa, which is unique in so many ways. The moment Khan Bahadur Ali

⁵ I assume that Rizvi might have taken the idea of open eyes from The Holy Quran, Surah Kahaf, (Cave of seven sleepers who slept for 309 years) Allah says “You would have thought them awake though they were asleep” (The Nobel Quran 18/7).

holds her, he finds her exceptional, especially her glowing and mesmerizing eyes that captivates him. She had been an unusual and ‘the little wise girl’ for her mother and Asad uncle. Zaibunnissa, lovingly called Ziab, is a clairvoyant child. When she was hardly one and a half years old, “she could talk and recognize objects and colors with perfect vision” (7). The uncanny thing about Zaib is her sharp and penetrating look that makes people rattle. Zaib is real, but her qualities are magical, and she is quite aware of her magical power. Her mother (Jahanara) is equally conscious of her strength. That’s why, at times, she stares at her to avoid embarrassment in the presence of guests that may awaken retaliation by her piercing gaze.

The episode of scolding of her mother overlaps in *THS* when “Nivea would pull Clara’s braids and that would be enough to wake her daughter from her mad distraction and return the saltcellar to immobility (Allende 8). As she is gifted with “uncanny, piercing gaze” and the ability to read minds and auras of people. She could even communicate with animals and reptiles. Here are a few examples that demonstrate how she has exercised her magical powers.

TBR opens a space of the in-between, the real and the magical. The presence of a black cobra in the corner of grandmother’s room generated a great panic among the male servants and the maid, Zaib, who was passing by with one of her siblings Jahangir she decided to take control over the situation. Rizvi states, “Zaib glared right back and fixed her stare at even more venomously. . . Admitting defeat, the poor creature turned around and slithered away” (11). The reader is not sure which metamorphosis she has gone through during the process that made the cobra flee. In a matter-of-fact narrative her spiritual magical gaze communicated to the cobra and forced him to leave the place. The very leaving of cobra is real but communication through gaze is magical, telepathic, and spiritual. So, the world of real and spiritual is a merging of realms.

Similarly, the following event is also a good example of a merging realm. Pakistani society is conservative and traditional, where sex opportunities are rare. Rizvi draws the reader’s attention to an important issue that sometimes children are not safe even from their relatives. It is a cultural tradition in Pakistani families to greet elders, younger (women and

children) come closer and bow their heads to seek affection and prayers of their elders. To reciprocate the very gesture of respect elders place or pat their hands on their heads or backs. Adeel one of Zaib's distant maternal cousins happens to visit her family with his newly wedded wife. Rizvi notes, "Adeel was sitting on the lounge chair with his legs stretched out comfortably and he pulled Zaib as she came forward to greet him" (8). Adeel put his hand on her firm backside and was stroking her. The room was packed with relatives who were engaged in talks and silly laughter; therefore, no one noticed it, but she could feel his lascivious hand burning her body. She made up her mind to teach him a lesson. Rizvi explains Zaib's piercing (supernatural) look in the following words:

Zaib imagined a scorpion crawling over his face. Then he met her look. Adeel's hand fell away involuntarily and suddenly he felt as if he had been bitten by a poisonous creature and the fiery venom was coursing through his veins and burning the tissue, muscle, and bone in its path. He turned blue, unable to breathe, and clawed at the air as if to escape from the inferno within him. (8)

The moment she removed her stare from his eyes he was completely drenched, exhausted, and about to collapse on the floor, his wife caught sight of him and rushed to support him before he completely fell. Generally, the readers are conscious of the male's gaze but Rizvi inverts the discourse that a woman's gaze may be even more threatening. The male gaze is destructive but the woman's gaze is reformative and productive. Rizvi suggestively tries to educate parents that they should sensitize their children of good and bad touches and make them conscious of their surroundings.

Magical realism encourages a free flight of imagination. It does not confine itself to the traditional manifestations such as themes of supernatural, demons, and ghosts, it broadens its canvass to multiple issues pertaining to magical realism. Here the text offers another interesting example of merging realms. The illustration belongs to a kind of hallucinatory magical realism. The event creates difficulties in the mind of the reader in ascertaining the event that has taken place is either a dream/vision or a kind of hallucination whether waking or sleeping. I argue that it is an example of fictional narrative magical dream work. The very phenomenon is brought forth from the subconscious to

consciousness, from the mental image to the real happening. By the end, one finds it is nothing but a desire for a company, yearning for the imagination in a dreamlike situation. The reader is introduced to the most intimate friends of Murtaza.

For him, his friends were more than real but to Zaib they were fragments of his imagination and invocation. In magical realist texts, the reader does not believe literally in eerie perspectives therefore he does not distance himself from those events and consider them the product of hallucination, a dream, or insane fantasies (Chanady 173). At times, it becomes problematic for the reader whether to accept or reject the fictitious world. When the narrator narrates a story that lacks authenticity, it is not the job of the reader to express and react to his skepticism, but he may give his interpretation because of the authorial reticence allowance. He was animated to the true sense of the word that he had introduced his best and the most amazing associates to Zaib. They loved him and he reciprocated them unconditionally. I argue that Murtaza's day-dreams have become a mania, and seem to be more real to him than the dull social life around him. Moreover, to the postcolonial people, dreams and myths are real as actual events are taking place. According to Jean Weisgerber, "Dream and reality constitute the two poles of the human condition, and it is through the magnetism [attraction] of these poles that magic is born, especially when a spark shoots forth, the light of which catches a glimpse of transcendence, a truth behind the reality of life and dream" (17).

The postcolonial reader hardly questions the reliability or unreliability of the narrator, because his imagination is colored in myths, folklore, legend, surrealism, and marvelous realism, and the criteria of logic and perception do not apply to the society depicted in the magical fiction. For that very reason, the reader needs not be critical or over-judgmental. He does accept such events primarily on a literal level without showing his skepticism. The following example sets well in surrealist literature and unsettling doubts. The reader is required to appreciate how the different mentalities operate in the text. Murtaza introduces them to Zaib as if they are standing on the theatrical stage. While he is talking of them, he looks a bit dreamy and wistful. The whole event is described in a matter-of-fact narrative. Their names sound quite queer: Qadaver, very tall and seems as if touching the sky, Auj, and Mauj, the androgynous who speak in chorus, Bhavra, the scarab

beetle who whispers ridiculous but amusing stories. Marghuli is an endless chatter box. And last, but not least, Bonna the dwarf with his banjo, gets thrilled in singing songs, he is widely travelled who has visited the seven seas and other places that I haven't visited. Furthermore, he relates different stories about them with great happiness and surprise. The reader feels hesitant about what is real and what is fantastic. Rizvi states, "He hugged them one by one: Murguli, Qadaver, Auj and Mauj and Bonna were gathered there and Bhavra came to sit caressing him with his pincers. They chatted noisily and Murtaza felt young and joyful again" (350). They are the friends of his loneliness to soothe him. After his marriage with Zaib, his desire was fulfilled and their need and presence were fading fast and they parted from him. I argue they are more inspiring and consoling visions than the real. It is a hallucinatory tale of his adventure. The merging realms enable him to travel into a magical real dreamlike scenario. The very scene remains largely in non- magic hallucinatory mode. Faris states that, "In magical realism resemble the fantastic scenarios in dreams or hallucinations or reveries, which nevertheless are rooted in actual psyches and events, magical realism is often described as having a dreamlike quality, but one that merges with the objective world through text" (103). This episode also fits into the category of unsettling doubts. But at the same time, Zaib expressed her regret that she shares her own mysterious relationship with the blue room which is a good example of merging realms (196-97). The very episode establishes the fact that his world view differs from the rest of the characters around him.

Unsettling doubts generate a kind of distraction, contradiction, and disarray for the reader who finds himself unable to interpret certain events within the framework of the narrative as a whole. In Rizvi's fiction, there are numerous occasions where the implied reader finds unsettled. In magical realism, the implied reader derives pleasure without questioning the veracity of the phenomenon or distancing himself from the validity of the fictional world. Gonzalez Echevarria believes that "magical realism gives us a world view that does not depend on natural or physical laws, and not based on objective reality" (19).

Zaib makes a couple of out-of-body experiences is a good example of disruptions of time, space, and identity at the same time reader experiences unsettling doubts. The reader feels as if things are happening in reality or virtual/hyper reality. The narrator of the

magico-realist text reorients the mind of the implied reader in the opposite direction, considering extraordinary ordinary and supernatural natural. The antinomy is resolved in a manner that logical contradiction is not perceived by the reader. We are told that Zaib has learned the ropes of an out-of-body experience. The kidnapping of Qasim Ali Shah (Zaib's father) by a feudal, named Sultan Murad makes the whole family anxious. They are going through trauma. Rizvi notes, "It seemed all life had stopped and the family was living in time capsule" (96). The word "time capsule" unsettles the reader whether she is travelling in a time machine or space-ship. Whether he is watching a thriller or science fiction documentary. The reader feels as if he is reading a science fiction, in which events are considered impossible but not out of place within the logical code of the text. The image blurs and disrupts the boundaries of cyclical time. It further unsettles the reader whether it is a physical journey or a spiritual one. Rizvi shows her authorial reticence. The reader is not provided with the details of the 'journey'. But in fact, it is not science fiction, because in science fiction the author needs a rational and physical explanation for any unusual explanation and the reader does not find any explanation regarding the spaceship travel. Science fiction is sometimes confused with magical realism. It is regarded as a form of fantasy fiction which includes elements about space and time. Bower argues that supernatural and extraordinary happenings in science fiction require "a rational, physical explanation" (28).

During the read, the reader experiences a situation of suspended disbelief. Rizvi states, "I'm going to try and communicate with Baba, Let's see if it works . . . It sounds absurd even when Zaib said it, but no one laughed. . . She was no ordinary, irrational child with a wild imagination. . . Her voice sounded dry, croaky and weak, but her eyes were bright. I saw him, she said triumphantly to her mother" (94). The whole event is described in a matter-of-fact narrative style. It is equally a good example of narrative magic. Qasim Ali Shah was sitting in the corner but his left arm and left leg were tied with heavy chains to the wall . . . The magical aspect of the whole episode is how the wounds of her father transferred to her body? This makes the reader reluctant to validate whether it is real or magical. Zaib points to "her forearm where a purple mark like a fresh bruise began to appear and darken, 'and here,' she pointed to her ankles where they could see welts were rising on her delicate white skin . . ." (95). Rizvi emphasis that spirituality is powerful

where science fails spirituality comes to man's rescue.

According to Chanady, "The narrator must actually adopt the perspective of a character who believes in a world ruled by laws different from our own" (102). Finally, she manages to establish a connection to Sultan Murad and finds him in an awkward position. The antinomy is resolved when the reader comes to know the relationship is established through telepathy. She had a different mind picture about him but he looked sick both physically and mentally, "his mouth drooling and his pillow stained with regurgitated food . . ." (98). Moreover, she engages in a dialogue with Shah Murad which creates a convincing world view to the reader. He looked frightened to see her and wanted to scream but his voice got hoarse. He could hardly believe in such supernaturalizational act. She told him not to get frightened and release her father. He inquired about who was her father? She mentioned her father's name and told him that she was neither a devil nor an angel. He thought that she was responsible for his present wretched condition and subjected him to this most shattering pain that he had been enduring. This makes the reader uncertain how the arrest of Qasim Ali Shah is relevant to his physical wretchedness. Shah Murad told her that as if his belly was being consumed by hell-fire. The doctor thoroughly examines him and says nothing is wrong with him. This mystery complicates the situation further and the reader becomes dumbfounded whether his ailment is real or perceptual. This all happened to me after I locked your father. Could you guarantee me, if I release your father, I would be free of this unbearable pain that is wreaking me? At that moment she realized that she had done enough to jostle him inside out.

The antinomy resolved and makes the reader convinced this is not perceptual it is real. She has employed her magical power to get things done. In magical realism extraordinary is treated as *ordinary* "admitted, accepted, and integrated into the rationality and materiality of literary realism" (Zamora and Faris 3). She assured him if he let her father go and she would pray that his sins be pardoned. Rizvi wants to establish that pray has a magical power to cure. The fear is internalized and Shah Murad is convinced that there was a strong connection between his present state and the custody of her father. If the situation is to ameliorate, he has to be released with immediate effect. The reader again experiences a state of suspended disbelief, when he learns that during the experience all her

energies were sapped that made her eyes close. The statement affirms that it was neither a dream nor hallucination. It was real but magical. The narrative magic of Rizvi keeps the reader fluctuating whether it is dream or fantasy, is it real or imaginary, and is it physical or spiritual? According to Zamora, “magical realism expands fictional reality to include events we used to call magic in realism” (17). The reader while reading, experiences unsettled doubts with reference to her communication with Shah Murad. He asks questions about her identity. Does she remain the same, or does her journey make her identity multiple, mobile, and fluid? At the time she does not remain the wife of Murtaza or the obedient daughter of Qasim Ali Shah. She becomes a commanding negotiator or she is all in one. In this regard, her identity becomes fluid and multiple. After a few hours, the whole family is thrilled to hear the news that Qasim Ali Shah has returned home. The whole family is convinced and considered the miracle ordinary because in magical realist text extraordinary becomes ordinary and unusual usual.

There is another occasion when she exhibits her magical powers to expose the infidelity of men like Baber. The reader remains under the impression as things are happening in real. This episode helps bring her from the margin to center for her extraordinary powers which are considered ordinary by her family. She has developed a bond of sisterhood with Ayesha because she considers her another victim to patriarchy. To teach Baber a lesson, she plans another “out- of-body” visit (339). The last episode to save Mehr has shaken her confidence. She embarks upon another adventure to measure her spiritual strength. To hide her identity, she covers her face with a black dupatta (veil) except her eyes. Rizvi documents, “Zaib felt herself floating. She felt like an astronaut in space. She travelled through space and impenetrably purgatorial black void until she felt herself reaching Murtaz’s house” (340). I term it levitation, a feature of magical realism. Moreover, Rizvi underscores how lower-class women like Shakila (who used to serve Ayesha) are seduced and exploited through incentives of favor and possessions. Zaib found that he was not alone in his bed; a woman was sleeping with him. She could not recognize her at first glance but saw her arm moving closer. She recognized it was Shakila; she did not get furious because Zaib had realized and visualized how she might have been prey to his evil design, which is usually the fate of such poor souls. Similar situations can be traced in *THS*, where maids and women of lower social status are victims of man’s lust. I have

thoroughly discussed it in my analysis of the fourth chapter. The next couple of lines keep the reader unsettled, when he finds that he was sleeping on his bed makes the reader bit confused and amused. Rizvi states his psychological and physical state in the following words:

Zaib prodded Baber's corpulent body with his walking stick that stood near the bed and awake, keeping her distance and staying within the shadows to avoid being recognized. He opened his eyes sleepily grunting in annoyance until his eyes became accustomed to the darkness and he saw a pair of eyes flashing at him from the depth of darkness. He gasped and froze in horror, his face devoid of color. He couldn't speak, but a few incoherent choking sounds left his throat. In his anxiety, he reached for the gun he always kept at his bedside but he saw the apparition looking at his hand and suddenly a bolt of pain shot through his arm. He whimpered and cowered under the bed clothes like a dog waiting to be struck. (340-41)

She warns him in a commanding voice to shun his evil ways, she knows that "there has been too much sin and wickedness in your life and so far, you have got away with it" (341). He needs to keep a fair distance from his wife and daughter, he had been a great source of trouble for them. Now onwards if he did not mend his ways, he would be cursed and punished. Furthermore, she commanded him to marry Shakila, he would have four sons from her. She told him that she was going to meet him soon whether her commands are executed or not, if not, he should be ready to face the dire consequences: "Disease will attack your body and scourge your brain". On hearing all this, Rizvi documents his reaction, "It was almost worse than the terror of death. She had never seen so much fear in man's eyes. She hoped that her words would be embedded in his brain and she would never have to come again" (341). Zaib is the mouthpiece of Rizvi, it becomes compelling to mention in the light of above discussion that Zaib is a pure, selfless, and courageous soul who rescues the silenced and marginalized women who had been the victim of male sexual assault.

Apart from the five characteristics suggested by Wendy B. Faris, certain other magical techniques have been employed by Rizvi in her text. The following episode has innate antimony which unsettles the reader as if things are happening in reality because of

the matter-of-fact narrative, and the reader feels hesitant as the episode moves forward the very antimony gets resolved at a time or at times writer exercises authorial reticence. For instance, Baqar's drinking and his late-night arrival and falling on the bed for undisturbed sleep had become a permanent feature. Zainab had become sick of it. One night, her son was running high temperature to get it down she placed wet bandages on his forehead. Because of the fever, he was constantly moaning that disturbed his peaceful night. As he was deadly intoxicated, he pounced at her to make him quiet. Rizvi documents the situation:

Suddenly Baqir pounced on Zainab and pulled the child from her arms. She screamed with shock as Baqir gripped Ayaz by the feet and hang him upside down. Her mind raced and she rushed to grab the baby just as Baqir let him, in her mind's eye, Zainab saw her son crushing to the floor, his brains bursting out of his skull. (41)

The magical realist writers use dream as magic which is closely associated with surrealism. According to Michal Dupuis and Albert Mingelgrun, "in magical realism, if it is true that dreams keep it psychological (individual or collective) and metaphysical purposes, it will nevertheless tend to free itself and to distance itself—totally or partially, definitely or provisionally from the psyche that nevertheless continues to nourish it. It seems to root itself fraudulently in the sensory reality surrounding the being that endangers it" (24). Though it was a nightmare which was the product of her internalized fear. The very idea frightened her to the extent that her heart starts pounding. The moment she opened her eyes she realized that he was in her arms and the very next moment Baqir called the nurse to take him away and feed him. The dream internalized fear in her and she realized that she had become more vulnerable and insecure. The feeling filled her with irritation against her husband. The key words "through her mind's eye" and "the moment she opened her eyes" resolve the antinomy.

Similarly, Rizvi has beautifully externalized Zaib's fear and anxiety. The reader experiences suspended disbelief. The unknown fear of an invisible eye (Jalal) is always lurking in Zaib's mind. Rizvi notes, "She felt a tingling sensation at the back of her neck

like someone was watching her. The fear of invisible eye won't let her decide whether to tell or not to tell . . . Others, like Mehr, mumbled, 'you have a creepy feeling syndrome'" (379). Zaib has been receiving alarming signals that something evil is going to befall because of her prognostication. The vibes were real, intuitive and spiritual. Rizvi's magical artistic narrative power is at its peak. The reader remains caught in a web of suspended disbelief. Moreover, chapter 11 after migration from Shahi Manzil to Qasr-e-Zaib beautifully illustrates the experience of unsettling doubts. Zaib watched with her open eyes two men entered along with a waft of cheap cigarette that blocked her nostrils, it alarmed her to the extent that she got up in fright. She realized that it was none but Jalal. He tried to tie her with rope and stuffed her mouth with the dirty rag. And during the exercise hurled abuses and spelled his long-lasting venom against her. She found herself helpless and was about to be killed, in the meantime she heard the bang of a shot gun, after that she lost her consciousness. The moment, she opened her eyes scenario was changed. She found that "it was a beautiful rain forest and the rain dripped gently from the tips of the leaves, though the drops did not wet her" (380).

In the first casual reading, it sounds as if things are happening in a dream. She does not know who fire the gunshot; the reader knows later that it was Murtaza who fired the gun. Rizvi through this episode achieves a dual purpose: to create strong ripples of unsettling doubts and second, establish that Murtaza has been transformed from a coward person to a brave mature man who stood by the test of time. He has developed a sense how to handle critical situations. He knows exactly how to hush Zaib's fear once for all. He does not allow the police to remove Jalal's dead body, till Zaib recovered consciousness and saw him dead bathed in blood with her own eyes to ensure he has met his eternal fate (379-382). The reader hardly feels settled till the end of the chapter to know was it real or a dream? The scene may seem like a dream, but it is not a dream, the text tempts to co-opt it by categorizing it as a dream and forbidding that cooption at the same time leaving the reader doubtful and causing him to hesitate. The very elements of doubt, hesitation, wonder, and awe are inbuilt in the magical realist texts. The above-mentioned scene is a blend of all the feelings.

Rizvi has the knack to externalize inner guilt through hallucination. Similarly,

Majeed met an unfortunate accident. To see Majeed's body pooled in blood, she somewhat lost her balance. She rushed to Majeed and her hands and clothes were blood-stained. It seemed as if her old haunting memories revived. The pool of blood she had witnessed near Jalal's dead body, she couldn't completely efface it from her unconsciousness, it revived and she got a fit of hallucination. Taussig's argument seems relevant in this regard, "The process is analogous to how the desperate elements of [hallucination] and realism in magical realism constitute a dialogical mode in which they strangely complement each other in a way that is often to explain in rational terms. The notion of a "hallucinogenic creation" of an "antiself" (327). And women are stereotyped they suffer from hallucinations. I argue that it might be the result of their suppressed feelings. Though she had washed her hands and cleaned her clothes, Murtaza noticed, "her looking repeatedly at her hands and her clothes and trying to rub something off through her hands and clothes were clean," when he asked her what are doing Zaib? She replied, "There is too much blood everywhere and it did not seem to come off." She saw blood everywhere: on Samar and Ayaz's clothes. "It is a stubborn stain. It does not leave no matter" (386-7). She says all with great conviction as if it is real and to her it is. While analyzing the magical realist features in my primary text, I have come across hybridity, marvelous realism, and defamiliarization. I discuss these elements under the following subheadings.

6.6.1. Marvelous Realism

Marvelous realism is another common denominator in the three novels. Magic realism is often confused with Carpentier's "marvelous real". To Borges, marvelous is similar to the magico-mythic worldview of primitive societies (58). Marvelous realism is a marker of (Latin American) identity that rejects hegemonic European influence. Stephen Slemon article "Magic Realism as a post-colonial Discourse" refers to the ideological function of magic realist fiction to relieve the pain of colonial subjugation by retreating into a mythic universe, into a phantasy world where problems can be solved by divine intervention (Faris, p. 106). I argue that previously magical realism was confined to Latin America exclusively but, now, it is accepted and celebrated in other parts of the globe. So is the case with marvelous realism. Marvelous realism is native mythico-magic as we find in the three novels. Rizvi has given some examples of Pakistani brand of marvelous

realism in her fiction. These examples sound interesting in the background of Zaib's marriage that makes everybody anxiety-ridden, especially the young club was in a state of mourning. Rizvi states, "The gardener came to Qurut-ul-ain anxiously claiming that the shrubs and trees were doggedly refusing to get on the tasks of spring and no new sprouts had been seen, although there were significant signs of growth in every other house or haveli in the vicinity" (141). She gives her own interpretation and tells him to be patient and situation would ameliorate after Zaib's wedding. If human beings are not happy and feeling good, it does have some impact on the plants as well because they are also living creatures. It seems as if religion and superstition are infused into the world.

Rizvi also refers to religious culture as people do believe in miracles of saints. Those who do not believe in saints cannot cure themselves with miracles of saints. Many consider Asad Chacha a saint who cures the ailing boy with his messianic hand (Rizvi 5). The reader also finds examples of marvelous realism in Allende and Esquivel's novels. The ant's episode in *THS* and the treatment of Mr. John grandfather by Mary are fine examples of marvelous and mythic realism termed by carpentier and Jeanne Delbaere-Grant. (See Allende 124-125, Esquivel 113-114).

Chanady states that "sometimes the world view in a magico-realist narrative is so alien to the [White] reader that the author/the narrator must intrude in order to enable him to understand it. This often happens when the perspective is that of a different race or ethnic group of which most readers have little knowledge" (175). The writer intends to introduce the code of supernatural is not to distract the reader but to provide him with a logical contradiction, the supernatural does exist where it seems impossible. Since the implied reader is not familiar with the cultural belief system, therefore, he must be told the superstitions and legends. Mourning is a typical feature of/in postcolonial societies. The death of Qasim Ali Shah (patriarch) affects everything: not only the perception of members of the family but also the sensibility of the surroundings. Nature (sky) too weeps with the mourners. The very death changes the whole scenario that arise through indigenous marvelous realist culture. Rizvi documents it details:

Now the strange phenomena reached the ears of the family. It rained for three days

in the town from the day of Qasim's death as soon as soyam [third day of death] was over. It had not rained at this time of the year in the history of Dera Murshid. A burning tree was found in the middle of the forest: one solitary tree consumed by flames burning to ashes but affecting the surrounding area. People talked of the events without surprise or consternation. After all, it was Qasim who had left the world and nature mourned his loss too. (252)

It reminds me of Gabriel Garcia Marquez's fiction *One Hundred Years of Solitude* and *Love in the Time of Cholera* as if Rizvi is under the influence of Marquez. It rained for five years in *One Hundred Years of Solitude*. Moreover, there is another parallel that may be drawn, when the main patriarch of Buendia's family, Jose Arcadio Buendia's dies the rain of yellow flowers begins. "A short time later, when the carpenter was taking measurements for the coffin, through the window they saw a light rain of tiny yellow flowers falling" (Marquiz 72). In Marquiz's *Love in the Time of Cholera*, the protagonists (Florentino Ariza and Fermina Daza) met after fifty-one years, nine months, and four days. Every event or happening is associated with subjective feeling. There is another episode which took place regarding Qasim's death, which Qurut-ul-ain termed as "The house is crying at the death of Qasim" (262). Water drops were dripping from the wall, but there was a yellow spot accumulated on the wall. Different members of the family emerged from the different rooms complaining of water pools in their rooms. Samar emerged from her room and said, "Amma [mother], there's water dripping from the . . . , ' she noticed the pool of water and the look in her mother-in-law's eyes and stopped short" (262). When the house was thoroughly checked and rechecked nothing was leaking but the mystery and antinomy are yet to be resolved. The matriarch of the family decides that everything has been thoroughly checked and found no leakage, she inferred that the house is in a state of mourning over the death of Qasim. Presence of fantastic in the magical text can be seen in two ways: natural and supernatural; presenting "laws of convention that is reason and empirical knowledge and the other is the code of superstition, irrationality, and myth" (Chanady 13).

Moreover, in Pakistani culture, transsexuals do visit on marriages, it is generally thought lucky for the bride and groom because they cure the evil eye and strengthen the

marriage bonds between the couple (143). This myth is believed in Pakistani culture. It is also generally believed (cultural belief system) that the curse of transsexuals directly goes to heaven and may cost heavy. The pragmatic aspect of it is that such myths are spread because money is involved in it. Rizvi gives graphic description of Sheikh Ameer who wears a heavy silver ring for the dual reasons.

First, for adornment and second for saving from the evil eye (160-61). It is not limited to ring only men also wear a heavy band of silver on their wrist and some go for silver or brass on their ankle to express their religious affiliation to the historical event of Karbala. Similarly, Rizvi in her fiction introduces the religious and cultural ritual of a marriage ceremony. What is the significance of nikah and how it is conducted; it sanctifies marriage. Referring to Imam Zamin, Rizvi states, “Jahanara tied an ‘imam Zamin’ on her daughter’s arm for protection given by saints” (154). ‘Imam Zamin’ signifies a token that is tied on arm for protection by the saint, according to sheia version (154).

In the postcolonial world, such treatment is not only accepted but also valued over science. The people have more belief in this kind of treatment than medical science. To the people, it is a matter of their faith system. Asad’s treatment of the poor girl seems more of a spiritual healer than of a doctor as his touch of hand cured her without the application of his stethoscope and medical instruments, during the period of treatment he had to undergo great physical stress. The girl who was about eight years old seems to be on the death bed she was pale and seemed half of her age due to malnutrition. I argue that in the postcolonial world, a great number of people are living below the poverty line suffering from malnutrition resulting in stunted growth.

Rizvi employs the technique of maximalism in describing the experience of the poor girl treatment. Though she was sweating in the middle of summer when Asad placed his magical hand on her forehead it was icy cold and this coldness travelled to the bone marrow that made him shiver, his feet went numb and teeth began to chatter. He did not remove his hands from her forehead, though his condition was getting the worst, he could feel that his heart was pounding between the ribs like a big running machine, he realized as if his vision went blocked, the cries began to echo and getting uncomfortably louder. He

strongly felt that blood was rushing to his head, this mysterious situation remained for some time till he collapsed, in the meantime, the girl opened her eyes lacking the strength to talk but a ray of hope could be seen through her black eyes. This episode of treatment portrays him as more of a messiah than a physician. He believes in spirituality, mythico magical realism (chanting mantras) more than science. These lines of her draw binaries to let the reader conclude what's reality and what is a mystery:

He now knew he was nothing but a mere chalice through which the forces had chosen to work and help those who had no one. He did not matter in the scheme of things . . . But thousands who thronged at his door from that day on, he was a savior and nothing less; a demi-god who healed the sick and gave solace to the poor. (Rizvi 31)

According to Warnes, “faith based magical realism often assumes a vatic function, calling upon the reader to suspend rational-empirical judgments about the way things are in favor of an expanded order of reality. Frequently, though not always, it does this in order to recuperate a non- Western cultural world view” (12). In this part of the world (Pakistan and India) people (the poor and the illiterate in particular) prefer to visit moulvi (spiritual healer) than a doctor for patient's checkup because they believe in this religious-cultural faith system. I argue that their belief system is one of the dominating factors. But the fake cleric exploits these poor simple souls and brings a bad name to the religion (Islam). Rizvi states the situation in the following words:

Moulvi had declared that the child was *possessed* by an *evil spirit*. The only solution, the cleric had declared was to flog the child and derive the spirit away, for this dangerous and selfless service he would charge *one hundred rupees*, about as much as the father of the child earned in a year. (emphasis mine 28)

In the forthcoming discussion, I have discussed a typical brand of black magic practiced in general and Pakistan in particular.

6.6.2. Black Magic Practice and Fortune Telling

In postcolonial societies, especially Africa and the subcontinent, the culture of black magic is common and Pakistan is no exception. It springs from negative feelings like jealousy, envy, and rivalry. When people cannot compete, they employ such negative tactics. Zainab is told that black magic is the reason of husband's indifference. The rumor spreads that Lali (a dancer/lover of Baqir Mirz) has charmed her husband through black magic. To neutralize the magical spell, she was given amulets, Holy verses blew upon the water was given to drink so that he may come out of the evil spell, under his pillow, prayers written papers were placed so that he shuns his evil practices and spending nights with that prostitute Lali (37-38). After giving birth to Ayazuddin Mirza, he became further removed from her and his son, Ayazuddin Mirza, was a magnet to the whole family, especially his grandmother. On his first birthday, she flew to seventh heaven.

Zaib refers to the anecdotes of Dadi Amma who relates different stories of black magic. Rizvi mentions, that "how people who do black magic put pins into dolls that are supposed represent the person they mean to harm" (96). I argue that some women like Jamila (typical representative of such ideology), gets easily influenced by these evil practices when they find themselves hopeless and helpless. Fake religious clerics through the glib of tongue beguile and mislead people. Zaib finds "a strand of hair coiled around a small piece of paper. The paper itself was covered in dirt and rolled around four-inch stick" (210). She laughs inwardly at her mother-in-law for her superstitious thinking. This is the first time Zaib tells her mother-in-law that she does not need it. In her response, Jamila is shocked and infuriated for her impudence of desecrating the amulet given by the holy hands of her revered Pir Saheb (Jalal) to cure her barrenness.

Chanady contends that, "the description of superstition, for example, becomes an exercise in exoticism. The narrator must actually adopt the perspective of a character who believes in a world ruled by laws different from our own" (116). Postcolonial societies are generally considered superstitious. Some of the superstitions are part of their belief system. The reader wonders whether it is superstition or magic. An unusual world view is very much acceptable and credible in magical texts, authenticating superstition and fantasy. The

concept of the evil eye is an old one. Different people do believe different things according to their cultural beliefs. As Mehr stated, “always put spot on Aalia and Raania and behind Sulaiman’s ear to ward off the evil eye. And for the rest of us, I say a particular dua every night” (357). I argue that dua (prayer) is not a superstition, it is part of our religious belief system. Muslim societies heavily believe in duas. As Muslims, when we pray, we communicate to Allah to get closer and seek His forgiveness. Allah Almighty says in the Holy Quran: “When my servants ask you concerning me, (tell them) I am indeed close (to them). I listen to the prayer of every suppliant when he calls on me.” (Quran, 2:186).

The story does not end here “mannat” is also part of religious culture in some of the sects in particular. It gives them a sense of security and surety. Mannat can be best defined as a future promise you make with supernatural force(s), if it is fulfilled you go for it, as we find in the case of Sulaiman. Majeed asked, “Are you going to keep a “mannat” for Sulaiman’s health and then pierce his left ear lobe and put a stud in it when he’s ten? Logic and science fail to justify and appreciate this spiritual belief system. Leach finds himself in a conundrum to distinguish whether it is magical or non-magical; the act carries a great symbolic significance that makes it real (504). The people who practice them have more faith in them than science and logic. Spirituality is a magnet in postcolonial societies, like Pakistan. Unfortunately, shrines of the saints have become the center of minting money, evil oppressive practices to exploit the naïve and simple people in the name of religion. Some people prefer to visit moulvi than a doctor for a patient’s checkup because it is part of their cultural religious belief system.

Another practice that thrives in postcolonial societies is the practice of fortune-telling. Najumi (fortune teller) emotionally and psychologically exploits people irrespective of the rich and the poor. Man is curious by nature and wants to know the future events in advance. The moment Zaib, Sammar, Liala, and Meher get sight of the fortune teller they couldn’t resist the temptation. The magical slogan written on the placard allured them, “What does your future hold? The interesting and amusing part is that a parrot is going to unfold your fate. Ironically, he is wiser and more omniscient. In fact, it is against the spirit of Islam and a kind of sherik. On one but only Allah is worthy to be worshipped. Let the parrot unfold. In the mysteries of your life, is there happiness or strive” (109). Rizvi

through these examples makes the reader conscious of the postcolonial magical practices. I argue that most of them have nothing to do with real life, it is a sheer wastage of time, money, and energy. I term it nothing but mere superstitions. But at the same time, I do believe in evil eye, or the pangs of jealousy may break a stone, such things do exist, these are not superstitions or myths because Quran o Sunnah support it. Allaah (SWT) says, “And from the evil of the envier when he envies” [113:5]. At one more place Allah says, “And verily, those who disbelieve would almost make you slip with their eyes (through hatred)” [al-Qalam 68:51]. To reinforce the idea, The Prophet (PBUH) said, “The evil eye enters the man in to the grave and enters the camel into the pot”. (Declared Hasan by Al Albaani in Saheeh al Jaami? 4144] Thus the Quran, Sunnah and reality confirm that and it (evil eye) cannot be denied. What we need is to cultivate humane empathy, love, and harmony. Now I discuss another technique that is defamiliarization.

6.6.3. Defamiliarization

Talking walls is an example of defamiliarization as Shklovsky uses examples from Tolstoy. “The narrator of ‘Kholstomer,’ for example, is a horse, and it is the horse’s point of view (rather than a person’s) that makes the story seem unfamiliar” (Shklovsky 16). Since we find unusual happenings in the form of walls that talk with Zaib and include her into their “wall talk club” based on their mental chemistry and reciprocation of knowledge, each estimates the other, both are reservoirs of knowledge and information (16). Zaib holds a flood of information within the confines of her mind but remains modest, but at times gets irritated and throws tantrums at her siblings. The walls perform multiple functions like pacifying, motivating, and showing her the line of action. This supernatural assistance turns her head a bit, and she presumes as if she may be assigned some great role in the future to play and be raised to the level of a saint-like Joan of Arc (21).

There are a couple of more examples. I emphasize the very description of the automobiles by the old village men is innovative and interestingly they call the cars “roaring jinn inside a tin box with wheels” (74). Similarly, when Zaib had a clear realization of the challenge ahead regarding her marriage and tackling her in-laws, she took bath to cool herself. Rizvi presents the bath as a baptism that infused courage and strength

in her. Rizvi states that “she would emerge whole and unswerving in her determination to disallow anyone from penetrating her soul” (158). In the above-mentioned examples, a familiar idea has been expressed in an unfamiliar way that is called defamiliarization. Storytelling and mythmaking are essential features of postcolonial magical realist texts. I have discussed fables and myths in forthcoming discussion.

6.7 Fables and Myths

Postcolonial magical realist texts (including three of my primary texts) are packed with the rich traditions of storytelling, myth-making, and addressing the socio-political concerns of their time. The chief end of the writers is to reassert and reclaim their own cultural identity which had been under erasure during colonial, and imperial times. The magical realist technique gives them further allowance to incorporate fantastical and mythical elements to subvert dominant discourse, dictatorial regimes other power structures like religion, family, and patriarchy. Moreover, storytelling and mythmaking also help magical postcolonial writers to foreground and interweave the complex and diverse cultural histories that shape postcolonial societies. Storytelling and mythmaking may be used as powerful tools to resist and reclaim their own cultural identity along with subverting dominant narratives and power structures. Stories are told and retold and eventually shape into myths and legends. It not only captures the interest of the reader but also a rich reservoir of knowledge, information, and tradition. Zamora and Faris point out that:

Texts labelled magical realist draw upon cultural systems that are no less ‘real’ than those upon which traditional literary realism draws often non-Western cultural systems that privilege mystery over empiricism, empathy over technology, tradition over innovation.

Their primary narrative investment may be in the myths, legends, rituals — that is in collective (sometimes oral and performative, as well as written) practices that bind communities together. (3)

The myths are employed to “reclaim a space of otherness by appealing to myths of difference” (Camayd-Frexas 49). The novel *TBR* is packed with numerous events and

stories which emerge from indigenous culture. The postcolonial world is appreciated by the Western reader in terms of eccentricity of rationality. The talking walls share different stories of family's deaths, births, and marriages, events of magnanimity, dreams and ideas, visions and missions, secrets of family rivalries, tales of envy, and hatred. The blue room still has hundreds of anecdotes to reveal but Zaib is very cautious of her frequent visits so that she may not be noticed by any of the family members. We have been told through the blue room the saga of her father and uncle Faridullah and his wife Sumar, her uncle Asadullah and her aunt Zainab. Their stories help her appreciate their personalities, behavior, and reactions in different situations. She gets the answers to so many riddles for instance, why his uncle Asad did not marry, and what was the reason for Farid's Chachu's indifference to his wife's infidelities? And why did Zainab Phopho (aunt) have a scar on her face? In the beginning, Rizvi exercises authorial reticence to maintain a sense of elusiveness and mystery. The antinomy gets resolved as the plot progresses and stories are narrated by the talking walls. Now, these stories help her and the implied reader to penetrate the very nature of the characters (17).

At times I get the feel as if I am reading a bildungsroman novel. The novel is written with a feminist agenda. Rizvi wants to teach the reader (especially women) how a daughter-in-law should behave, and how smartly she has covered the dark aspects of her in-laws and talks only of their good aspects. In a way, it is a criticism of the joint family system. To Rizvi it has more demerits than merits, it is no less than a patriarchal institution. It curtails individual's liberty. Zaib felt un-homely and suffocated at Murtaza's and expressed her desire to visit her parents. She was "cordially welcomed" and her parents realized that she looked much older than her age when she departed a year ago. After a couple of days, somehow, she manages to sneak away unnoticed to talk to the talking walls. She is thrilled and so are the walls! The talking walls appreciate and depreciate her simultaneously. First, they grill her that make her cry. Then they make her realize that she has not done justice with Murtaza in making a sweeping statement. Second, she should be more caring and intimate with Murtaza's aunt Ayesha for her wellbeing as she is a wonderful soul, they told her that she had been living in that house a kind of confinement along with the ill-treatment of the family members. Zaib was more fortunate because she had a supportive and adoring husband.

The reader gets into a trance as if communication is taking place in real. It is not only the characters of the text but the reader too feels its spell. This very extraordinary event is presented as ordinary. It may be termed as an example of defamiliarization. Once Zaib has developed a rapport with the walls of the blue room, she harbors high hopes to be raised to the higher level of a saint, on hearing her misgivings they express their displeasure and tell her that it is the result of her pro-active imagination. She complains to them that why they do not tell her the reality, on hearing it, their response was interesting, they exercised their right of authorial reticence by saying, “It is completely our prerogative to give you information or to withhold it as and when we desire” (21). The walls are privileged to enjoy the aerial view of things to have a holistic picture. All you need is to trust us we guarantee you that your interest will be religiously guarded.

Shahi Manzil—a majestic abode of Zaibunnisa and family is a mysterious place. Rizvi compares it to the ‘matriarchal bosom of motherhood.’ People of the town are quite curious and talk strange things about the Shahi Manzil. The one who visits the place, the people of the town curiously investigate them. They get a strong feeling that the one who goes there, empty pocket comes with a heavy purse. There are myths about the family: some were of the view that Asadullah was a celibate and homosexual while others consider him a saint who magically cures dying children. People blame Zainab, paternal aunt of Zaib, a tyrannical and evil woman, on the other hand, some people consider her a caring and loving mother, and both are inseparable. In short, the family was a source of endless paradoxical stories, old dies at the emergence of new stories (5). Moreover, Asad shares anecdotes of pirates, legends, and monsters from Greek mythology. Samar too has the art to capture the interest of the children through storytelling. Apart from that, she teaches them how to make slingshots and bows and arrows, and how to fry potatoes and roast corn on the cob (Rizvi 47).

As stories are the part and parcel of magical postcolonial fiction and *TBR* is no exception. After returning from the hunting expedition, they share their stories and claim sixty-four partridges they had shot, which were served as trophies at dinner (79). Rizvi derives pleasure in sharing the stories with the reader. She refers to the history of perfume, who were the inventors of perfume and in past, it was not worn for sensory pleasure but it

often used for therapeutic and medicinal purposes. And Egyptians extracted it from animals, like musk “which is extracted from a gland in the underbelly of a particular species of deer, the Musq” (111).

6.8 Conclusion

In my analysis, I try to explore magical feminist elements in the text. I further trace everyday examples of Pakistani marvelous realism. Rizvi seems to be well-versed in the techniques of magical realism/feminism and marvelous realism employed by the master writers of the genre like Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Isabel Allende, Laura Esquivel, Toni Morrison, Ben Okri etc. The novel is a social critique on certain institutions like patriarchy, marriage, religion, family, and feudalism for their being exploitative and oppressive. Through the analysis, it is also observed that women of the lower class are treated as a commodity to be abused. She also talks about modern issues like identity and migration. The research critically reads the text through magical feminist postcolonial lens, I have traced out multiply shifting identities of the female characters along with the postcolonial issues of race, class, and identity. In the next chapter I conclude my thesis.

Chapter 7

Conclusion

In this chapter, I conclude my study by going back to my basic research premises, thesis statement, and research questions to vindicate my research claims. After analyzing the selected texts, I found that there is an (a)symmetrical intimacy between magical feminist and postcolonial texts. It is largely symmetrical because the three global south magical feminist postcolonial writers try to energize the minor voices and bring them from margin to center. The boundaries between reality and fantasy are blurred, and my research questions may now be read as affirmative statements after my analysis.

This research attempts to trace the use of magical feminist techniques and postcolonial elements in the selected texts. My analysis demonstrates that the fiction of the three magical feminist women writers attempts to reclaim women's fair representation by raising issues of race, class, gender, identity, sexuality, and subjectivity. This study focuses the overlapping space between magical feminist and postcolonial writers. The postcolonial writers are revolutionary and reactionary, whereas magical writers are apparently compromising, fantastical, and ironic in their approach. What does constitute the liminal space between the two? In order to trace the common grounds and differences between magical feminist and postcolonialist texts, I first tried to locate the selected texts of three women writers, Isabel Allende, Laura Esquivel, and Nafisa Rizvi's fiction, in the magical feminist postcolonial literary tradition. Then, through my literature review, I contextualized my study with the contemporary scholarship and traced my space of intervention by pointing out the gaps in the existing scholarship. Since this study is qualitative in nature, I provided a rationale of using textual analysis and comparative analysis as my research methods for analyzing my primary texts. Following are the findings of my research:

As for my first finding, I have to go back to the formation of the thesis title. As I write in the introductory paragraph of my project in chapter 1, the use of the parenthetical "A" in the title emphasizes that magical feminism and postcolonialism share more

commonalities than the few differences that arise due to gender. Furthermore, the combined role of magical feminist postcolonial texts is to challenge and disrupt established hegemonic structures related to power, patriarchy, agency, autonomy, and control. The analysis of selected texts points to the presence of (a)symmetrical intimacy between magical feminist and postcolonial writers. Postcolonial writers typically adopt an essentialist perspective and often frame their narratives in binary terms. They predominantly employ a mode of writing that challenges established norms and dissenting discourse. In contrast, magical realist writers use an indirect and ironic tone in their work. Their writing is often not overtly political, drawing readers in with fantastical and magical elements. Since the selected texts present both postcolonial and magical feminist elements simultaneously, “(A)Symmetrical” in the title gets vindicated.

My findings are in line with my research questions. My first research question reads: “How do the selected writers embed (a)symmetrical dynamics of magical feminist and postcolonial elements in the selected texts?” Magical realist writers are concerned with the postcolonial issues of race, class, and gender. The issues of race, class, gender, and misrepresentation become quite obvious in the magical feminist postcolonial texts. The portrayal of Native American people in general and women in particular, are not presented in true colors. Negros, especially in *THS*, are misrepresented as sex workers and misfits for other jobs. This notion of racism is relevant to my study as it is the postcolonial reading of the texts. I have also analyzed Latin American texts where identity and sexuality of Arabs and Africans are misrepresented. Pedro Tercero Garcia is more known through the color of his skin than the content of his character. So is the case with other characters too. To Trueba, Pedro Tercero is a ‘cannibal’, a dirty little boy, a little shit, an Indian who is a source of contamination (Allende 173). This study showcases how mixed-race and low-class characters are underrepresented. In Esquivel’s *LWC*, native people are othered in the novel. Especially regarding Nacha, Chenchá, and Gertrudis have been devalued for their race and class. The research also underscores how native people and their culture is derided and othered. Dr. Brown’s grandmother is an example to support my argument. She belongs to the Kikapu Indian tribe and is captured as booty and brought back to live with him. Though he marries her still she is not accepted by his proud Yankee family. This is how the native people and clan and women in particular, are othered and humiliated. In Rizvi’s

TBR, the reader comes across issue of class and identity. The marginalized characters are internally colonized. There is a glaring difference between the worlds of haves and have not. The reader also finds internal colonization of women (Lali, Jamila, Ayesha, Zainab, Shakila) in Rizvi's *TBR*.

For my second finding, I have tried to find answer to my second research question through my analysis. My second question reads: "In what ways has magical feminism been used as a creative technique in the selected texts?" The analysis of the texts provides sufficient evidence as to how magical feminism has been used as a creative technique. Patricia Hart coins the term magical feminism. It is the application of magical realism on femino-centric texts. The texts of Allende, Esquivel and Rizvi are packed with magical realist techniques. They used them creatively to make their texts magical feminist. They have employed techniques of clairvoyance, telepathy, mind reading, prognostication, supernaturalization, narrative magic, hybridity, defamiliarization, hyperbole, surrealism, and grotesque in their writings. I have discussed these magical realist techniques across my thesis and particularly in analysis chapters. Here I cite few examples of the above-mentioned techniques from my analysis chapters.

In my analysis, I have traced some of the magical techniques in Allende's *THS*. Clara's family considered her supernatural powers as commonplace. Her telekinetic ability to move the saltcellar and furniture across the room and forecast catastrophe is nothing but an innate flair. As Hart counts prophecy in the clairvoyance category (41). The shrinking episode of Esteban Trueba is an example of narrative magic. Similarly, defamiliarization is an imaginative process of narrative magic that involves the innovation of making familiar things defamiliarized. Zaib can read the aura of characters. Zaib has read the minds of the two boys of Jalal, who fix their eyes on Mehar and Laila as she has read the aura of Jalal whose hands are red with blood. The study finds that the three magical feminist postcolonial writers employ the grotesque in their writings. It generates laughter and disgust in the heart and mind of the reader simultaneously. On Rosaura wedding, the bite of the wedding cake embitters her. She feels strong nausea and cannot control the vomit. Being the bride, it is expected from her to remain composed. Esquivel states, "She was swept away in a raging rotting river several yards; then she could not hold back anymore, and she spewed out great

noisy mouthful of vomit, like an erupting volcano, right before Pedro's horrified eyes" (40).

Here is an example of surrealism. In surrealism strange happenings are more cerebral than the real. Moreover, it might be the expression of Murtaza's repressed desires. In Rizvi's *TBR*, he introduces (Qadaer, Auj, Mauj, Bhavra, Marghuli, and Bonna) to Zaib as if they are standing on the theatrical stage. While he is talking to them, he looks a bit dreamy and wistful. The whole event is described in a matter-of-fact narrative. Their names sound queer: Qadaver, (tall) touching the sky, Auj, and Mauj, the androgynous who speak in chorus, Bhavra, the scarab beetle who whispers ridiculous but amusing stories. Rizvi states, "He hugged them one by one: Murguli, Qadaver, Auj and Mauj and Bonna were gathered there and Bhavra came to sit caressing him with his pincers. They chatted noisily and Murtaza felt young and joyful again" (350).

The example of mythic realism in Esquivel's *LWC* is cited to throw light on the Kikapu culture which is presented as non-scientific and traditional along with the Western culture that is scientific and modern. 'The Kikapu' rushed and placed her healing hands on his wounds, the bleeding stopped. It mesmerized everyone and let her stay with her sick father-in-law to cure him completely through herbs, singing melodious songs, burning of the copal, and incense.

This research finds answer to the first and second questions by finding that both postcolonial and magical texts blend dreams, apparitions, fairy tales, and myths with the everyday reality of their local cultures, often termed as marvelous realism. Here is an example of marvelous realism: Zaib's marriage causes great anxiety, especially among the younger generation, as her father not seek her consent, and the decision is made hastily. Rizvi states, "The gardener came to Qurut-ul-ain anxiously claiming that the shrubs and trees were doggedly refusing to get on the tasks of spring and no new sprouts had been seen, although there were significant signs of growth in every other house or haveli in the vicinity" (141). She reassures him to be patient, as the situation will improve after Zaib's wedding. This illustrates that the well-being of humans and plants are interconnected, blurring the lines between reality and fantasy, a shared characteristic of magical realism

and postcolonial marvelous myth.

My third finding is based on answering the third research question, which reads: “How do magical feminism and postcolonialism factor in mapping out multiply shifting identities of the female protagonists in the selected novels?” The three women writers, Isabel Allende, Laura Esquivel, and Nafisa Rizvi, show that their protagonists respectively go through a transformation of multiply shifting identities from an object position to an agentive subject position. In the beginning, they remain under patriarchal oppression. I have traced their object positions. For instance, in Rizvi’s *TBR*, Zaib’s agency is curtailed. Her father does not take her consent regarding marriage and decides that she is going to marry after four months.

In Allende’s *THS*, Trueba becomes so obsessive that he wants complete control over Clara’s body and soul. Blanca’s affair with Padero infuriates Estaban Trueba. Trueba’s rage remains unabated, and he shows his anger by kicking the furniture, whipping the walls, and hurling abuses of all kinds. He raises serious questions about Clara being a complete failure regarding Blanca’s character building. He accuses Blanca to have no moral scruples. And that she has no sense of race and class. She behaves like a bohemian (Allende 223). Alba, also falls victim to custodial violence/rape at the hands of Trueba Garcia. “A brutal slap knocked her [Alba] to the floor. Violent hands lifted her to feet.” (452). The female protagonists of the three novels (Clara, Blanca, Alba, Tita, Gertrudis, and Zaib) resist patriarchy and challenge oppressive socio-cultural systems that silence them. They exert their identity and agency in their own capacity.

Tita gets herself liberated from the cruel clutches of patriarchy. She tells Mama Elena categorically, “I know who I am! A person who has a perfect right to live her life as she pleases. Once and for all, leave me alone; I won’t put up with you! I hate you; I have always hated you!” (199). Tita cannot bear her overbearing role anymore. She has reached the level of self-actualization and has gained her true identity and agency. Similarly, Gertrudis rebels against patriarchy, joins the Army, and rises to the position of a General in the Army. Zaib’s migration from Shahi Manzal to Qasr-e-Zaib is a bold step to gain identity and agency. Zaib, being a pragmatic and forward-looking woman, has a strong

realization that youngsters would not be able to grow to their full potential under the deep and dark shadows of patriarchy.

The findings reveal several parallels among the three novels. They can be compared in terms of their treatment of political history. Isabel Allende provides a detailed account of political turmoil in Chile, dedicating two chapters (thirteen and fourteen) exclusively to the subject. For details, please see my discussion on pages. 126-28. Laura Esquivel, on the other hand, passingly alludes to the Mexican revolution, while Nafisa Rizvi's *TBR* focuses more on sociocultural and bildungsroman elements. Furthermore, storytelling and myth-making serve as common elements in magical feminist postcolonial fiction. The thread of supernaturalization, another common denominator, is found in all three texts. The writers have embedded this feature as part of the magical real.

To vindicate my assumptions on the selected texts, I employed the lenses of multiple theorists, like Patricia Hart, Stephen Slemon, and Wendy B. Faris, respectively. I find that the deployment of their theoretical positions has sufficiently supported my argument throughout my study. The theoretical lens of Patricia Hart and her definition of magical feminism offered me valuable support while I was doing my research. From a feminist perspective, Hart's concept of magical feminism enriched my analysis of the three texts. Stephen Slemon's concept of "Magical Realism as Post-Colonial Discourse" aligned with Hart's perspective and assisted in analyzing the selected texts. It provided a means to read magical realist texts as postcolonial discourse. The examination of the texts shows that the three women writers empower the marginalized women characters in order to give them a voice and bring them to the 'center' where their voices could be heard. In addition, Wendy B. Faris' definitions helped me read my selected texts both as feminist postcolonial and magical realist texts. Her definitions of magical realism contributed to understanding how magical elements function in my primary texts. I also used pertinent ideas from feminist and postcolonial magical realist critics (as secondary sources) that proved useful.

My findings also support my use of textual and comparative analysis as research methods to analyze the three primary texts. These methods have assisted me in interpreting the texts as cultural artifacts. Catherine Belsey's essay, "Textual Analysis as a Research

Method,” proved helpful for the analysis of the primary texts. Textual analysis has helped me nuance the existing scholarship. I also employed Celena Kusch’s idea of comparative analysis from her book *Literary Analysis: the basics* to analyze my texts as a research method. It helped me compare texts across cultures and diverse themes. Furthermore, this method assisted me in approaching translations, as two of my Latin American texts are translated works. The research vindicates that both the colonized people and women, in particular, are Othered for their being voiceless, and subordinate positions.

As I have mentioned above, the theoretical framework invoked for analyzing my primary texts support my argument. The three selected writers blend magical realist techniques in their feminist postcolonial narratives. This research addresses my thesis statement and responds to the controlling research questions and, thus, it supports my claim that there is an (a)symmetrical intimacy between magical feminist and postcolonial texts. These texts identify realist texts’ gaps, absences, and silences through fables, myths, and allegories.

This study contributes to the production of knowledge in that hardly any other texts have been analyzed through the theoretical lenses of Patricia Hart, Stephen Slemon, and Wendy B. Faris, simultaneously. Secondly, to the best of my understanding, I have not come across any other research on *TBR*, along with the two other Latin American texts, *THS* and *LWC*. It lends originality to this research project. Another contribution of this study is its relevance to the ground realities of Pakistan. This research has tried to bring Pakistani culture and a relatively new South Asian Pakistani writer into the limelight of Western academia. Moreover, it has also attempted to introduce the two celebrated Latin American writers to the Pakistani readers in the magical feminist and postcolonial context.

7.1 Recommendations for Future Research

Though there is a long list of South Asian writers who write in the magical realist vein, few Pakistani writers’ texts are read by invoking a magical feminist lens. In this sense, this research opens avenues for other researchers. The future researchers may explore, among others, Zulifqar Ghose’s *Figures of Enchantment* and *The Triple Mirror of the Self* as to how fantasy and realism blend in these texts. Muhammad Hanif’s *Our Lady of*

Alice Bhatti may be good fare for a feminist postcolonial reading. Mohsin Hamid's *Exit West* may be an intriguing read if it is read by deploying a magical/postmodernist theoretical support based on Wendy B. Faris' essay "Scheherazade's Children: Magical Realism and Postmodern Fiction". Bapsi Sidhwa's *Cracking India* may be an interesting read through the lenses of historiographic metafiction and magical realism.

On the other hand, there is a long list of Indian writers who write in a magical realist style. My research may provide a lead for the magical postcolonial feminist investigation. As her *The God of Small Things* has already been explored from the magical realist and feminist perspectives, Arundathi Roy's *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* invites critical attention from postmodernist, postcolonial and magical feminist angles. My research may also be used as a starting point for magical feminist and postcolonial reading of Shubhangi Swarup's *Latitudes of Longing*. Raj Kamal Jha's *The City and the Sea* may be read as a magical feminist postcolonial text. The new researcher may explore themes of violence of toxic masculinity. Megha Rao's *Music to Flame Lilies* invites readers to engage with its magical realism as a literary device and as a means to explore larger societal issues. This novel may make a good case study for those interested in magical feminism and postcolonialism.

Furthermore, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's work *Purple Hibiscus* is a novel that opens critical avenues for the researcher to study it through a postcolonial feminist/ eco-feminist lens. The text also deals with the themes of migration, patriarchy, women going through multiply shifting identities from an object to an agentive subject, cultural negotiation, diaspora, globalization, and identity. Her other novel, *Half of a Yellow Sun*, may be read through a postcolonial and postmodern lens. The novel explores themes of love, betrayal, political upheaval, and the impact of war on personal and national identity. *The Hungry Tide* by Amitav Ghosh may be interpreted through eco-critical and postcolonial perspectives. Although it is not categorically classified as a magical realist text, the novel embraces mythical and fantastical elements, particularly through Sundarbans folklore and the almost mythical quality of the landscape. The mythical and the fantastical elements in this text may, however, tempt the researcher to do a magical realist engagement with it.

There are a few more magical feminist postcolonial texts that may draw the attention of future researchers. Ana Castillo's *Watercolor Women Opaque Men: A Novel in Verse* is a good example of marvelous realism, as it blends cultural mythology with contemporary Chicana experiences, the structure of verse novels, and the representation of gender and identity in literature. The new researcher may also explore themes of love, sexual orientation, and cultural identity in this postcolonial feminist text.

Short stories are another attractive genre for magical feminist and postcolonial readings. Marie-Helene Bertino's short-story collection *Safe as Houses* is a magical realist text. The potential researcher may explore how the writer blends myth and reality. It further provides material for critical inquiry into identity, home, and loss. In Daisy Johnson's *Fen*, stories of women, researchers may explore themes of gender, sexuality, and landscape, particularly focusing on the English Fenlands as a space where the boundaries between human and non-human, natural and supernatural, are blurred. The text may be read through magical feminist postcolonial lenses. Another useful work for future research is *The Stories of Eva Luna* by Isabel Allende. It may be read through magical feminist postcolonial lenses. The new researchers may explore the intersections of gender, power, and storytelling, exploring how narrative forms contribute to constructing identity and resistance against oppression.

To summarize, writers from different geographical and cultural backgrounds may be compared and contrasted to open up new avenues for research. Though Latin American writers have recently enjoyed a leading position in practicing magical realism, it is now popular across world literature. The novels I have analyzed have some cultural and thematic commonalities. Apart from being postcolonial, these texts are rather multi-ethnic and multi-narrational, like magical realism is itself hybridized and synthesized. The future researchers may deploy diverse magical realist/feminist and postcolonial perspectives in order to nuance and problematize my research, so that conversation continues in this domain of knowledge and new grounds are broken in research. In this sense, my research productively contributes to the existing scholarship in magical realist and postcolonial studies and simultaneously provides leads for future research.

WORKS CITED

- Abarca, Meredith E. "Los Chilaquiles de mi 'ama': The Language of Everyday Cooking." *In Pilaf Pozole, and Pad Thai. American Women and Ethnic Food*, ed. Sherrie A. Inness. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2001.
- Adams, Ricci-James. "Magical Feminism: The Paradoxical Pain in Fefu and her Friends by Maria Irene Fornes and The Eisteddfod. Wayback Machine *Anatomy and Poetics*. Issue Six, Winter 2005.
- Agarwal, Bina. "Positioning the western feminist agenda: a comment." *Indian Journal of Gender Studies* 1.2 (1994): 249-255.
- Ahmad, Aijaz. "The politics of literary postcoloniality." *Race & Class* 36.3 (1995): 1-20.
- Alazraki, Jaime. "Para Una Revalidación Del Concepto Realismo Mágico En La Literatura Hispanoamericana." *Homenaje a Andrés Iduarte* (1976): 9-21.
- Alexis, Jacques Stephen. "Lettre à mes amis peintres." *Reflets d'Haiti* January 21, 1956.
- Allende Isabel. "Introduction." *Feminism in Literature: A Gale Critical Companion*. 2019. *Encyclopedia.com*. 10th September 2019.
- Allende, Isabel. *Afrodita: Cuentos, recetas y otros afrodisíacos/Aphrodite: A Memoir of the Senses: Cuentos, recetas y otros afrodisíacos*. Vintage Espanol, 2019.
- Allende, Isabel. "The House of the Spirits." *Translated by Magda Bogin. London: Black Swan* (1986).
- American Heritage Dictionary*, 1976 ed., s.v. "clairvoyance." *American Heritage Dictionary*. "Expressionism" 2nd College Ed. 1991.
- Amos, Valerie, and Pratibha Parmar. "Challenging imperial feminism." *Feminist review* 17.1 (1984): 3-19.
- Angulo, Maria-Elena. *Magic Realism: Social Context and Discourse*. Garland Publishing, Inc. New York and London 1995.
- Anthony, Appiah. 'Is the Post- in Postmodernism and the post- in Post-colonial?' *Critical Inquiry*, 17, winter 1991, p. 348.
- Ardener, Edwin. "Belief and the Problem of Women and the 'Problem' revisited." *Feminist Anthropology* (1975).

- Arias, Salvador. *Recopilación De Textos Sobre Alejo Carpentier*. La Habana: Casa de las Américas, 1977.
- Ashcroft, B., Griffiths, G., & Tiffin, H. *Key concepts in post-colonial studies*. London and New York, NY: Routledge. (2004).
- Ashcroft, Bill, Griffiths and Tiffin Helen (eds.), *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literature*, London: Rutledge, 1989, p.2.
- _____. *Key concepts in post-colonial studies*. London and New York, NY: Routledge. (2004). Ashcroft, B., Griffiths, G., & Tiffin, H. (Eds.). *The Post-colonial studies reader* (1st. ed.). London and New York, NY: Routledge. (1995).
- _____. "Modernity's first born: Latin America and postcolonial transformation." *ARIEL: A Review of International English Literature* 29.2 (1998).
- Ashcroft, William D. "Intersecting marginalities: post-colonialism and feminism." *Kunapipi* 11.2 (1989): 6.
- Bahri, Deepika. "Feminism in/and Postcolonialism." *The Cambridge companion to postcolonial literary studies* (2004): 199-220.
- Balao, Manuel Suzzarini. "The historical time in Los Pasos Perdidos, by Alejo Carpentier." *ABRA Magazine* 8.9 (1988): 155-164.
- Barthes, Roland. "The death of the author." (1977). p. 147.
- Barrios de Chungara, D. *Let Me Speak: Testimony of Domatila, a Woman of the Bolivian Mines*, translated by Victoria Ortiz, London: Monthly Review Press. 1977.
- Bautista, Gloria. "El Realismo Mágico En La Casa De Los Espíritus." *Discurso literario: Revista de temas hispánicos (Paraguay)* 6 (1989): 299-310.
- Beauvoir, Simone de. *The Second Sex*. (New York: Vintage Books, 1973).
- Beechey, Veronica. "Some notes on female wage labour in capitalist production." *Capital & Class* 1.3 (1977): 45-66.
- Belsey, C. Textual analysis as a research method. In Griffin, G. (Ed.), *Research methods for English studies*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press (2005). pp. 157-174.
- Benet. *Readers Encyclopedia*, 4th ed. 1996.
- Bennett, Caroline. "The Other and the Other-Worldly: The Function of Magic in Isabel Allende's La Casa De Los Espiritus." *Bulletin of Hispanic studies* 75 3 (1998):

357-66.

- Benyei, Tama's. Rereading "magic realism." *Hungarian Journal of English and American Studies (HJEAS)*, Vol. 3, No. 1, THEORY ISSUE (1997), pp. 149-179.
- Bhabha, Homi K., ed. *Nation and narration*. Routledge: 2013.
- _____. *Location of culture*. USA and Canada: Routledge. (1994).
- _____. Hybridity: Cultural Diversity and Cultural Differences. In Ashcroft, B., Griffiths, G., & Tiffin, H. (Eds.), *The post-colonial studies reader* (pp. 206-209). London and New York: Routledge. (1988).
- Boehmer, Elleke. *Colonial and Postcolonial Literature: Migrant Metaphors*, Oxford: Oxford University Press. 1995.
- Booker, M. Keith. *A Practical Introduction to Literary Theory and Criticism*. New York: Longman. 1996.
- Booth, Wayne. *The Rhetoric of Fiction*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1961.
- Boserup, Ester. *Women's Role in Economic Development*. New York: St. Martin's Press; London: Allen and Unwin. 1970.
- Bowers, Maggie. *Magic(al) Realism*, New York: Routledge; 2004.
- Bowden, Peta, and Jane Mummery. *Understanding feminism*. Routledge, 2014.
- Brah, A. "Question of Difference and International Feminism," in J. Aaron and S. Walby, eds., *Out of the Margins: Women's Studies in Nineties*. London, Falmer Press, 1991. 168-76.
- Braudel, Fernand. *On History*. University of Chicago Press, 1982.
- Brooke-Rose, Christine. *A Rhetoric of the Unreal: Studies in Narrative and Structure, Especially of the Fantastic*. CUP Archive, 1983.
- Brown, Beverly. "Displacing the Difference -----Review, *Nature, Culture and Gender*." m/f 8: 79-89. 1983.
- Brownmiller, Susan. *Against Our Will: men, women and rape* (Harmondsworth: Penguin). 1976.
- Brunton, Rosanne D. *Feminine discourses in the fantastic: A reading of selected inter-American writers*. The Pennsylvania State University, 1990.
- Camayd-Freixas, Erik. *Realismo Mágico Y Primitivismo: Relecturas De Carpentier, Asturias, Rulfo Y García Márquez*. University Press of Amer, 1998. 318.

- _____. *Realismo magico y primitivismo en la novela hispanoamericana de Alejo Carpentier, Miguel Angel Asturias, Juan Rulfo y Gabriel Garcia Marquez*. MD: University Press of America, 1998.
- Carby, Hazel V. "White woman listen! Black feminism and the boundaries of sisterhood." *Empire strikes back*. Routledge, 2004. 211-234.
- Carpentier, Alejo, et al. "Magical Realism: Theory, History, Community." (1995).
- _____. "Problemática de la actual novela latinoamericana." *Tientosy diferencias*. Mexico: UNAM, 1964. 5-46.
- _____. "The Kingdom of This World. 1949." *Trans. Harriet De Onís. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux* (1957).
- _____. "El reino de este mundo" (Caracas: Festival del Libro Popular Venezolano, 1954).
- _____. 'On the Marvelous Real in America', trans. Tanya Huntington and Lois Parkinson Zamora, in Lois Parkinson Zamora and Windy B. Faris (eds) *Magical Realism: Theory, History, Community*, Durham, NC London: Duke University Press, PP. 75-88, [1949] (1995^a).
- Carby, H. "White woman listen! Black feminism and the boundaries of sisterhood" in *The Empire Strikes Back: Race and Racism in 70s Britain*, Centre for Contemporary Cultural
- Cassirer, Ernst. *Language and Myth*. Trans. Susanne K. Langer. New York: Dover, n.d
Studies, University of Birmingham, London: Hutchinson. (1982).
- Castillo, Debra, and Maria Socorro Tabuenca Cordoba. *Border Women. Writing from La Frontera*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002.
- Cervantes, Miguel de Saavedra. *Don Quixote de la Mancha*, trans. Charles Jarvis, ed. E.C. Riley, World Classics Series, Oxford University Press, 1992.
- Césaire, Aimé. *Discourse on colonialism*. NYU Press, Monthly Review Press, 1972.
- Chambers, Claire, and Susan Watkins. "Postcolonial feminism?" *The Journal of Commonwealth Literature* 47.3 (2012): 297-301.
- Chiampi, Irlemar. "El Realismo Maravilloso Forma E Ideología En La Novela Hispanoamericana." (1983).
- Chanady, Amaryll. "Magic Realism Revisited: The Deconstruction of Antinomies."

- Canadian Review of Comparative Literature*, 2003, pp. 428-444.
- _____. *Magical Realism and the fantastic: Resolved Versus Unresolved Antinomy*, New York: Garland, 1985.
- _____. "The Territorialization of the Imaginary in Latin America: Self-Affirmation and Resistance to Metropolitan Paradigm." *Magical realism: Theory, history, community*, edited by Zamora, Lois Parkinson, and Wendy B. Faris, 1995, pp. 125-144.
- Chanda, Ipshita. "Feminist Theory in Perspective." *A companion to postcolonial studies*. Edited by Schwarz, Henry, and Sangeeta Ray, Blackwell Publishings, 2005. 486-507.
- Chiampi, Irlemar. *El Realismo Maravilloso Forma E Ideología En la Novela Hispanoamericana*. Trans. (from Portuguese) by Agustin Martiniez and Margara Russotto. Caracas: Monte Avila, 1983.
- Childs, Peter, and Williams, Patrick. *An Introduction to Post-Colonial Theory*. Pearson Education, 1997.
- Cixous, Helene. "Sorties: Out and Out: Attacks/Ways out/Forays." *The logic of the gift: Toward an ethic of generosity* (1997): 148-73.
- _____. "Stories" (from *la Jeune Née*), in *New French Feminisms*, ed. Elaine Marks and Isebel de Courtivron (Brighton: Harvester), 1981. pp. 90-8.
- Cixous, Helene. The Laugh of Medusa. *Signs*, Vol. 1, No. 4. (Summer 1976), pp. 875-893. <http://www.jstor.org> 15 15:35:59 2007.
- _____. *"Coming to Writing" and Other Essays*. Ed. Deborah Jenson. Trans. Sarah Cornell, et al. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991.
- Cohn, Deborah N. *History and Memory in the Two Souths: Recent Southern and Spanish American Fiction*. Vanderbilt University Press, 1999.
- Colás, Santiago. "Of Creole Symptoms, Cuban Fantasies, and Other Latin American Postcolonial Ideologies." *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America* (1995): 382- 396.
- Cooper, Brenda. *Magical realism in West African fiction: Seeing with the Third Eye*. New York: Routledge, 2012.
- Cornell, Drucilla. "Beyond Accommodation: Ethical Feminism, Deconstruction, and the

- Law.” (1991).
- Coulthard, R. G. *Race and Colour in Caribbean Literature*. London, Oxford University Press, 1962.
- Cowie, Elizabeth. “Women as Sign.” m/f 1: 49-63. 1978.
- Costa Lima, Luiz. *Control of the Imaginary: Reason and Imagination in Modern Times*. Trans. Ronald W. Sousa. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988.
- Coulthard, R. G. *Race and Colour in Caribbean Literature*. London, Oxford University Press, 1962.
- Crawford, Lawrence. "Viktor Shlovskij: "Différance" in Defamiliarization." *Comparative Literature* 36 (1984): 209.
- Crawford, Mary, and Rhoda Unger. *Women and Gender: A Feminist Psychology*. McGraw-Hill, 2004.
- Crenshaw, Kimberle. “Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color” (1994). (2005).
- Cutrufelli, Maria Rosa. *Women of Africa: Roots of oppression*. Vol. 3. London: Zed Press; Totowa, NJ, USA: US distributor, Biblio Distribution Center, 1983.
- Daly, Mary. *Gyn/Ecology: the metaethics of radical feminism* (London: Women's Press). 1978.
- Danow, David. *The spirit of carnival: Magical realism and the grotesque*. University Press of Kentucky, 2014.
- Darrieussecq, Marie. *Pig Tales*. 1996 (in French). Translated by Linda Coverdale. New York: New Press, 1997.
- Dash, J. Michael. “Marvelous Realism——the Way Out of Negritude”, *Caribbean Studies*, 13, 4 (January): 1974, pp. 57-70
- Davies, Catherine. "Fernando Ortiz's Transculturation: The Postcolonial Intellectual and the Politics of Cultural Representation." *Postcolonial perspectives on the cultures of Latin America and Lusophone Africa* (2000): 141-68.
- Davies, Lloyd. *Isabel Allende, La Casa De Los Espíritus*. Grant & Cutler, 2000.
- Davis, Y. Angela. *Women, Race and Class*. New York: Vintage Books, A Division of Random House, 1981.
- De Alva, J. Jorge Klor, and J. Jorge. "The Postcolonization of the (Latin) American

Experience, A Reconsideration of "Colonialism", "Postcolonialism" and "Mestizaje". *After colonialism: Imperial histories and postcolonial displacements* (1995): 241-275.

_____. "Colonialism and postcolonialism as (Latin) American mirages." *Colonial Latin American Review* 1.1-2 (1992): 3-23.

Dean, Jonathan. "Who's afraid of third wave feminism? On the uses of the 'third wave' in British feminist politics." *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 11.3 (2009): 334-352.

Deardon, Ann. *Arab Women*. ed., London: Minority Rights Group Report no. 27. 1975.

Delbaere-Grant, Jeanne. "Psychic Realism, Mythic Realism, Grotesque Realism: Variations on Magic Realism in Contemporary Literature in English." *Magical realism: Theory, history, community*, edited by Zamora, Lois Parkinson, and Wendy B. Faris, 1995, pp. 249-263.

_____. *Psychic realism, mythic realism, grotesque realism: Variations on magic realism in contemporary literature in English*. Duke University Press, 1995.

_____. "Magic realism: The energy of the margins", in Theo D'Haen and Hans Bertans (eds.) *Postmodern Fiction in Canada*, Amsterdam: Rodopi. 1992.

Deleuze, Giles, and Guattari, Felix. *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. New York: Viking, 1977.

Delphy, Christine. *Close to Home: a materialist analysis of women's oppression* (London: Hutchinson). 1984.

DeSalvo, Louise A. *Writing as a Way of Healing: How Telling Our Stories Transforms Our Lives*. Beacon Press, 2000.

Derrida, Jacques. "Le Parergon." *La Verte' en Peinture*. Paris: Flammarion, 1978.

_____. *Of Grammatology*. Baltimore. Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974.

_____. *Speech and phenomena, and other essays on Husserl's theory of signs*. Northwestern University Press, 1973. pp. 129-60.

De Zepetnek, Steven Tötösy. *Comparative literature: theory, method, application*. Vol. 18. Rodopi, 1998.

Dirlik, Arif. "The Postcolonial Aura: Third World Criticism in the Age of Global Capitalism", *Critical Inquiry*, 20, Winter 1994, p. 329.

- Dombroski, Robert. "The Rise and Fall of Fascism", in Peter Brand and Lino Pertile (eds) *The Cambridge History of Italian Literature*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.
- Doris, Meyer. "Introduction. *Lives on the Line.*": 1-11.
- Duerr, Hans Peter. "Dreamtime Concerning the Boundary between Wilderness and Civilization." (1985).
- Dupuis, Michel, Albert Mingelgrun, and Jean Weisgerber. "Pour une poétique du réalisme magique." *Le réalisme magique: Roman. Peinture et cinema*, edited by Jean Weigerbet. 24. Brussels: Le Centre des Avant-gardes littéraires de l'Université de Bruxelles (1987).
- Durix, Jean-Pierre. *Mimesis, Genres and Post-Colonial Discourse: Deconstructing Magical Realism*. London: Macmillan, 1998.
- Eagleton, Terry. *Literary theory: an introduction*. (1996).
- Echevarria, Roberto Gonzalez. *Alejo Carpentier: The Pilgrim at home*, Ithaca, NY and London: Cornell University Press, 1974.
- _____. "Isla a su vuelo fugitiva: Carpentier y el realismo mágico." *Revista iberoamericana* 86 (1974): 9-63.
- Ehrenreich, Barbara and English, Deidre. *For Her Own Good: 150 Years of the experts' advice to women* (London: Pluto). 1979.
- Eliot George, *Adam Bede*. (New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1997).
- Emmons, Carey Ellen. *The mystical space of Mexican feminism within magic realism in the works of Laura Esquivel*. Utah State University, 2003.
- Enloe, Cynthia. *Bananas, beaches and bases: Making feminist sense of international politics*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989.
- Escaja, Tina. 2000. "Reescribiendo a Penelope: Mujeres e Identidad Mexicana en Como agua para chocolate." *Revista Iberoamericana* 66.192 (Julio-Septiembre): 571-86.
- Esquivel, Laura. *Like Water for Chocolate*. Translated by Carol Christenson and Thomas Christensen University of Texas Press, 1998.
- Etersen, K. Holst. "First things first: Problems of a feminist approach to African literature." *Kunapipi* 6(3), 1984.

- Etxebarria, Lucia, and Nunez Puente, Sonia. *En brazos de la mujer fetiche*. Barcelona: Destino, 2002.
- Evans, Mari (ed). *Black Women Writers: Arguments and Interviews*, London: Pluto, 1985.
- Evans-Pritchard, Edward E. *Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic among the Azande*. Vol. 12: Oxford London, 1937.
- _____. *Witchcraft, Oracles, and Magic among the Azande*. Oxford: OUP, 1950.
- Fanon, Frantz. *Black Skin, White Masks*. Translated by Charles Lam Markmann. New York: Grove Press, 1968.
- Faris, Wendy B. *Ordinary Enchantments: Magical Realism and Remystification of Narrative*. Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 2004.
- Faris, Wendy B. and Zomara, Lois Parkinson, Introduction to *Magical Realism: Theory, History, Community*, 1997. PP. 3-4.
- Felski, R. and Friedman, S. S. (eds.) (2013) *Comparison: Theories, Approaches, Uses*, Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Fernández-Levin, Rosa. "Ritual And" Sacred Space" In Laura Esquivel's "Like Water For Chocolate"." *Confluencia* 12.1 (1996): 106-120.
- Firestone, Shulamith, *The Dialectic of Sex: the case of feminist revolution* (New York: Morrow). 1974.
- Fisher, Jo. "Out of the Shadows: Women." *Resistance and Politics in South America*, London: Latin America Bureau. (1993).
- Fish, Stanley Eugene. *Is there a text in this class?: The authority of interpretive communities*. Harvard University Press, 1980.
- Flores, Angel. 'Magical Realism' in Spanish American Fiction', in Lois Parkinson Zamora and Windy Faris (eds) *Magical Realism: Theory, History, Community*, Durham, NC and London: Duke University Press, PP. 109-17, [1955] (19995).
- _____. *El realismo magico en la cuento hispanoamericano*. Tlahuapan, Mexico: Premia, 1985.
- _____. "Magical Realism in Spanish American Fiction." *Hispania* 38 2 (1955): 187-92.

- Foreman, P Gabrielle. "Past-on Stories: History and the Magically Real, Morrison and Allende on Call." *Feminist Studies* 18 2 (1992): 369-88.
- Fowlie, Wallace. *Age of Surrealism*. Bloomington and London: Indiana University Press, 1960.
- Franco, Jean. *An Introduction to Spanish-American Literature*. Cambridge University Press, 1994.
- Frank, Andre Gunder. *Capitalism and underdevelopment in Latin America*. Vol. 93. NYU Press, Monthly Review Press. 1969.
- Frazer, J. George. *The Golden Bough*, 1890; reprint, New York: Macmillan, 1945.
- Freixas, Erik. "Theories of Magical Realism." *Critical Insights Magical Realism*, Edited by Ignacio Lo'pez-Calvo, Salem Press, a division of EBSCO Information Services, Incorporated, Massachusetts, 2014, pp. 3-17.
- Frucht, Abby. *Licorice. Saint Paul, Minn.:* . Reprint, New York: Grove,: Graywolf Press, 1999., 1993.
- Gandhi, R. *Revenge reconciliation: Understanding South Asian history*. New Delhi, India: Penguin Group. (1999).
- Gans, H. J. (2007). Ethnic and racial identity. In M. C. Waters, R. Ueda (Eds.), *The new Americans: A guide to immigration since 1965*. (pp. 98–109). Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Garcia, Marquez, Gabriel. "The Solitude of Latin America," Nobel Lecture, 1982, translated by Marina Castaneda, in *Gabriel Garcia Marquez and the power of fiction*, ed. Julio Ortega (Austin: Univ. of Texas Press, 1988), pp. 88-89. See also "Fantasia y creacion artistica en America Latina y el Caribe". *Texto Critico* 14 (1979): 3-8.
- _____. "Fantasia y creacion artistica en America Latina y el Caribe." *Texto critico* 14 (1979): 3-8.
- Gelles, Richard J. *The Violent Home* (Beverly Hills, Calif.: Sage).
- Gilbert Sandra M. and Guber, Susan. *The Madwoman in the Attic. The Women Writer and the Nineteenth Century Literary Imagination*. New Heaven: Yale University Press. 1979.
- Gilman, Charlotte Perkins. *Women and Economics: a study of the economic relation*

- between men and women as a factor in social evolution* (New York: Harper Torchbooks). 1966.
- Gilman, Sander L. "Black bodies, white bodies: Toward an iconography of female sexuality in late nineteenth-century art, medicine, and literature" in H. L. Gates, Jr (ed.), *Race, Writing and Difference*, Chicago University Press, (1985a), pp. 223-261.
- Glenn, Kathleen. M. "Postmodern Parody and Culinary-Narrative Art in *Como agua para chocolate*." *Chasqui* 23.2: 1994. 39-47.
- Goodison, Lorna. Quoted in Carole Boyce Davis, *Black Women, Writing and Identity: Migration of the Subject*, London: Routledge, 1990, p. 166.
- Gordon, Linda. *Women's Body Women's Right* (New York; Penguin). 1977.
 _____. "The struggle for reproductive freedom", in *Capitalist Patriarchy*, ed. Zillah R. Eisenstein (New York: Monthly Review Press). 1979.
- Griffin, Gabriele. *Research Methods for English Studies*. Edinburgh University Press, 2013.
- Grosso, Alfonso. *Los espanoles y el "Boom"*, ed. Fernando Tola de Habich (Caracas: Tiempo Nuevo, 1971.)
- Grosz, Elizabeth A, and Elizabeth Grosz. *Volatile Bodies: Toward a Corporeal Feminism*. Indiana University Press, 1994.
- Guenther, Irene. *Magic Realism, New objectivity, and the arts during the Weimar Republic*. Duke University Press, 1995. 33-73.
- Harris, Wilson. *The Womb of Space* (Westport, Conn: Greenwood, 1983), pp. 69-70.
- Hart, Patricia. *Narrative Magic in the Fiction of Isabel Allende*. Associated University Press, 1989.
- Hartmann, Heidi. "The family as the locus of gender, class and political struggle: the example of housework", *Signs*, 6, 3, pp. 366-94.
- Hawthorne, Nathaniel. *The Birthmark: 1843*. Infomotions, Incorporated, 1843.
 _____. *Speculum of the Other Woman*. Cornell University Press, 1984.
- Hayden, Dolores. *The Grand Domestic Revolution: a history of feminist design for American homes, neighborhoods, and critics* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press). 1981.

- Hegerfeldt, Anne. C. *Lies that Tell the Truth: Magical Realism seen through Contemporary Fiction from Britain*. Amsterdam: Rodopi. 2005.
- Heidegger, Martin. *Being And Time*, London (1962).
- Hite, Shere. *The Hite report: A nationwide study of female sexuality*. London: Corge, 1981. Hollington, Michael. *Günter Grass: the writer in a pluralist society*. London; Boston: M. Boyars, 1980.
- hooks, bell. "Understanding Patriarchy by Bell Hooks." *POC Online Classroom* (2017).
- Horkheimer, Max, and Theodor W. Adorno. *Dialektik der Aufklärung*. Theodor W. Adorno, *Gesammelte Schriften 3*. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1984.
- Hulme, Peter. *Colonial encounters: Europe and the native Caribbean, 1492-1797*. Methuen, 1986.
- Huntington, S. P. (1993). The clash of civilization? *Foreign Affairs*, (72)3, 22-49.
Retrieved from <http://www.polsci.wvu.edu>.
- Huston, Perdita. *Third World Women Speak out*. New York: Praeger. 1979.
- Ibsen, Kristine. "On Recipes, Reading, and Revolution: Postboom Parody in Como agua para chocolate." *Hispanic Review* 63.2: 1995. 133-46.
- Imbert, A. Enrique. *Literatura Hispanoamericana* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1970.)
- Irigaray, Luce. *The Sex Which Is Not One*. Trans. Gillian C. Gill. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985.
- _____. *Speculum of the Other Woman*, trans. Gillian Gill (Ithaca: Cornell University Press). (1985a).
- _____. *This Sex Which is not One*, trans. Catherine Porter (Ithaca: Cornell University Press). (1985b).
- _____. "This Sex Which is not One" and "When the Goos Get Together." In Marks and De Courtivron, (1981), 1981.
- Jain, Devaki. "Can Feminism Be a Global Ideology?" *Quest: A Feminist Quarterly* 4.2 (1978): 9-15.
- Jameson, Fredric. "On Magic Realism," *Critical Inquiry*, 12 (1968), 301-03.
- _____. "The Realist Floor-Plan." *On Signs* (1985): 373-83.
- Jehlen, Myra. "Archimedes and the paradox of feminist criticism." *Signs: Journal of*

- Women in Culture and Society* 6.4 (1981): 575-601.
- Jeyathurai, Dashini. "Labouring bodies, labouring histories: The Malaysian-Indian estate girl." *The Journal of Commonwealth Literature* 47.3 (2012): 303-323.
- John, Mary E. *Discrepant dislocations: Feminism, theory, and postcolonial histories*. University of California Press, 1996.
- Jónasdóttir, Anna G. *Why women are oppressed*. Temple University Press, 1994.
- Jones, Ann Rosalind. "Writing the Body: Toward an Understanding of" L'Écriture Feminine. *Feminist Studies* 7.2 (1981): 247-263.
- Kafka, Franz. 'Metamorphosis', in *Metamorphosis and Other Stories*, trans. Willa and Edwin Muir, Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin, [1915] (1961).
- Kaminsky, Amy. "Feminist Criticism and Latin American Literary Scholarship." *Dispositio*, vol. 22, no. 49, 1997, pp. 135-153.
- Katrack, H. Ketu. "Decolonizing Culture: Toward a Theory for Postcolonial Women's Texts." *Modern Fiction Studies* 35(1), 1989.
- Kelly, Joan. "Early Feminist Theory and the" Querelle des Femmes", 1400-1789." *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 8.1 (1982): 4-28.
- Kelly, Liz. *Surviving Sexual Violence* (Cambridge: Polity Press). 1988a.
- Kenyon, Linda. "A Conversation with Robert Kroetsch." *The New Quarterly* 5 (1985): 9-19. Kinsey, Alfred C., et al. *Sexual behavior in the human female*. Indiana University Press, 1998. Kolmar, Wendy K., and Frances Bartkowski. *Feminist theory: A reader*. New York: McGraw Hill, 2005.
- Koski, Linda Irene. *Women's experience in the novels of four modern Chilean writers: Marta Brunet, Maria Luisa Bombal, Mercedes Valdivieso, and Isabel Allende*. Stanford University, 1989.
- Kramarae, Cheri, and Paula A. Treichler. "A feminist dictionary." (1985). Kristeva, Julia. *The Kristeva Reader*, ed. Toril Moi (Oxford: Blackwell). 1986.
- _____. *Revolution in Poetic Language*. Columbia University Press, 1984.
- _____. *Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art*. Trans. Leon Roudiez. New York: Columbia University, 1980.
- Kroetsch, Robert. *What the Crow Said* (Don Mills: General Publishing, 1978). Kusch, Celena. *Literary analysis: The basics*. Routledge, 2016.

- Lawless, Cecilia. "Experimental Cooking in Como agua para chocolate." *Monographic Review* 8 (1992): 261-72.
- Leach, Edmund. *Social Anthropology*. Oxford: OUP, 1982.
- Leal, Luis. "Magic realism in Spanish American Literature." *Magical realism: Theory, history, community*, edited by Zamora, Lois Parkinson, and Wendy B. Faris, 1995, pp. 119-124.
- Leo Tolstoy's Diary, entry dated February 29, 1897. [The date is transcribed incorrectly; it should read March 1, 1897.]
- Levy-Bruhl, Lucian. *How Natives think*. London: George Allen Unwin, 1926.
- Lewis, Laura A. "The Weaknesses of women and the feminization of the Indian in colonial Mexico." *Colonial Latin American Review* 5.1 (1996): 73-94.
- Ling, Amy. "I'm here: An Asian American woman's response." *New Literary History* 19.1 (1987): 151-160.
- Loewenstein, Claudia, and Laura Esquivel. "Revolución interior al exterior: An Interview with Laura Esquivel." *Southwest Review* 79.4 (1994): 592-607.
- Loomba, Ania. "*Colonialism/Postcolonialism: the new critical idiom*." London and New York: Routledge, (1998).
- Lorde, Audre, "The master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's House." in Cherrie Moraga and Gloria Anzaldua (eds) (1983) *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color*, Latham, NY: Kitchen Table Press.
- Lucas Dobrian, Susan. Romancing the Cook: Parodic Consumption of Popular Romance Myths in *Como agua para chocolate*." *Latin American Literary Review*. 1996: 56-66.
- MacKinnon, Catherine. *The Sexual Harassment of Working: a case of sex discrimination* (New Haven: Yale University Press). 1979.
- Marks, Elaine and de Courtvron, Isabelle (eds.) *New French Feminisms* (Brighton: Harvester). 1981.
- Marquez, Garcia Gabriel. *Love in the Time of Cholera*. Translated by Edith Grossman, Vintage- Random House, 1988.
- Martin, Wendy. "The Feminine Mystique in American Fiction." *Female Studies II. Ed. Florence Howe*. Pittsburgh: KNOW (1970).

- Marx and Engles, "Manifesto of the Communist Party", in Marx, *The Revolutions of 1848* (Political Writings, vol. 1), ed. David Fernbach, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1973, p. 71.
- Mauss, Marcel. *A General Theory of Magic*. Trans. Robert Brain. London: Routledge, 1972. McLeod, John, ed. *The Routledge companion to postcolonial studies*. Routledge, 2007.
- McNeese, Tim. *Isabel Allende*. Infobase Publishing, 2006.
- Meacham, Cherie. "Como agua para chocolate: Cinderella and the Revolution." *Hispanic Journal* 19.1 (Spring): 1998. 117-27.
- Menton, Seymour. *Magic Realism Rediscovered, 1918-1981*, Philadelphia: Art Alliance/London and Toronto: Associated University Press, 1983.
- _____. *The Spanish American Short Story: A Critical Anthology*, (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1980).
- Meyer, Doris. *Reinterpreting the Spanish Essay: Women Writers of the 19th and 20th Centuries*. ed., Austin: University of Texas Press, 1995.
- _____. "Parenting the Text": Female Creativity and Dialogic Relationships in Isabel Allende's *La Casa De Los Espíritus*." *Hispania* (1990): 360-65.
- _____. *Introduction: Lives on the Line: The Testimony of Contemporary Latin American Authors*. University of California Press, 1988.
- Mies, Maria. *The lace makers of Narsapur: Indian housewives produce for the world market*. Zed Books, 1982.
- _____. *Patriarchy and Accumulation on a World Scale: women in the international division of labour*. (London: Zed Books). 1986.
- Miller, Beth and Gonzalez, Alfonso. *26 otras del Mexico actual*. Mexico: B. Costa-Amic, 1978.
- Mishra, V. and Hodge, B. "What is post(-)colonialism?", *Textual Practice*, 5, 3, 1991, reprinted Williams and Chrisman (eds.), *op. cit.*, p. 284.
- Mitchel, Juliet. *Women's Estate* (Harmondsworth: Penguin). 1971.
- Mohanty, T. Chandra. "Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourse". *Third World Women and the Politics of Feminism* Edited by Mohanty T. Chandra, Russo, Ann, Torres, Lourdes, Indiana University Press, 1991.
- _____. "Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourse", in

- B. Ashcroft, G. Griffiths and H. Tiffin (eds) *The Postcolonial Reader*, (1984).
London: Routledge: 259-263.
- _____. "Under Western eyes: Feminist scholarship and colonial discourses."
Boundary 2 12(3), 13(1) (Spring/Fall), 1984, pp. 333-358.
- _____. "Under Western eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses,"
Third World Women and the Politics of Feminism. Bloomington: Indiana
University Press, 51-80.
- Moi, Toril. *Sexual/Textual Politics*. Routledge, 2002.
- _____. *Sexual/textual politics: Feminist literary theory*. Routledge, 1985.
- Molloy, Sylvia. "Sentido de ausencias." *Revista Iberoamericana* 51.132-133: pp. 483-
88, 1985. Moraga, Cherríe Gloria, Anzaldúa. Eds. *This Bridge Called My Back
Writings by Radical Women of Color*. Watertown, MA: Persephone Press. (1983).
- Mores Ellen. *Literary Women: The Great Writers*. New York: Doubleday. Reprinted
(1977) London: The Women's Press. 1976.
- Morgan, Ellen. *Humanbecoming: Form and Focus in the Neo-Feminist Novel*. Images of
Women in Fiction: Feminist Perspectives. Metuchen, N.J., and London Scarecrow
Press, 1978., 1978.
- Moses, Michael Valdez. "Magical Realism at World's End." *Literary Imagination* 3 1
(2001): 105-33.
- Nelson, Sarah. *Incest: Fact and myth*. Edinburgh: Stramullion, 1987.
- Nietzsche, Friedrich. *The Will to Power*. Trans. Walter Kaufman and R. J. Hollingdale.
New York: Vintage, 1968.
- O'Gorman, E. *The Invention of America*, Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.
1961.
- Ortiz, Cristina. *Como Agua para chocolate: Manera de hecerse.* *Letras Femenias* 22.1-2:
1996. 121-30
- Otto, Rudolf. *The Idea of the Holy*. Trans. John Harvey. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1959.
- Patmore, Coventry. *The angel in the house*. Macmillan, 1866.
- Paz, Octavio. *The Labyrinth of Solitude*, Translated by Lysander Kemp (rev. ed. New
York: Grove Press, 1985).
- Petersen, Kirsten Holst. "First things first: Problems of a feminist approach to

- African literature." *Kunapipi* 6.3 (1984): 9.
- Pizzey, Erin. *Scream quietly or the Neighbor Will hear* (Harmonsworth: Penguin). 1974.
- Ponzio, Carl Joseph. *Reading (for) Magical Gaps: The Novice Reader's Aesthetic Response to Magical Realism*. University of California, Merced, 2013.
- Pope, Randolph D. "The Spanish American Novel from 1950 to 1975, in Robert Gonzalez Echevarria and Enrique Pupo-Walker, *The Cambridge History of American Literature: The Twentieth Century, Vol. 2*, Cambridge University Press, pp. 226-78.
- Potvin, Claudine. "Como agua para chocolate:" parodia o cliché?" *Revista Canadiense de Estudios Hispánicos*. 20.1 (Otono): 1995. 55-67.
- Price, Helene. "Unsavory Representation in Laura Esquivel's *Like Water for Chocolate*." *A Companion to Magical Realism*, edited by Stephen M. Hart and Wen-chin Ouyang, Tamesis, 2005, pp. 181-190.
- Price, Greg. *Latin America: The Writer's Journey*, London: Hamish Hamilton.
- Radhakrishnan, Rajagopalan. "Between Home and Location: Diasporic Mediations." (1996).
- Radhakrishnan, R. *Diasporic mediations: Between home and location*. London: University of Minnesota Press. (1996), (pp. 155-184).
- Rajan, S. Rajeswari, and You-me Park. "Postcolonial Feminism/Postcolonialism and Feminism." Edited by Schwarz, Henry, and Sangeeta Ray, *A companion to postcolonial studies*. Blackwell Publishings, 2000, 2005. 53-71.
- Rajos, Mario. "Un caleidoscopio de espejos desordenados," *Revista Iberoamericana* 132-33 (1985): 919.
- _____. "" La casa de los espíritus", de Isabel Allende: un caleidoscopio de espejos desordenados." *Revista iberoamericana* 51.132 (1985): 917-925.
- Register, Cheri. American Feminist Literary Criticism: a bibliographical Introduction' in Donovan, Josephine (ed.) *Feminist Literary Criticism. Explanation in Theory*. Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1975. 1-28.
- Reich, W. *The Sexual Revolution* (New York: Farrar, Strauss and Giroux). 1969.
- Restrepo, Luis Fernando. "The cultures of colonialism." *The Companion to Latin*

- American Studies*. London: 2003, pp. 47-68.
- Retamar, Roberto Fernández. *Caliban and other essays*. U of Minnesota Press, 1989.
- Rich, Adrienne. *Of Woman Born: motherhood as experience and institution* (London: Routledge). 1977.
- _____. "Compulsory heterosexuality and lesbian existence." *Signs: Journal of women in culture and society* 5.4 (1980): 631-660.
- Rizvi, Nafisa. *The Blue Room*. Sama Editorial and Publishing Services, 2009.
- Rodriguez, Monegal. "Realismo magico vs. literatura fantastica." *Yates* 25-37.
- Roh, Franz. 'Magic Realism: Post Expressionism', trans. Wendy B. Faris, in Lois Parkinson Zamora and Windy B. Faris (eds) *Magical Realism: Theory, History, Community*, Durham, NC and London: Duke University Press, [1927] (1995).
- _____. "Realismo Magico/Post Expressionismo: Problemas De La Pintura De Occidente, and Reprinted under the Title "Magic Realism: Post-Expressionism," in *Magical Realism: Theory History Community*, Edited by Lois Parkinson Zamora and Windy B. Faris, ." (1925 (in German), 1927): 15-31.
- _____. *Nach-Expressionismus. Magischer Realismus. Probleme der neusten Europäischen Malerei*. Translated by Wendy B. Faris. Leipzig: Klinkhardt und Biermann, 1925.
- Ronie-Richelle Garcia-Johnson. "The Struggle for Space: Feminism and Freedom in *the House of the Spirits*,". *Revista Hispanica Moderna* 47 1 (1994).
- Rosaldo, M. A. "The Use and Abuse of Anthropology: Reflection on Feminism and Cross- Cultural Understanding." *Signs* 53: pp. 389-417, 1980.
- Rosaldo, Michelle Zimbalist. "Woman, culture and society: a theoretical overview", in *Woman, Culture and Society*, ed. Michelle Zimbalist Rosaldo and Louise Lamphere (Stanford: Stanford University Press), 1974. pp. 17-42.
- Ruskin, John. *Lectures on Art delivered before the University of Oxford in Hilary term, 1870*, London: George Allen, 1903.
- _____. *Sesame and lilies*. JB Alden, 1883.
- Russell, Diana E. H. *Sexual Exploitation: rape, child sexual abuse, and workplace harassment* (Beverly Hills, Calif.: Sage).
- Sabo, Oana. "Disjunctures and diaspora in Kiran Desai's the inheritance of loss." *The*

- Journal of Commonwealth Literature* 47.3 (2012): 375-392.
- Said, Edward W. "Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient. 1978."
Harmondsworth, Eng.: Penguin 115 (1995).
- _____. *Culture and Imperialism*, London: Chatto, 1993. P. 3.
- _____. *Orientalism*. New York: Random House, 1978.
- Sampaloesi, Ana. "Pachacamac." In *Locas por la cocina*, by Angelica Gorodischer, Virginia Haurie, Elvira Ibarguen, Hilda Rais, Ana Sapaloesi. Buenos Aires: Biblos. 1997.
- Sanchez, Maria Ruth Noriega. *Magic realism in contemporary American women's fiction*. Diss. University of Sheffield, 2001.
- Selden, Raman, Peter Widdowson and Peter Brooker. "Feminist Theories". A Reader's Guide to *Contemporary Literary Theory*. Harlow, UK: Pearson Education Limited, 2005. 115-143. Print
- Sered, Susan Starr. *Priestess, Mother, Sacred Sister: Religions Dominated by Women*. Oxford University Press on Demand, 1996.
- Shklovsky, Viktor. "Art as Technique." *Literary theory: An anthology* (1917): 15-21. Shorter, Edward. *A History of Women's Bodies*. (Harmondsworth: Pelican). 1984.
- Shaw, Deborah. "Seducing the public: Images of Mexico in *Like Water for Chocolate* and *Amores Perros*," in *Contemporary Cinema of Latin America: 10 Key Film* (London: Continuum, 2003), pp. 36-51.
- Showalter, Elaine. "Feminist Criticism in the Wilderness." *Critical inquiry* 8 2 (1981): 179-205.
- _____. *A Literature of Their Own: British Women Novelists from Brontë to Lessing*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977.
- Simpkins, Scott. "Sources of Magic Realism: Supplements to Realism in Contemporary Latin American Literature in *Magical Realism: Theory, History, Community*, 145-159, Edited by Lois Parkinson Zamora and Wendy B. Faris." Durham: Duke University Press, 1995.
- Simpkins, Scott. *Magical Strategies: The supplement of Realism, Twentieth century Literature*, Vol. 34, no. 2, 1988, PP. 140-154. DOI: 10.2307/441074.
- Sinnigen, John H. "Como agua para chocolate: Feminine Space, Postmodern Cultural

- Politics, National Allegory." *CIEFL Bulletin* 7.1/2 (1995): 111-31.
- Siskind, Mariano. "Magical Realism and Postcolonial Writing." *The Cambridge History of Postcolonial Literature*. Cambridge/New York ..., 2011.
- Skubal, Susanne. *Word of Mouth. Food and Fiction after Freud*. London: Routledge, 2002.
- Slemon, Stephen. "Magic Realism as Postcolonial Discourse" *Magical realism: Theory, history, community*. Duke University Press, 1995.
- Slemon, Stephen. *Magic Realism as Postcolonial Discourse*. 1988.
- _____. "Modernism's Last Post" in Ian Adam and Helen Tiffin (eds.), *Past the Last Post: Theorizing Post-Colonialism and Postmodernism*, Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1991, p. 3.
- Sorensen, Diana. *A Turbulent Decade Remembered: Scenes from the Latin American Sixties*. Stanford University Press, 2007.
- Spivak, C. Gayatri. *An aesthetic education in the era of globalization*. Harvard University Press, 2013.
- _____. *The Post-Colonial Critic: Interviews, Strategies, Dialogues*, ed. Sarah Harasym, London: Routledge, 1990, p. 166.
- _____. *Outside in the teaching Machine, op. cit.*, p, 217.
- _____. "The Rani of Simur" in Francis Barker et al. (eds) *Europe and Its Others* Vol. 1, (1985a), proceeding of the Essex Conference on the Sociology of Literature, Colchester: University of Essex.
- _____. 'Can the subaltern speak? Speculation on Widow Sacrifice', *Wedge*, Winter/Spring: pp. 120-130, (1985b).
- Spivak, G. "Can the Subaltern Speak? Speculations on Widow Sacrifice", *Wedge* (7) 8 (Winter/Spring). (1985b), Cited in Ashcroft et al 1995.
- _____. "Three Women's Texts and a Critique of Imperialism", *Critical Inquiry* (18) 4 (summer) (1985c): 756-769.
- Spivak, Gaytri Chakravorty. Three women's texts and a critique of imperialism. *Critical Inquiry* 12(1) 1985: 243-261.
- Spivak, Gayatri C. "Three women's texts and a critique of imperialism." *Postcolonial criticism*. Routledge, 2014. 145-165.

- _____. "Can the Subaltern Speak?" in Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg, eds., *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 271-313.
- _____. "Subaltern Talk: Interview with the Editors." In *The Spivak Reader*, edited by Donna La.
- Stewart, A. Elaine. *From art to literature: Magic realism in "Like Water for Chocolate" and "Mangos, Bananas and Coconuts"*. Angelo State University, 1999.
- Strecher, Matthew C. "Magical Realism and the Search for Identity in the Fiction of Murakami Haruki." *Journal of Japanese Studies* (1999): 263-98.
- Suarez-Murias, Marguerite C. "El realismo magico: una definicion etnica." In Marguerite C. Suarez-Murias. *Essays on Hispanic Literature/Ensayos de literatura hispana: A Bilingual Anthology*. Washington D.C.: University Press of America, 1982. Pp. 95-114.
- _____. "Spanish-American magical realism: an ethnic definition." *Caribbean Studies* 16.3 / 4 (1976): 109-124.
- Suleri, S. "Women Skin Deep: Feminism and the Postcolonial Condition", *Critical Inquiry*, (18) 4, 1992. (Summer): 756-769.
- Swanson, Philip. *The new novel in Latin America: politics and popular culture after the boom*. Manchester University Press, 1995.
- Tambiah, Stanley. "Form and Meaning of Magical Acts." *Culture, Thought and Social Action: An Anthropological Perspective*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard UP, 1985. 60-86.
- Tannen, Ricki Stefanie. *The Female Trickster: The Mask That Reveals, Post-Jungian and Postmodern Psychological Perspectives on Women in Contemporary Culture*. Routledge, 2014.
- Taussig, Michael T. *Shamanism, colonialism, and the wild man: A study in terror and healing*. University of Chicago Press, 1987.
- Taylor, Claire. "The Spanish and Portuguese Empires." McLeod, John, ed. *The Routledge companion to postcolonial studies*. Routledge, 2007, pp. 46-58.
- _____. "Latin America." *The Routledge Companion to Postcolonial Studies*, Edited by John McLeod. Routledge, 2007, pp. 120-128.

- Thieme, John. "Beyond History: Margaret Atwood's *Surfacing* and Robert Kroetsch's *Badlands*," in *Revisions of Canadian Literature*. p. 74.
- Turner, Mark. "Andrés Guerrero, A. (eds)." *After Spanish Rule. Postcolonial Predicaments of the Americas*, Durham, NC: Duke University Press. 2003.
- Tiffin, Helen. "Commonwealth literature: comparison and judgment," in *The History and Historiography of Commonwealth Literature*, ed. Dieter Riemen-schneider (Tubingen: Gunter Narr,) na, 1983. p. 32.
- Tinker, Irene, and Michelle Bo Bramsen. *Women and World Development*. ed., Washington, D. C.: Overseas Development Council. 1972.
- Todorov, Tzvetan. *The Fantastic: A Structural Approach to a Literary Genre*. Cornell University Press, 1975.
- _____. "The Fantastic: A Structural Approach to a Literary Genre, Trans." *Richard Howard (1970 (1973): 3-23*.
- Tolkien, John Ronald Reuel. "On fairy-stories." (1966).
- Transley, V. David. *The Raiment of Light: A Study of Human Aura*. Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1984.
- Tyagi, Ritu. "Understanding postcolonial feminism in relation with postcolonial and feminist theories." *International Journal of Language and Linguistics* 1.2 (2014): 45-50.
- Viswesmarn, Kamala. (1996). *Fiction of Feminist Ethnography*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996.
- Walby, Sylvia. *Theorizing patriarchy*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990.
- Warnes, Christopher. *Magical realism and the postcolonial novel: Between faith and irreverence*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2009.
- Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary. *Surrealism*. 12th Ed. 1977.
- Weisgerber, Jean. *Le réalisme magique: Roman, peinture et cinéma*. Brussels: Le Centre des Avant-gardes littéraires de l'Université de Bruxelles, 1987.
- Wilson, Rawdon. *The metamorphoses of fictional space: Magical realism*. na, 1995.
- Wollstonecraft, Mary. "A Vindication of the Rights of Women, ed." *Ulrich H. Hardt (New York: Whitston, 1982) (1982): 359*.
- Woolf, Virginia. *A room of one's own and three guineas*. OUP Oxford, 2015.

- _____. "A Room of One's Own," in feminism: *The Essential Historical Writing*: ed. Miriam Schneir (New York: Vintage Books, 1972.) Wright, Elizabeth. *Lacan and Postfeminism*. Icon books, 2000.
- Yegenoglu, Meyda. *Colonial fantasies: Towards a feminist reading of Orientalism*. Cambridge University Press, 1998.
- Young, David and Hagarman, Keith. *Magical Realist Fiction: A Reader* (New York: Longman, 1984.)
- Zamora, Lois Parkinson, Faris, B. Wendy. *On the Marvelous Real in America. Magical Realism, Theory, Community*. Ed. Durham & London: Duke University Press; 1997, P. 102.
- _____. *Magical Realism: Theory, History, Community*, Durham, NC and London: Duke University Press, 1995.
- _____. "The Magical Tables of Isabel Allende and Remedios Varo." *Comparative Literature* 44 2 (1992): 113-43.
- Zea, Leopoldo. *Discurso desde la marginacion y la barbarie* (Barcelona: Anthropos, 1988).
- Zimmerman, Don and West, Candace. "Sex roles, interruptions and silence in conversation", in *Language and Sex: difference and Dominance*, ed. Barrie Thorne and Nancy Henley (Rowley, Mass: Newbury House), 1975. pp. 105-29.
- Zubiaurre, Maite. "Culinary Eros in Contemporary Hispanic Female Fiction: From Kitchen Tales to Table Narratives." *College Literature*, vol. 33, no. 3, 2006, pp. 29-51.
- _____. *Magical Realism: Theory, History, Community*, Durham, NC and London: Duke University Press, 1995.
- _____. "The Magical Tables of Isabel Allende and Remedios Varo." *Comparative Literature* 44 2 (1992): 113-43.
- ONLINE SOURCES
- Art and Reality in Die Blechtrommel*. Forum for Modern Language Studies. 1967. Oxford University Press.
- Encyclopedia Britannica*, 31 Aug. 2023, www.britannica.com/biography/al-Biruni#ref1110648.

Feminism - New World Encyclopedia. www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Feminism.

“Happy Candlemas! ¡Feliz Día de la Candelaria!”. *CancunSafe. NeuMedia*.

Retrieved 2 March 2011.

“Kasur Rape Cases: Imran Ali Handed Four Additional Death Sentences.” *The Express Tribune*, 9 Aug. 2018, tribune.com.pk/story/1773866/kasur-rape-cases-imran-ali-handed-four-additional-death-sentences.

—. “Magical Feminism.” *Wikipedia*, 13 Nov. 2022, en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Magical_feminism.

—. “Magic Realism.” *Wikipedia*, 23 Oct. 2023, en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Magic_realism#Surrealism. *mquran.org. The Miraculous Quran - 18.18*.

—. “Magic Realism.” *Wikipedia*, 23 Oct. 2023, en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Magic_realism#Fantasy.

—. “Magic Realism.” *Wikipedia*, 23 Oct. 2023, en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Magic_realism#Origins.

Magical Strategies: The Supplement of Realism on JSTOR. www.jstor.org/stable/441074.

Outlaws of the Text: Women’s Bodies and the Organisation of Gender in Imperial Space.

Australia/Canada Post-colonialization and Women’s Texts’ Conference, Research Network, Calgary Institute for the Humanities (February 13–16). 1992.

Oxford English Dictionary, 1970 ed., s.v. “clairvoyance.”

Poetry Foundation. “Ode to a Nightingale by John Keats | Poetry Foundation.” *Poetry Foundation*, www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/44479/ode-to-a-nightingale.

Quoteistan. “I Always Like Walking in the Rain, so No One Can See Me Crying.”

Pinterest, 18 Jan. 2015, www.pinterest.com/pin/485262928575107686.

Saliba, George. “Al-Bīrūnī | Persian Scholar, Astronomer, Mathematician and Geographer.”

Sawant, Prasanna. “8 Fascinating Magical Realism Novels by Indian Authors.” *The Curious Reader*, 3 June 2020, www.the curiousreader.in/bookrack/magical-realism-novels-by-indian-authors.

Shodhganga: A Reservoir of Indian Theses @ INFLIBNET.

shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/bitstream/10603/76994/7/07_chapter-1.pdf. *Similarities*

Between Feminism and Postcolonialism. mural.uv.es/gemdelho/page3.HTML.

“Terry Pratchett by Linda Richards”. *januarymagazine.com*. 2002. Retrieved February 17, 2008.

“The Evil Eye — LEARN ISLAM.” *LEARN ISLAM*, learn-islam.org/evil-eye-class1.

“The Nobel Prize in Literature 1982.” *NobelPrize.org*,
www.nobelprize.org/prizes/literature/1982/marquez/prose.

“Third-wave Feminism.” *Wikipedia*, 30 Sept. 2023, en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Third-wave_feminism.

“Thus Spoke Zarathustra.” *Wikipedia*, 23 Oct. 2023,
en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thus_Spoke_Zarathustra.

“Value and Importance of Dua in Islam - Islamic Articles.” *Islamic Articles*, 9 May 2019,
www.quranreading.com/blog/value-and-importance-of-dua-in-islam.

Wikipedia contributors. “King Cake.” *Wikipedia*, 2 Oct. 2023, en.wikipedia.org/wiki/King_cake.