

THE FUNCTION OF MAGICAL REALISM IN CONTEMPORARY WOMEN'S
FICTION: JEANETTE WINTERSON'S *THE PASSION*, LAURA ESQUIVEL'S
LIKE WATER FOR CHOCOLATE AND ISABEL ALLENDE'S *THE HOUSE OF*
THE SPIRITS

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ABSTRACT

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This thesis aims to discuss the function of magical realism as an emancipatory literary mode worldwide to make the voices of the oppressed heard with reference to the novels of three contemporary women writers from different geographies, *The Passion* by the British Jeanette Winterson, *Like Water for Chocolate* by the Mexican Laura Esquivel and *The House of the Spirits* by the Chilean Isabel Allende. Magical realism embodies oxymoronic concepts such as the ordinary and extraordinary and displays them as a whole without detaching from the real world. Magical realism is used to allow authors a chance to express themselves against patriarchal values and oppressive regimes. In *The Passion*, through magical realism, Winterson transgresses the boundary between fact and fiction and it functions as a significant tool of postmodern historiographic

metafiction to question the objectivity of historical knowledge imposed by the authorities, to subvert traditional gender roles constructed by the patriarchal discourse and to enable alternative histories to be verbalized. In *Like Water for Chocolate*, Esquivel employs magical realism to criticize the traditions against women imposed by the society. In *The House of the Spirits*, using magical realism, Allende criticizes the Chilean military coup and reverses the monopoly of history writing by the political power holders to demonstrate the agonies of the persecuted. This thesis claims that although these writers focus on different problems existing in their societies, through magical realism they unite to struggle against patriarchal totalizing discourse, to refute dominant notions of reality and to be the voice of the repressed.

Key Words: Magical Realism, Postmodernism, Jeanette Winterson, Laura Esquivel, Isabel Allende

ÖZ

ÇAĞDAŞ KADIN KURMACASINDA BÜYÜLÜ GERÇEKÇİLİĞİN İŞLEVİ:
JEANETTE WINTERSON'IN *TUTKU*, LAURA ESQUIVEL'İN *ACI ÇİKOLATA*
VE ISABEL ALLENDE'NİN *RUHLAR EVİ* ESERLERİ

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Bu tez üç farklı coğrafyadan üç farklı çağdaş kadın yazarın, İngiliz Jeanette Winterson'ın *Tutku*, Meksikalı Laura Esquivel'in *Acı Çikolata* ve Şilili Isabel Allende'nin *Ruhlar Evi* başlıklı romanlarına referansla toplumda ezilen kesimlerin sesini duyurmada büyümlü gerçekçiliğin dünya çapında özgürleştirici bir edebi tarz olarak işlevini tartışmayı amaçlamaktadır. Büyümlü gerçekçilik, sıradan ve sıra dışı gibi tezat oluşturan kavramları kapsar ve bunları gerçek dünyadan kopmadan bir bütün olarak gözler önüne serer. Büyümlü gerçekçilik yazarlara ataerkil değerlere ve baskıcı yönetimlere karşı kendilerini ifade etme fırsatı vermek amacıyla kullanılmaktadır. *Tutku*'da, Winterson büyümlü gerçekçilik aracılığıyla gerçek ve kurgu arasındaki sınırı aşar ve büyümlü gerçekçilik postmodern tarihsel üstkurgunun önemli bir aracı olarak, otoriteler tarafından dayatılmış tarihsel bilginin tarafsızlığını sorgulamak, ataerkil söylem tarafından yapılandırılmış geleneksel cinsiyet rollerini

altüst etmek ve alternatif tarihlerin seslendirilebilmesi işlevini görür. *Acı Çikolata*'da, Esquivel büyülü gerçekçiliği toplum tarafından dayatılan kadın karşıtı gelenekleri eleştirme amacıyla kullanmaktadır. *Ruhlar Evi*'nde ise Allende büyülü gerçekçilik aracılığıyla Şili askeri darbesini eleştirir ve bu dönemde zulme uğramış insanların acılarını yansıtmak için politik erklerin tekelindeki tarih yazımını tersyüz eder. Bu tez sözü geçen yazarların kendi toplumlarında var olan farklı sorunlara odaklanmalarına rağmen, büyülü gerçekçilik aracılığıyla bütünleştirici ataerkil söyleme karşı mücadelelerinde, baskın olan gerçeklik anlayışını çürütmede ve bastırılmışların sesi olmada birleştiklerini iddia eder.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Büyülü gerçekçilik, postmodernizm, Jeanette Winterson, Laura Esquivel, Isabel Allende

To my precious parents, my brother Yaman and Uğur

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Aim and the Scope of the Study

The aim of this study is to discuss the use of magical realism on different topics by three contemporary female writers from different parts of the world, coming from completely different backgrounds yet with the same unity of purpose. *The Passion* by Jeanette Winterson, *Like Water for Chocolate* by Laura Esquivel and *The House of the Spirits* by Isabel Allende, all serve the same aim which is to give out a sound to the oppressed so that their unspoken stories will be put into words. In their quest for freedom of expression, magical realism becomes a valuable tool to reach their goals for these outstanding writers. Having many dimensions and various interpretations, magical realism has been widely used all over the world by the authors who are sensitive to the problems of the marginalized in their societies.

In the first chapter of this thesis, the emergence of magic realism in painting in Germany by Franz Roh in 1925 and its transition process to literature from Europe to Latin America are analyzed in detail. The differences between magical realism and other genres easily confused with it such as realism, fantastic, surrealism, science fiction and allegory are highlighted so as to show in what way magical realism is

different from them to eliminate the questions in the readers' minds about the borders of magical realism and clarify its place in world literature. Furthermore, five primary characteristics for a text to be considered a genuine example of magical realism designated by Wendy B. Faris are examined with references to the works of the leading magical realist authors such as Gabriel García Márquez, Salman Rushdie, Toni Morrison, D.M. Thomas and Carlos Fuentes. Additionally, the post-colonial and postmodern characteristics of magical realism are analyzed. As a part of the theoretical background, magical realist writers' interest in undermining the official history and their postmodern stance to historiography are studied. Finally, the concepts of sex, gender and gender roles are also covered in the first chapter.

The second chapter focuses on Winterson's use of magical realism in *The Passion* as a significant tool for historiographic metafiction to undermine the authority of official history. As magical realism aspires to uncover alternative realities and viewpoints by exceeding the limits between fact and fantasy, Winterson adopts it to challenge the authority of official history and to offer personal histories combined with supernatural characters. In this regard, since both magical realism and historiographic metafiction oppose the hierarchies and they both have an exclusive attention to problematization of official history, they match up with their quest for alternative realities and unheard histories to challenge the monolithic treatment of history. By retelling history together with magical stories, Winterson not only stresses the fictional aspect of history writing but also problematizes the accuracy of history as a grand narrative. Through the use of magical realism, Winterson not only blurs the line between history and fiction but also parodies well-established

institutions like the Church. She also problematizes traditional gender roles and compulsory heterosexuality imposed by the patriarchal order.

The third chapter deals with Laura Esquivel's *Like Water for Chocolate* and its use of magical realism to criticize the traditions present in some cultures against women and reveal how these illogical traditions affect their lives destructively. While most traditions promote the well-being of society such as unity and social attachment, some others have destructive effects both physically and mentally, especially on the female population of the world. Hurtful traditional acts exist in various forms in various countries. Unfortunately, there exist outrageous rules in some societies which place women to an inferior status which turn their lives into nightmares. In this chapter, first Esquivel's literary personality is discussed. Next, the application of magical realism in *Like Water for Chocolate* to criticize traditions against women and to reflect the agonies they have suffered due to the nonsensical traditions. Also, through the use of magic, Esquivel empowers her female characters by swapping the traditional gender roles and parodies popular romance novels.

In the fourth chapter, the political function of magical realism and Allende's bringing the dark period of her country to light in *The House of the Spirits* are discussed. Her use of magical realism in *The House of the Spirits* to criticize the Chilean military coup and period of Augusto Pinochet's dictatorship from the perspectives of the tormented and challenge the monopoly of history writing by the progovernment so as to demonstrate the agonies of the persecuted due to fear and censorship. Often magical realists emerge from those parts of the world where dictatorships prevail and as a result freedom of expression is under suppression. It is not possible for a writer to criticize a dictator explicitly and get away with it.

Nevertheless, magical realism manages to do it implicitly. The plots which embody supernatural elements may not appear like direct political critiques; however, careful readers can read between the lines and perceive the hidden message underneath. Hence, Isabel Allende as a close relative of the overthrown Marxist president of Chile, Salvador Allende, employs magical realism as a means to reflect the political realities of her country. Receiving death threats just because of her surname and political stance, Allende was only able to write *The House of the Spirits* in exile, in Venezuela and reflect the political climate of her country under Pinochet regime and made the voices of those who were tortured due to their ideologies heard by the entire world. In this chapter, Allende's literary identity and parallels between her own life and *The House of the Spirits* are discussed in detail. Also, her use of magical realism as a means of empowering her female characters and allowing them a chance to challenge the monopoly of history writing of those in power is discussed.

In the last part, a synthesis will be provided for this study based on the analysis of texts, in terms of the diverse functions of magical realism and why Winterson, Esquivel and Allende have used this mode to address to the some of the problems existing in the world.

In conclusion, I have discussed the intricate correlation between the diverse challenges offered by magical realism to the mainstream patriarchal totalizing discourse and how it is employed by the novelists studied in this thesis I have argued that the subversive potentials of magical realism offer the novelists an opportunity to give the marginalized a chance to raise their voices.

CHAPTER 2

THE THEORETICAL BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

2.1 The Origins and Development of Magical Realism

Magical realism, a literary mode, having the quality of amalgamating two oxymoronic concepts, magic and realism, has been luring the attention of many writers and critics since the boom of magical realist novels in Latin American literature in the 1960s and then its expansion worldwide especially among postcolonial authors. Due to being an oxymoron and its hybrid nature (magic plus realism), it has lured the attention of many critics. In magical realist fiction, supernatural elements are treated as mundane and everyday matters by both the author and characters in the text. This is most probably the reason why it has attracted many leading writers, scholars and critics all around the world since its first emergence in the domain of literature.

Arargüç (2016) draws a parallel between reading magical realist fiction and playing yo-yo so as to manifest the experience of a magical realist fiction reader clearly (11). In just the same way as playing yo-yo with its up and down movements, the experience of reading a magical realist work leaves the reader in a limbo situation, that is to say, in an undecided condition. In other words, the reader can never reach

an absolute judgement on the issue of what is true and what is not as the text alternates between the supernatural and the real. This dilemma, the hesitation in the matter of what should be taken into consideration as true, is kept alive during the reading experience, thus, the reader cannot reach a conclusion as there is a non-hierarchical relationship between the magical and real in magical realist texts. Although it is defined in *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms* as “kind of modern fiction in which fabulous and fantastical events are included in a narrative that otherwise maintains the 'reliable' tone of objective realistic report” (Baldick 2001:146), there is no consensus on a single definition of this elusive literary mode and this is merely one of the numerous definitions of magical realism. In addition to all these contradictions about its definition, magical realism also has a debated history full of confusions. Even the creator of the term, German art critic Franz Roh, did not give a concise definition of the term, which led many critics to adopt their own definitions. The difficulties in defining the term, its complex history and heterogeneous usages could not hinder magical realism from being one of the most popular forms of contemporary literature and an outstanding phenomenon used worldwide for different purposes. Bowers divides the turning points of magical realism into three periods in order to minimize the confusions about the complicated history of the term:

The first period is set in Germany in the 1920s, the second period in Central America in the 1940s and the third period, beginning in 1955 in Latin America, continues internationally to this day. All these periods are linked by literary and artistic figures whose works spread the influence of magic(al) realism around Europe, from Europe to Latin America, and from Latin America to the rest of the world. The key figures in the development of the term are the German critic Franz Roh best known for his work in the 1920s, the mid-twentieth-century Cuban writer Alejo Carpentier, the Italian writer Massimo Bontempelli from the 1920s and 1930s, the mid-twentieth-century Latin American literary critic Angel Flores and the late twentieth century Latin American novelist Gabriel García Márquez. (2004:7)

Contrary to the popular belief that magical realism is a literary mode which is unique to Latin America and first appeared in this particular part of the world, magical realism first appeared surprisingly in pictorial art of the 1920s during the Weimar Republic in Germany. Although it is a disputed term in terms of its history and definitions, many critics are of a single mind about its first usage in German art criticism. The general agreement amongst the majority of contemporary critics, such as Amaryll Chanady, Seymour Menton, Maggie Ann Bowers, Louis Parkinson Zamora and Wendy Faris, is that German art historian, photographer and critic Franz Roh (1890-1965) first coined the term with the publication of his book *Nach-Expressionismus, Magischer Realismus: Probleme der neuesten europäischen Malerei* (*After Expressionism, Magic Realism: Problems of the newest European painting*) which was published in 1925 in order to introduce a new artistic style appearing in European painting with a reaction to former movements of painting—primarily to impressionism and expressionism. When he coined the term, most probably Roh did not foresee that magical realism would turn out to be a worldwide literary phenomenon after decades from its emergence in painting. Reeds pointed out that Roh did not imagine that his term for painting would be a worldwide phenomenon and occupy the world literature as follows:

[I]t is unlikely he could have realised how far this notion would travel in terms of both geographic and inter-disciplinary debate. It has since formed part of Latin American literature, postcolonial studies, and can now be found in art and literary criticism related to India, Africa, Canada, Europe, and beyond. (Reeds 2013:41)

In his article “Magic Realism: Post Expressionism”, Roh celebrates the emergence of magic realism to describe the trend in post-expressionist painting of the 1920s and notify the demise of expressionism which failed to represent the mystical non-material aspects of reality with its extreme otherworldly stance. Expressionism, one

of the leading art movements dominated the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, was considered as a style which values subjective mental states and emotions over objective reality. What was criticised sternly by Roh was expressionism's "exaggerated preference for fantastic, extraterrestrial, remote objects" (1995:16). According to him, in expressionist painting, worldly and mundane subjects were scorned. What he does in his book is to celebrate the emergence of the new art called magic realism or post-expressionism which has a tendency to go back to the worldly and mundane and eventually form a new type of reality. Roh points out that:

We recognize this world, although now—not only because we have emerged from a dream—we look on it with new eyes. The religious and transcendental themes have largely disappeared in recent painting. In contrast, we are offered a new style that is thoroughly of this world, that celebrates the mundane. (1995:17)

Roh says that in this new trend, magic realism, in painting, "humanity seems destined to oscillate forever between devotion to the world of dreams and adherence to the world of reality (ibid.). Roh's magic realism, keeping its terrestrial attitude, was a return to reality as a reaction to expressionism's extreme desire for the fantastic. In his 1925 publication, Roh includes the paintings of Georg Schrimpf, Otto Dix and Georg Grosz as the examples of magic realist painting. In expressionist painting, there was the purpose of distancing the mundane and "investing it with a shocking exoticism" (Roh 1995:16). For instance, as Roh mentions, in expressionist painting "if the theme was erotic, it often degenerated into savage sensuality. If devilish men were depicted, they had faces of cannibals (ibid.). Again, Roh puts emphasis on expressionism's more abstract style and its remoteness from the everyday reality and he celebrates magic realism's return to reality by giving examples from Schrimpf's, Grosz's and Dix's paintings. Through examining their

paintings, Roh criticizes expressionism and exalts magical realism once more as they reflect “[i]nstead of the mother of God, the purity of a shepherdess in the fields (Schrimpf). Instead of the remote horrors of hell, the inextinguishable horrors of our own time (Grosz and Dix)” (ibid. 17). In contrast to expressionism’s transcendental, religious and extraterrestrial themes, magic realism has an insistent interest for the terrestrial as can be understood from Roh’s words:

It feels as if that roughshod and frenetic transcendentalism, that devilish detour, that flight from the world have died and now an insatiable love for terrestrial things and a delight in their fragmented and limited nature has reawakened. One could say that once again a profound calm and thought-fulness prevails, a calm that is perhaps a prelude to a new flight, launched with a more mature knowledge and earthly substance. (ibid.)

Roh’s concept of magic realism can be associated with defamiliarization.

Defamiliarization is a term coined by Russian formalist Victor Shklovsky in 1917 to “disturb its audience’s routine perception of reality” (Quinn 2006:112).

Defamiliarization is an artistic technique which makes the reader see the familiar from different and unfamiliar angles so as to intensify the perception of the familiar.

Although the term defamiliarization was coined by Shklovsky first, it has its origins in *Lyrical Ballads* (1798), co-written work of Romantic poets William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge. In the reprinted preface of *Lyrical Ballads* (1800),

Wordsworth writes:

The principal object then which I proposed to myself in these Poems was to make the incidents of common life interesting by tracing in them, truly though not ostentatiously, the primary laws of our nature: chiefly as far as regards the manner in which we associate ideas in a state of excitement. (235-236)

In other words, Wordsworth justifies that familiar things cease seeming to be interesting to us after a certain time, therefore, according to him the role of the poet is to represent the usual interesting by reflecting it in an extraordinary way.

Correspondingly, both Wordsworth’s and Roh’s ideas on the importance of showing

something usual with an unusual approach overlap with Shklovsky's defamiliarization. The core principle of Roh's sense of magic realist painting, that is showing the everyday objects in an unusual way, actually contradict with the way it is used in contemporary literary studies. Roh also states that with the word magic, he means "mystery does not descend to the represented world, but rather hides and palpitates behind it" (1995:16). In other words, he implies that his preference for the word magic does not signify supernatural elements like ghosts, witches and wizards in magic realist painting. What he actually means with the word magic is seeing the ordinary from different angles and perspectives.

Some critics often prefer to eliminate the historical evolution of the term completely as they think the evolution of magical realism from painting into literature does not have any relation to magical realism as the literary mode we use today. According to Anne C. Hegerfeldt (2005), magical realism in literature differs considerably from Roh's magic realism as a pictorial art term and she says that "the exact opposite, in fact, of what the original term signified" (2005: 14). In order to eliminate the confusions around Roh's magic realism in painting and today's literary magical realism, Bowers clarifies the differences between them by explaining the meaning of 'magic' in each version of magic(al) realism:

In fact, each of the versions of magic(al) realism have differing meanings for the term 'magic'; in magic realism 'magic' refers to the mystery of life: in marvellous and magical realism 'magic' 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. (Bowers 2004:19)

Mostly, magic realism and magical realism are erroneously considered as the same thing and used interchangeably. However, taking Bowers' distinction of Roh's magic

realism and literary magical realism into account, these contradictions can be clarified. Accordingly, magic realism refers to the art or painting term coined by Roh and with the word magic, Roh refers to going back to reality and seeing everyday objects from a different perspective. Instead, he exalted the mystery behind the everyday objects and celebrated the “world’s rational organization” (Guenther 1995:35). On the other hand, in discordance with Roh’s magic realism, the magic part of magical realism in literature can be linked with extraordinary incidents including ghosts and miracles in a realistic context. At this juncture, the main difference between Roh’s magic realism and literary magical realism is that the former makes an effort to represent the ordinary as extraordinary while the latter aims to demonstrate the extraordinary as ordinary as Zamora and Faris also point out:

The supernatural is not a simple or obvious matter, but it is an ordinary matter, an everyday occurrence—admitted, accepted, and integrated into the rationality and materiality of literary realism. Magic is no longer quixotic madness, but normative and normalizing. (1995:3)

Despite the different meaning of magic between painting and literature, many critics like Leal, Guenther, Bowers and Reeds are inclined to study the evolution of magical realism as a literary term without ignoring its root, that is Roh’s ideas. Contrary to Hegerfeldt’s argument that Roh’s term, which merely deals with painting, should not be taken into account while studying magical realism in literature, Reeds suggests that ignoring its roots leads to much confusions about the history of magical realism despite the huge difference between them. Reeds says that “[t]he principal reason for this confusion is the fact that critics create their own definitions of magical realism, often without taking into account the term’s historical evolution” (2013:41).

The person who applied the term to literature for the first time was the Italian poet, novelist, playwright and critic Massimo Bontempelli (1878-1960). The influence of Roh's magic realism did not remain restricted only to Germany, on the contrary, the term leapt from the 1920s German painting to literary domain with the publication of Bontempelli's bilingual magazine (in both French and Italian) *900 (Novecento)* in 1926 just a year after Roh's publication. This bilingualism helped the term to spread all around Europe and influence many writers. As Bowers states in her book *Magic(al) realism* (2004), Bontempelli was influenced initially by surrealism and then by Roh's magic realism at the time of Mussolini's fascist rule in Italy, founded the bilingual magazine *900 (Novecento)* in 1926 (12). Bowers also points out that Bontempelli's ideas correspond to that of Roh as both of their aim was to demonstrate the mysterious and fantastic aspect of reality. In *The Cambridge History of Italian Literature* (1996), Dombroski also notes that Bontempelli sought to present "the mysterious and fantastic quality of reality" (522). Although their ideas about magical realism mostly overlap, Roh and Bontempelli differed from each other as "Bontempelli applied these thoughts to writing not to pictorial art" (Bowers 12). Having been influenced by fascism, Bontempelli's aim was to employ magic realism so as to create a common consciousness in Italy "by opening new mythical and magical perspectives on reality" (qtd.in Bowers 58). Accordingly, Bontempelli was acknowledged as the first magical realist writer in the West. His magazine impressed renowned Latin American authors like Miguel Angel Asturias and Alejo Carpentier. These writers were also influenced by European Surrealism as they were exposed to intellectual debates when they were living in Europe.

After leaving an indelible mark in Europe, Roh's seminal essay was translated into Spanish in 1927 and published with the title "El Realismo Magico" in José Ortega y Gasset's *Revista de Occidente (Magazine of the West)* which was an influential magazine all across Latin America read by leading writers Miguel Angel Asturias and Jorge Luis Borges. One of the milestone figures in the history of magical realism is the Cuban novelist, musicologist, essayist and playwright Alejo Carpentier (1904-1980). Carpentier was considerably exposed to European Surrealism when he was living in Paris in the 1930s. In the preface to his book *The Kingdom of This World (El reino este mundo)* (1949), instead of using the term magical realism, he devises his own term *lo real maravilloso americano* (American marvellous realism) to describe what he argues as the Latin American form of magical realism. In his essay "On the Marvellous Real in America", which was actually presented as the preface of his book, *The Kingdom of This World*, Carpentier distinguishes European Surrealism from Latin American marvellous realism. What Carpentier meant was that in order to place and create the marvellous in their works, European Surrealists had to look for fabrications and artificiality, detached from their everyday reality as Carpentier regarded it as a "'tiresome pretension' unconnected in magical content to its cultural context of production" (Bowers 2004:33). From the perspective of Carpentier, in European Surrealism "[e]verything is premeditated and calculated to produce a sensation of strangeness" ("The Baroque" 103). On the other hand, from Carpentier's point of view, this case is just the opposite in Latin America as marvellous is present everywhere and can easily be attained. Frederic Jameson, in his article, "On Magical Realism in Film" (1986), says that in the social reality of Latin America, 'realism' is already necessarily a 'magic realism'" (311).

Carpentier clarifies what he means by *lo real maravilloso*, “a uniquely Latin American form of magic realism” distinguishing itself from its European roots (Zamora and Faris 1995:75). Latin American writers depended on their own context full of marvel and miracles. In his essay “The Baroque and the Marvellous Real”, he explains the marvellous nature of Latin America as he says “[t]he marvellous real that I defend and that is our own marvellous real is encountered in its raw state, latent and omnipresent, in all that is Latin American. Here is the strange is commonplace, and always was commonplace” (1995:104).

Carpentier also argues that European authors’ disbelief in the marvellous distinguishes it from *lo real maravilloso*. In his article “On the Marvelous Real in America”, Carpentier underlines the importance of faith while experiencing the marvellous. He criticises European writers’ lack of disbelief in the extraordinary and their limited imagination. Carpentier avers that the marvellous in Europe is limited to “the old cliches of the Brocelianda jungle, the Knights of the Round Table, Merlin the sorcerer and the Arthurian legend” (1995:84). He says that “the phenomenon of the marvellous presupposes faith” which is inherent in the nature of Latin America where the extraordinary is prevalent in everyday reality (ibid. 86). In her article, “The Territorialization of the Imaginary in Latin America: Self-Affirmation and Resistance to Metropolitan Paradigms”, Amaryll Chanady also says that Carpentier coined the term *lo real maravilloso* “as a marker of difference in a Latin American discourse of identity rejecting European influence” (1995:137). It can be concluded that Carpentier coined his own term indigenous to Latin to constitute a literature of his own continent consisted of their firm belief in the marvellous. He points out that he does not need to look for anything else as the marvellous inherent in Latin

America's geography. Finally, Carpentier asks the question "what is the entire history of America if not a chronicle of the marvellous real?" ("On the Marvelous Real" 88).

When Angel Flores, a renowned professor of Latin American Literature, presented his article entitled "Magical Realism in Spanish American Fiction" at Modern Language Association conference in 1954, a new definition of magical realism was put forward combining Roh's magic realism and Carpentier's marvellous real. Flores defended Carpentier's ideas that Latin America is the homeland of magical realism by acknowledging magical realism "as an authentic expression" of Latin America (1995:116). According to him, since their encounter with Spanish conquistadors, romantic and fantastic elements were a matter of an expression of amazement in the course of events they experienced. These elements can be found "in the letters of Columbus, in the chroniclers, in the sagas of Cabeza de Vaca entered the literary mainstream during Modernism" (ibid. 112). As it can be understood from the aforementioned quotation, Flores claims that the roots of magical realism dates back to the sixteenth century and he admits that Spanish romantic realist literature including Cervantes' world-famous Don Quixote had a notable impact on the development of Latin American magical realism.

Contrary to European critics' inclination to associate the term with Franz Roh, Flores claims that the first representative of magical realism is Jorge Luis Borges. Ignoring its European roots, Franz Roh and Massimo Bontempelli in his article, Flores asserts that the first example of magical realist fiction in Latin American literature is *A Universal History of Infamy* (*Historia universal de la infamia*) (1955) written by

Jorge Luis Borges in 1935 and adds that Borges was inevitably impressed by the Czech author, Franz Kafka when he translated Kafka's works into Spanish:

For the sake of convenience I shall use the year 1935 as the point of departure of this new phase of American literature, of magical realism. It was in 1935 that Jorge Luis Borges' collection *Historia universal de la infamia* [*A Universal History of Infamy*] made its appearance in Buenos Aires, at least two years after he had completed a masterly translation into Spanish of Franz Kafka's shorter fiction. (Flores 113)

To Flores, in the time of the First World, there was a revisitation of symbolism and magical realism by many writers including Franz Kafka as they regarded realism as "a blind alley" (111-12). Flores avers that magical realism reappeared in Latin America upon publication of Borges' *A Universal History of Infamy*, a collection of short stories. He also put emphasis on the huge influence of Kafka on Borges by saying, "Kafka's impact on him has been the most profound and revealing" (ibid.). Nevertheless, Flores contradicts with himself when he asserts that Borges is the first practitioner of magical realism at the same time he claims that he was influenced by Kafka. Hegerfeldt also mentions Flores' paradoxical allegation:

Flores' 'territorialization' of magic realism is rendered problematic by the first part of his essay, where he discussed the mode as a universal reaction against photographic realism and, paradoxically enough, provides the new Latin American trend with illustrious European heritage. (19)

Another confusion created by Flores is labelling Borges as a magical realist writer whose works are actually genuine examples of fantastic literature. Therefore, this misdescription led to complexities between the fantastic and magical realist fiction. Even though he paradoxically states that Borges was impressed by Kafka, he regards magical realism as an entirely Latin American phenomenon in a similar vein to Alejo Carpentier:

Never before have so many sensitive and talented writers lived at the same time in Latin America —never have they worked so unanimously to overhaul and polish the craft of fiction. In fact their slim but weighty output may well mark the inception of a genuinely Latin American fiction. We may claim, without apologies, that Latin America is no longer in search of its expansion, to use Henriquez Urena's felicitous

phrase- we may claim that Latin America now possesses an authentic expression, one that is uniquely civilized, exciting, and let us hope, perennial. (Flores 116)

Flores highlights that Latin America accomplished to produce an authentic expression for itself thanks to its prolific writers. Echoing Carpentier's ideas, Flores has the opinion that Latin America found the literature of its own with its original voice.

After twelve years, Flores' article was sternly criticised by the Mexican critic, Luis Leal. According to Leal, Flores included in his list of magical realist authors that cannot actually be considered as magical realist. Leal also objects to Flores' labelling Borges as the first representative of magical realism. Unlike Flores who ignored the European roots of the term, Leal acknowledges that the pioneer of the term is Franz Roh. His essay was crucial in terms of locating Roh as the pioneer of the term.

According to Reeds, in referring to Roh as the initiator of the term and mentioning its evolution from painting, "Leal helped to reposition magical realism within its proper historical context" (Reeds 57-58). In his essay, Leal emphasised that Carpentier is the one who "has paid this phenomenon the most attention" in Latin America with his *lo real maravilloso* (Leal 1995: 120). His words tied magical realism and *lo real maravilloso* and eventually prompted confusions that magical realism and Carpentier's *lo real maravilloso* are the same thing. Literary critic and professor of Latin American contemporary literature, Emir Rodríguez Monegal emphasised that magical realism and *lo real maravilloso* are dissimilar because Roh's magical realism "was more interested in the phenomenological activity of 'seeing' reality whereas Carpentier's *lo real maravilloso* "substituted Roh's phenomenological approach with an ontological approach" (1977:26-27). Thanks to Monegal, the fact that magical realism and *lo real maravilloso* are actually different concepts was highlighted.

As it is discussed before, Flores claimed that Kafka's renowned novella, *Metamorphosis* (1915) is a genuine example of magical realist fiction, by which Borges was extremely influenced, is another point Leal sharply criticises because he thinks that Kafka's novella does not belong to magical realism but the fantastic. The protagonist Gregor Samsa's turning into a huge cockroach is not explained in the story. Gregor's treating this transformation as a mundane occurrence emphasises the "matter-of-fact magical realist manner" in the story (Bowers 2004:25). On the other hand, when it comes to the reaction of his family to the supernatural, it can be concluded that the story does not have a magical realist manner in this respect. Gregor's family was astonished and frightened when they found out that their son turned into a gigantic insect. In the end, Gregor was killed by his own family due to "his and his family's rejection of the extraordinariness" (ibid.). Though, Gregor himself admits that this transformation is a part of his own destiny, he does not consider the extraordinary as a part of everyday reality. In this case, it is clearly shown that "it is possible to have magical realist elements in a text that is not consistently magical realist in its approach" (ibid.) If the text contains magical realist elements like extraordinary occurrences but denies accepting them as a part of everyday reality, that text cannot be considered as magical realist. For this reason, Leal rejects that Flores' argument that Borges' main inspiration for his work comes from Kafka as he says "the basic characteristic of Kafka's stories is the invention of intolerable situations" (121). Though Leal did not provide a precise definition of magical realism as most of the critics do, he substantially contributed to differentiate magical realism from other movements it is confused with like surrealism, fantastic, allegory and science fiction. Comprehending the difference of the term from other genres and terms is as essential as scrutinising its evolution from painting to

literature. In order to define something, it is a good way to mention what it is not.

Leal (1995) does it quite successfully to distinguish magical realism from other genres which are often confused with it as in the following statement:

Unlike surrealism, magical realism does not use dream motifs; neither does it distort reality or create imagined worlds, as writers of fantastic or science fiction do; nor does it emphasise psychological analysis of characters, since it doesn't try to find reasons for their actions or their inability to express themselves. Magical realism is not an aesthetic movement either, as was modernism, which was interested in creating worlds dominated by a refined style; neither is it interested in the creation of complex structures per se. (121)

He questions the attitude of magical realism towards reality and finds out that magical realists do not create fabricated worlds as authors of fantastic and science fiction do, instead magical realists face reality and try to see the mystery in the mundane and suggests that "[i]n magical realism the writer confronts reality and tries to untangle it, to discover what is mysterious in things, in life, in human acts" (ibid.).

Stretching the roots of the term to Franz Roh, Leal propounds that it was Arturo Uslar Pietri who applied magical realism for the first time in Hispanic America in 1948. Just a year later, Alejo Carpentier was impressed by the term:

In Hispanic America, it seems to have been Arturo Uslar Pietri who first used the term in his book *Letras y hombres de Venezuela* [The Literature and Men of Venezuela] (1948), where he says: "What became prominent in the short story and left an indelible mark there was the consideration of man as a mystery surrounded by realistic facts. A poetic prediction or a poetic denial of reality. What for lack of another name could be called a magical realism." After Uslar Pietri, Alejo Carpentier has paid this phenomenon the most attention. (Leal 120)

In brief, the term magic realism (*magischer Realismus*) was first coined in 1925 by German art critic Franz Roh so as to state the emergence of a new painting trend as a reaction to former movements like expressionism and impressionism. In 1927, the term proceeded on its way to literature with the Italian author Massimo Bontempelli. Having been influenced by Bontempelli, Latin American writers adopted and monopolized the term as the authentic expression of their continent. As Bowers

states, it is Nobel laureate Arturo Uslar Pietri who used the term, magical realism, for the first time in Hispanic America in 1948. Just a year later, Carpentier introduced the term *lo real maravilloso americano* to mention the inherent marvellous in Latin America. In the 1960s, magical realist fiction flourished in Latin America during the boom period. Therefore, this flourishing led many people to associate magical realism only with Latin America. Latin American literature earned an international success with magical realism in the 1960s especially with nobel-winning *One Hundred Years of Solitude* (1967) by Gabriel García Márquez. While they were looking for a national and literary identity independent from the colonizer's imposed identities for them, the Latin American, who have a colonial past, benefitted from magical realism. The fact that magical realism is an effective means for expression not only for the colonized but also for the marginalised also impressed other societies to raise their voice. This explains why it is used widely today not only by post-colonial authors like Salman Rushdie, Gabriel García Márquez, Isabel Allende, Ben Okri but also by Jeannette Winterson, Günter Grass, Angela Carter, Robert Nye, Marina Warner, Latife Tekin and Nazli Eray that do not have a colonial past.

2.2 The Difference between Magical Realism and Other Literary Modes

Magical realism is a controversial and contradictory term not only because of its perplexing history but also its relation to other genres and terms. It is often confused with genres like surrealism, fantastic literature, allegory and science fiction. Comprehending the difference of the term from other genres and terms is as essential as scrutinising its evolution from painting to literature. It is crucial to consider the

realist part of magical realism. Magical realism cannot be separated from realism as one of the components of this oxymoronic term is realism. Its realistic part cannot be ignored completely; however, the difference between magical realism and traditional realism should be taken into account. In his *Glossary of Literary Terms* (1993), M.H. Abrams defines realism as a “recurrent mode in various areas and literary forms, of representing human life and experience in literature” (174). Abrams states that:

[R]ealistic fiction is often opposed the romantic fiction. The romance is said to present life as we would have it be—more picturesque, fantastic, adventurous, or heroic than actuality; realism, on the other hand, is said to represent life as it really is. (ibid.)

Although realism was not widely identified as an art and literature term until the mid-nineteenth century, the term dates back to Greek philosopher Aristotle and his concept of mimesis which is a Greek term meaning imitation. Bowers (2004) states that “the idea of portraying real actions in art was first discussed by Aristotle who claimed that the act of imitating life, or mimesis, is a natural instinct of humans” (20). Bowers also emphasises that it was Aristotle who “paved the way for what we now understand of the realism of fictional narratives” (ibid.). According to Aristotle, observing art is of vital importance in order to find out about the universal truths of life. Therefore, to him, it is essential that art must reflect the real. As Aristotle declares the poet’s task is to write what could happen not what has happened as the historians do. According to Aristotle “poetry, therefore, is a more philosophical and a higher thing than history: for poetry tends to express the universal, history the particular” (Bressler 2007:24).

First of all, magical realism can be considered as a branch of realism because just like literary realism, it also focuses on this world. In magical realist texts, all the

supernatural events really do happen in the world we live. In this respect, it distinguishes itself from fantastic literature and surrealism as magical realism does not need to create imaginary realms, everything happens in this terrestrial realm. Magical realist fiction often includes nonfictional elements such as biography and history. Thus, this feature of magical realism also links it with literary realism. Thus, this characteristic of magical realism verifies its earthly stance. Zamora and Faris also admit magical realism as an extension of literary realism as follows:

So magical realism may be considered an extension of realism in its concern with the nature of reality and its representation, at the same time that it resists the basic assumptions of post-enlightenment rationalism and literary realism. Mind and body, spirit and matter, life and death, real and imaginary, self and other, male and female: these are boundaries to be erased, transgressed, blurred, brought together, or otherwise fundamentally refashioned in magical realist texts. (1995:6)

The quotation shows that magical realism can be regarded as both an extension and a reaction to the flawed authoritarian representation of the 'real' in traditional realism. Traditional realist authors, by the force of the empirical and positivist sympathy of the era, ignoring their own thoughts and feelings, wrote their works in the light of science. Their aim was to demonstrate life as objectively as a mirror reflects it. For this reason, realism enhances its narrative by using real people and events. However, contrary to its claims of impeccable objectivity, realism is not trustworthy because what the reader should accept as real is only limited to what the writer picks up, adds, omits and reorganises. That is, although realism tries to hide its construction, it is a kind of fiction, as well. The notion of the 'real' is based on the rationalist and positivist Western worldview, as the realist writers limit the 'real' according to their own ideology and perspectives. Consequently, it can be thought as a repressive genre. Realism, being a Western-centric dominant genre, brings itself into existence through scientific and empirical laws of those in power. For instance, the fact that

history is always about the winners and power elites results from its being subject to the formal language of realism. Though realism includes particular events its narrative, which are suitable to its political and ideological criteria, magical realism rejects focusing on one single reality with its inclusion of supernatural elements. By creating alternative realities, magical realism is a way to question the claims of reality of the West and gives voice to the underprivileged. Faris alludes to Caliban, inhabitant of the island in Shakespeare's last play *The Tempest*, who learns his master's, Prospero's language to resist his control on the island:

[...] magical realism may resemble Caliban, now something of an icon of new world, or postcolonial writing, who learns the master's language, then uses it to curse. Magical realism has mastered the European discourse of realism and now it uses it to curse, exactly, but to undermine some of its master's assumptions. Just as Caliban's swear words are not the combinations of sounds Prospero intended for him to use, so magical realism's use of realistic detail to describe an impossible event, which moves us beyond everyday reality, rather than anchoring us in it, was not realism's original program. (Faris 2004:28)

To conclude, magical realism is a type of realism; however, it differs from traditional realism in questioning and challenging the authoritarian notions of the real. For instance, in traditional realism, incidents can be explained through empirical thinking whereas in magical realism, occurrences cannot be explained through reason.

Although both realism and magical realism rely on the representation of the real, they are different narrative modes. Magical realism oversteps the limits of realism through rejecting its adherence to a monolithic truth, disrupts what is acceptable as real and creates alternative dimensions to the concept of reality.

Surrealism is another artistic and literary movement which is usually confused with magical realism. Much of these confusion stems from the fact that the emergence of both of them took place in the same era and they both explore the extraordinary.

Surrealism is also known as super realism and emerged between World Wars I and II in France by André Breton's *Manifesto on Surrealism* (1924). What the surrealists aspired to do was to ignore the strict and repressive teachings of the modern society through overthrowing its rational thought. Having been strongly influenced by the revolutionary ideas and works of Freud and Jung on human mind, the surrealists gave superiority to the reality of the unconscious mind. The way they looked at the unconscious mind's effect over the actions and especially the dreams resulted in the surrealists to view art as insufficient without the presence of the inner life in it. According to critic Fowlie, the surrealists regarded that "conscious states of man's being are not sufficient to explain him to himself and others" (1960:16). Therefore, they turned to the unconscious to express inner life. Unlike surrealism, the extraordinary is seldom witnessed as a dream or psychological experience in magical realism because acting this way is in contradiction with the nature of magical realism in terms of taking the magic out of tangible reality and including it in the world of imagination. Bowers states that surrealists tried to "write against realist literature that reflected and reinforced what they considered to be bourgeois society's idea of itself, and magic(al) realism holds immense political possibilities in its disruption of categories" (2004:22). Surrealism and magical realism are often mixed up as they both depend on "non-pragmatic, non-realistic aspects of human existence" (ibid.). Even though, there are similar aspects in these two modes, they are distinct in terms of representing the inner life and psychology of the individual. On the other hand, magical realism gives superiority to the representation of material reality and "the ordinariness of magical realism's magic relies on its accepted and unquestioned position in tangible and material reality" (ibid.).

Fantastic literature is another genre which is often mixed up with magical realism.

Magical realism is often erroneously assumed as a subgenre of fantastic fiction.

Although fantasy and magical realism share the quality of including supernatural and magical elements, there are some nuances in terms of their treatment of the supernatural. In order to distinguish these subtleties between the two, examining the definition of fantastic is essential. In his book *The Fantastic: A Structural Approach to a Literary Genre* (1975), Russian structuralist Tzvetan Todorov defines fantastic as a moment of hesitation between the belief and disbelief of the supernatural.

Todorov sets three conditions so as to consider a text fantastic:

First, the text must oblige the reader to consider the world of the characters as a world of living persons and to hesitate between a natural and supernatural explanation of the events described. Second, this hesitation may also be experienced by a character; thus the reader's role is so to speak entrusted to a character, and at the same time hesitation is represented, it becomes one of the themes of the work—in the case of naive reading, the actual reader identifies himself with the character. Third, the reader must adopt a certain attitude with regard to the text: he will reject allegorical as well as "poetic" interpretations. These three requirements do not have an equal value. The first and the third actually constitute the genre; the second may not be fulfilled. Nonetheless, most examples satisfy all three conditions. (1975:33)

After setting three conditions for regarding a text fantastic in his influential study,

Todorov clearly manifests the difference between the fantastic and magical realism as he says "[t]he fantastic, we have seen, lasts only as long as a certain hesitation: a hesitation common to reader and character, who must decide whether or not what they perceive derives from 'reality' as it exists in the common opinion" (ibid.,41).

Todorov puts emphasis on the hesitation as an integral part of the fantastic and this hesitation is maintained throughout the text by the hesitation of a character, thus, the hesitation of the reader is kept alive. On the other hand, in magical realism as Faris clearly points out in her article "Scheherazade's Children: Magical Realism and Postmodern Fiction" (1995) "Magical realism combines realism and the fantastic in

such a way that magical elements grow organically out of the reality portrayed” (163). In magical realism as the supernatural elements are regarded as a part of daily life, the magical realist author does not have the responsibilities like finding logical explanations for the supernatural elements or persuading the reader to believe in anything. Characters in magical realist fiction take the magical events for granted without questioning the logic behind the supernatural incidents.

The most striking feature of a magical realist text is the concept of resolving the contradiction between the real and the supernatural. According to Eva Aldea (2011), Amaryll Chanady’s work *Magical Realism and the Fantastic* (1985) which focuses on the resolution of the conflict between the real and the supernatural, includes “one of the few fully developed and most convincing definitions of the genre” (10). In her work, Chanady chiefly investigates the magical realist works of Latin American writers by Marquez, Carpentier and Asturias. Aldea states that Chanady’s definition of magical realism is based on its contrast between the fantastic regarding “its narrative treatment of the natural and supernatural” (ibid.). In her *Ordinary Enchantments: Magical Realism and the Remystification of Narrative* (2004), Faris points out that the magic in magical realist fiction is apparent and the readers “barely hesitate” due to the strategy which is “the narrator’s acceptance of the magic modelling our own” (20). Chanady names this strategy as “authorial reticence” which the narrator presents magical elements amidst ordinary ones without registering surprise and this causes readers to suspend disbelief. In her study *Magical Realism and the Fantastic: Resolved Versus Unresolved Antinomy* (1985), Chanady explains the main difference between the fantastic and magical realism:

In contrast to the fantastic, the supernatural in magical realism does not disconcert the reader, and this is the fundamental difference between the two

modes. The same phenomena that are portrayed as problematical by the author of a fantastic narrative are presented in a matter-of-fact manner by the magical realist. (24)

According to Chanady, authorial reticence, that is authors' not making any comments on the magical, naturalises the supernatural in magical realist fiction. Because the fantastic encodes hesitation, it presents antinomy, "the simultaneous presence of two conflicting codes in the text," as unresolved. On the contrary, because the magical realist narrator accepts the antinomy and promotes the same acceptance in the reader, the antinomy is resolved. In contrast to the fantastic, magical realism does not problematise the supernatural as incongruous with our understanding of reality. Amaryll Chanady claims that naturalizing the supernatural in magical realist fiction shatters the contradiction between the real and the supernatural (36) which is the opposite case in the fantastic. Chanady's main point is that while the fantastic presents the opposition between the natural and the supernatural as unresolved, in magical realism the case is just the opposite. As in magical realist texts, "the supernatural is not presented as problematic" (Chanady 23), the antinomy is resolved. In magical realism, although the events may seem extraordinary to the reader, they are accepted by the characters without questioning. Consequently, the main difference between magical realism and the fantastic is the characters' treating the supernatural as everyday matters in magical realism.

Magical realist fiction is sometimes mistaken for science fiction, as well. Many people tend to regard science fiction as a form of fantasy fiction as it includes elements about space and the future. Supernatural and unusual occurrences in science fiction require "a rational, physical explanation" (Bowers 2004:28). In order to clarify the difference between science fiction and magical realism, Bowers sets

Aldous Huxley's magnum opus *Brave New World* (1932) as an example. The novel sets in a dystopian totalitarian world in which the population is controlled by mood boosting drugs and a policed class system. The difference of science fiction from magical realism is that "it is set in a world different from any known reality and its realism resides in the fact that we can recognise it as a possibility for our future" (ibid.). Unlike magical realism, it does not have a realistic setting that is recognisable in relation to any past or present reality. Hegerfeldt states that "in science fiction, the elements that constitute departures from realism likewise are fully integrated into the world of the text, again rendering it unidimensional" (54). In other words, she underlines the importance of adherence to the real in magical realism and two codes, the real and the supernatural, should remain intact in magical realist fiction and draws attention to bi-dimensionality of it. Proposing that magical realism's bi-dimensionality comes from "its evocation and subsequent transgression of the narrative conventions of literary realism", Hegerfeldt concludes that "science fiction significantly differs from the marvellous in that its impossible events are based on rational-scientific norms of logic, making the world of science fiction an extrapolation of our own"(ibid.).

Another frequently associated fictional narrative with magical realism is allegory. In *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms* (2001), allegory is defined as "a story or visual image with a second distinct meaning partially hidden behind its literal or visible meaning" (Baldick 5). According to Bowers, allegory is a narrative that is composed of double-layered meaning. "On one level the narrative makes sense as a plot. On another level, there is an alternative meaning to the plot which is often more philosophically profound than the plot itself" (ibid. 25). Then she gives one of the most cited and remarkable works as an example of allegory, *Gulliver's*

Travels (1726) by Jonathan Swift. Set in extraordinary and unknown lands, the plot depicts a man's travels and he narrates his adventures to his dubious friends when he returns to his homeland. The other level of interpretation suggests that it can also be read as a "comparative criticism of the ways human beings react to each other and other animals" (ibid. 26). In allegorical narrative, the plot is usually considered as insignificant compared to the alternative meaning which is based on the reader's interpretation. According to Bowers, what makes it challenging to blend allegory with magical realism is that "as the importance of the alternative meaning interferes with the need for the reader to accept the reality of the magical aspects of the plot" (ibid.). According to Faris, what distinguishes magical realism from allegory and fantasy is "the realism in magical realism" and the existence of the phenomenal world resembling the one we live in (2004:14). Nevertheless, magical realism fits neither of these categories exactly. Although both traditional realism and magical realism focus on the realistic side of life and they do not create imaginary worlds as fantastic literature does, there is a striking difference between them. In traditional realism, all the events can be explained through rational, empirical thinking. On the other hand, in magical realism, events which happen in a realistic context do not need to be explained by reason. Magical events are treated as everyday matters in magical realist fiction. This particular aspect of the mode differentiates from both fantastic literature and surrealism in that as in fantastic literature, there are no prefabricated, invented worlds and as in surrealism, the supernatural does not happen solely in the minds of the characters.

2.3 Characteristics of Magical Realism

As it is discussed, it is hard to pinpoint a single definition and the same thing is valid for its characteristics, as well. Due to its discursive progress, magical realism has achieved various definitions and attributes in time. Although it seems challenging to reach a consensus on its definitions, history and characteristics, Frederic Jameson says that “it retains a strange seductiveness” (1986:302). In her book *Ordinary Enchantments: Magical Realism and the Demystification of Narrative* (2004), Wendy B. Faris, one of the most frequently-quoted critics of magical realism, determines five primary characteristics that a magical realist fiction should possess. In order to regard a text magical realist, the text should bear the following traits: the irreducible element, the phenomenal world, unsettling doubts, merging realms and disruption of time, space and identity.

The first characteristic that Faris presents is the irreducible element of magic which stands for “something we cannot explain according to the laws of the universe” (7). These laws of the universe cannot be explained as “they have been formulated in Western empirically based discourse, that is, according to logic, familiar knowledge, or received belief” (ibid.,9). In other words, supernatural incidents cannot be explained through reason and empirical thinking. The supernatural in magical realism is beyond scientific explanation. Erickson states that magical realism is dissimilar to fantastic and surrealism “by simultaneously presenting the ‘magical’ and the ‘real’ realms as coexisting, not the displacement of one by the other” (2005:248). Although there is no other way to explain the magic in magical realism, it should be seen as something natural by the characters. To clarify what she means

by the irreducible element Faris provides some examples from well-known magical realist texts:

[...] in *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, Remedios the Beauty “really” ascends heavenward; Saleem Sinai in Salman Rushdie’s *Midnight’s Children* “really” is made invisible by his future wife, Parvati; Grenouille in Patrick Süskind’s *Perfume* “really” distills a powerful and intoxicating human scent from the bodies of virgins. (8)

As Faris states “the narrative voice reports extraordinary-magical-events, which would not normally be verifiable by sensory perception, in the same way in which other, ordinary events are recounted” (2004:7). In short, as the author reports the supernatural as in the same manner as the real, the supernatural incidents are considered as ordinary. The second primary characteristic of a magical realist text that Faris proposes is the necessity of existence of the phenomenal world. Through the intensive use of details from the phenomenal world, “realistic descriptions create a fictional world that resembles the one that we live in” (ibid.,14). The presence of the phenomenal world highlights the significance of realism in magical realism and this is the point that differentiates it from fantastic and allegory. Furthermore, magical realism cannot be considered as an escapist literature like fantastic, as everything occurs in the world we live.

In addition to the use of extensive details of the phenomenal world, reference to the historical realities of the phenomenal world is the second point that Faris discusses. Political critiques behind the supernatural is one of the most essential features of magical realist fiction due to authors’ inclination to debunk the political realities, cruelties and official historical accounts. As Faris states in an earlier article “Scheherazade’s Children: Magical Realism and Postmodern Fiction”, “in magical realist fictions, we witness an idiosyncratic recreation of historical events, but events

grounded firmly in historical realities-often alternate versions of officially sanctioned accounts” (Faris 1995:170). Foster Jr. (1995) points out the capacity of magical realism to readdress the political issues and criticise biased official historiography and says “magical realists characteristically responded to the harshness of modern history by developing a compensatory vision” (271). To give an example, in *One Hundred Years of Solitude* (1967), Marquez recasts history as magical realism is considered as “a powerful form of indirect political resistance” (Bowers 39):

His writing often concerns historical tragedies of such as civil wars, the rule of a dictator or an act of brutality by the army against its own people; for example, *One Hundred Years of Solitude* includes an account of a banana workers’ strike in Garcia Marquez’s coastal region during the civil war when the army shot and killed many of the strikers. Due to denial by the military regime that the event took place, a lack of official records and the unreliability of speculation in the region, the exact number of workers killed is not known. In Garcia Marquez’s version although the massacre is witnessed by Jose Arcadio, he can later no one to agree with what he saw and the massacre becomes a myth of little interest to the people. Here, Garcia Marquez is playing with the idea of denial, taking it to an extreme where denial is transformed into complete ignorance. (ibid.)

According to this, Marquez used magical realism in *One Hundred Years of Solitude* as a political tool so as to express historical atrocities, manipulation of reality and unreliability of documents by a corrupt government. By adopting magical realism as a narrative mode, he rejects realism and dictatorial history imposed by the corrupt government. Since magical realism blurs the lines between reality and the supernatural, it challenges the reliability of official history only written by the dominant ideology. Official history works only for the interest of authorities and it is altered and misrepresented by them. Criticising realism through the adoption of magical realism, Marquez retells the history of Latin America, especially his home country Colombia and presents alternative realities from the point of view of the oppressed. This demonstrates that official history does not reflect the reality and excludes the voices of the marginalised in the society; therefore, it remains

insufficient and impartial in terms of presenting the realities. Magical realism has the capacity to reflect the reality in all dimensions unlike that is imposed on us. Realities are distorted for the interest those who write it and this can be clearly seen in *One Hundred Years of Solitude* as follows ““You must have been dreaming”, the officers insisted. “Nothing happens in Macondo, nothing has ever happened in Macondo, and nothing ever will happen in Macondo. This is a happy town” (García Márquez 1978: 252). In *The Fragrance of Guava: Conversations with Gabriel Garcia Marquez* (1982) which includes interviews with him, Marquez underlines the inadequacy of realism to reflect the reality in all dimensions as he says “realism is a kind of premeditated literature that offers too static and exclusive version of reality. However, good or bad they may be, they are books which finish on the last page” (qtd. Simpkins 148). He does not consider realism as a sufficient and satisfactory mode as he states that realistic texts are “much less an accurate presentation of the thing in itself” (ibid.,). In order to highlight and exalt the superiority of magical realism in terms of reflecting the reality in all dimensions, Marquez says that “disproportion is part of our reality, too. Our reality is itself out of all proportion” (ibid.,). In short, magical realism has the capacity to present the events beyond it is seen and as Simpkins says “Marquez suggests that the magic text is, paradoxically, more realistic than a “realistic” text” (ibid.,).

Similarly, *The House of the Spirits* (1982) by Isabel Allende reflects the historical brutalities and turmoil in Chile through the integration of magical realism and just like Marquez Allende rejects reality made up by those in power. Allende’s novel, a family saga, takes place in Chile and reflects the atrociousness and barbarousness of the military dictatorship of Augusto Pinochet (1915-2006). Although the name and historical figures are not directly mentioned in the novel, there are references to them

as The President stands for Isabel Allende's father's cousin and her godfather Salvador Allende who was a Marxist Chilean President between the years 1970 and 1973. Salvador Allende committed suicide during the Chilean coup d'état. Moreover, the character The Poet refers to Nobel laureate Chilean poet Pablo Neruda and the character Pedro Tercero refers to Chilean folk singer Victor Jara whose hands were mutilated before being killed during the dictatorship of Pinochet. Just like this mutilation happened in Chilean history, in the novel, Pedro Tercero, who is a folk singer like Victor Jara, is exposed to mutilation by the patriarch of the novel, Esteban Trueba. Similar to the case in *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, the brutality of dictatorship and the massacre during the military coup were hidden from the public and official history in *The House of the Spirits*. To give an example, under the military government, while the majority of the citizens were being tortured and disappeared, all the streets were cleaned up, walls were painted and flowers were planted. In other words, the realities were covered up and hidden from the public. Isabel Allende had to flee from Chile and she started to live in exile in Venezuela for thirteen years. While she was in exile, she could write about the cruelty and oppressiveness in her country. It can be concluded that adopting magical realism as a narrative mode, Allende refuses official history and she retells the story of her country with an alternative perspective. Zamora and Faris put emphasis on the capacity of magical realism to distort the way official history is told as they state "magical realism as a literary practice also subverts the way history is told by transgressing boundaries of literary realism to fuse the world of the "mind and body, spirit and matter...male and female" (1995:6). In order to show the capability of magical realism to accuse political brutalities:

Magical realist texts are subversive: their in-betweenness, their all-at-onceness encourages resistance to monolithic political and cultural structures, a feature that has made the mode particularly useful to postcolonial cultures and, increasingly, to women. Hallucinatory scenes and events, fantastic/phantasmagoric characters are used [...] to indict recent political and cultural perversions. History is inscribed, often in detail, but in such a way that actual events and existing institutions are not always privileged and are certainly not limiting: historical narrative is no longer chronicle but clairvoyance. (ibid.)

The Passion (1987) by Jeanette Winterson, the first primary work that will be examined in this thesis, sets in the period of Napoleonic Wars (1803-1815) in France. The novel makes direct references to historical figures like Napoleon and Josephine. Hegerfeldt also states that “The Passion” uses Napoleon’s military campaigns as megastory” (2005:76). It is narrated by two different narrators. The first one is Henri, a young soldier who joins the army as a passionate supporter of Napoleon and becomes a member of his army kitchen staff. The second narrator is Villanelle, who is a bisexual Venetian woman with magical properties, cross dresses and works at a casino in Venice. Retelling the history from the perspective of two marginalised figures in the society—a soldier and a vivandière, *The Passion* presents alternatives to traditional history and enables to see the unseen thanks to multiple points of views. Hegerfeldt points out how realism is installed and instantly destroyed in *The Passion* as she says “the opening paragraphs of Winterson’s *The Passion* likewise install and immediately subvert realism. References to Napoleon and Josephine and much realistic detail are counteracted by pictures of fantastic excess” (77). In *The Passion*, just like the majority of magical realist texts that refer to official history, an alternative account of history is offered by the rewriting of official history.

The third primary characteristic of magical realist texts presented by Faris is unsettling doubts. As Faris suggests “before categorizing the irreducible element as

irreducible, the reader may hesitate between two contradictory understanding of events, and hence experience some unsettling doubts” (*Ordinary Enchantments* 17).

Faris underlines that these doubts can differ from the reader’s cultural upbringing:

The question of belief is central here, this hesitation frequently stemming 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. And because belief systems differ, clearly, some readers in some cultures will hesitate less than others, depending on their beliefs and narrative traditions. (ibid.)

According to Faris, “the contemporary Western reader’s primary doubt is most often between understanding an event as a character’s dream or hallucination and, alternatively, understanding it as a miracle” (ibid.). Toni Morrison’s *Beloved* (1987), one of the most renowned novels of magical realism, is exemplified by Faris in order to explain the unsettling doubts. The character Beloved moves in a provoking fashion between two options as she affects our rationalist tendencies to come to terms with antinomies or choose what is marvellous. Women around Sethe’s house ask themselves, “Was it the dead daughter come back? or a pretend? Was it whipping Sethe?” (258). After that, Beloved fades away. “Disappeared, some say, exploded right before their eyes. Ella is not so sure. ‘Maybe,’ she says, ‘maybe not. Could be hiding in the trees waiting for another chance’” (268). However, at the end of the novel, Beloved is forgotten like a bad dream. As in this scene, magical realist scenes tend to seem dreamlike. Nevertheless, as Faris also underlines they are not just dreams and “the text may both tempt us to co-opt them by categorizing them as dreams and forbid that co-option (*Ordinary Enchantments* 17-18). In magical realist texts, supernatural occurrences such as Remedios’s ascension to heaven, the flying Carpets, and Jose Arcadio’s blood travelling around Macondo in *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, Beloved’s tiny handprints appearing in the cake, revival of the dead in

both *The White Hotel* (1981) by D.M.Thomas, Clara's and Ferula's spirits appearing in *The House of the Spirits*, Mama Elana's appearing to Tita in *Like Water for Chocolate* are prevalent and these events are displayed matter-of-factly by the narrator. In magical realist texts, these unsettling doubts can be invented with some scenes which may seem dreamlike. Nonetheless, as Faris states "they are not dreams, and the text may both tempt us to co-opt them by categorizing them as dreams and forbid that co-option" (*Ordinary Enchantments* 17-18). Although hesitation depends on the reader's cultural background, in some cases, hesitation level is the same for all the readers. This situation can be exemplified with a character from *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, Pilar Ternara who is more than 145 of age. This creates equal hesitation for the readers from diverse cultural backgrounds. On the other hand, as Faris points out, in many examples of magical realist texts, "magic in magical realism is clear and we barely hesitate" due to "the narrator's acceptance of the magic modelling our own" (ibid.,19). This manner of presentation reminds Amaryll Chanady's differentiation between magical realism and the fantastic in her work *Magical Realism and the Fantastic* (1985) as she said:

In contrast to the fantastic, the supernatural in magical realism does not disconcert the reader, and this is the fundamental difference between the two modes. The same phenomena that are portrayed as problematical by the author of a fantastic narrative are presented in a matter-of-fact manner by the magical realist. Because the fantastic encodes hesitation, it presents antinomy, the simultaneous presence of two conflicting codes in the text, as unresolved. On the contrary, because the magical realist narrator accepts the antinomy and promotes the same acceptance in the reader, the antinomy is resolved.

On the other hand, according to Faris, despite the fact that majority of magical realist authors accept the divergence between magic and realism, and encourage their readers to do the same, many others do not accept this separation between the two and this leads to hesitation of the readers. In contrast to Chanady's idea that thanks to

the naturalisation of the supernatural by the author, the antinomy is resolved for the readers, Faris states that “the narrator’s acceptance of antinomy does not overcome our hesitation completely; thus the hesitation tends often to remain rather than being totally resolved” (20). The reason for these unsettling doubts is that “even when the text does not entice to hesitate, we readers’ investment in the codes of realism is still so strong”, therefore the unsettling doubts of the reader remains.

The fourth characteristic that Faris presents as primary is merging realms. In magical realist texts, the reader experiences the existence of various realms and closeness of these. Near-merging of two realms is exemplified by Marie Darrieussecq’s first novel, *Pig Tales* (1996), in which the narrator transforms into a sow. Therefore, it can be concluded that in magical realist texts, the narrator and sometimes characters are at the intersection of two realms and they belong neither to the one realm nor the other. In his *Postmodernist Fiction* (1987), Brian McHale while defining what he names as postmodern fantastic, he says that in these works as in Carlos Fuentes’ novella *Aura* (1962), “some representative of our world penetrates an outpost of the other world, the world next door and this precipitates a confrontation between real-world norms (the laws of nature) and other-worldly, supernatural norms” (McHale 75). According to Faris, magical realist texts are at the threshold of multiple worlds and they are like “a double-sided mirror that reflects in both directions” (21). For instance, in Allende’s *The House of the Spirits*, the protagonist Clara, who is a clairvoyant, communicates with the spirits throughout her lifetime. That is to say, Clara remains in a limbo situation during her lifetime and she neither entirely belongs to this world nor the other. Before she dies, she tells her granddaughter Alba

that “if she could easily communicate with those from the Hereafter, she was absolutely convinced that afterward she would be able to do the same with those of the Here-and-Now” (Allende 322). After her death, she is able to communicate with her loved ones. For example, when Alba is tortured during her interrogation after the military coup, Clara’s spirit appears to her and encourages her to survive.

In addition, the presentation of diverse realities in magical realist texts blurs the limits between fact and fiction, which is one of the shared characteristics of magical realism with postmodernism as Faris also points out:

As we are seeing, with respect to the realm of the referent, reports of irreducible elements of magic question post-Enlightenment science’s empirical definition of the world. With respect to the realm of the discourse, those reports of magic question the code of realism, and the texts foreground the constructed nature of fiction. In both cases, magical realism blurs borders between categories. It also begins to erode the categories themselves because the link between empirically constructed perceptions of reality and realistically constructed fictional discourse means that to question one is to question the other. (2004:23)

In other words, magical realist fiction problematizes and questions the empirical reality via the use of the supernatural. The inclusion of magic allows the reader to question what is real and the constructed nature of fiction. It enables the reader to interrogate the validity of what is real.

The last primary characteristic that Faris proposes in order to regard a text as magical realist is disruptions of time, space and identity. The disruption of time in magical realist texts is exemplified by *One Hundred Years of Solitude*. In the novel, our usual perception of time is demolished as there is “four years, eleven months, and two days” of rain, an insomnia plague that erases the past and the meaning of words, and a room where it is “always March and always Monday”. Faris exemplifies the fragmentation of space with Carlos Fuentes’ novel, *Distant Relations* (1980), in

which tropical plants grow over the automobile club's pool in Paris. Lastly, identity is shattered in magical realist texts and this identity disruption is manifested through Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* (1981). Being an outstanding example of postcolonial, postmodern and magical realist literature, in *Midnight's Children*, the protagonist of the novel, Saleem Sinai, is born at the precise moment when India gained its independence on 15 August, 1947. Saleem later finds out that all the children who were born at the exact moment of India's independence are gifted with telepathic powers like himself. Faris says that "the multivocal nature of the narrative and the cultural hybridity that characterise magical realism extends to its characters, which tend toward a radical multiplicity" (25). This situation is depicted by Faris through Saleem's questioning his own identity. "With over five hundred children of midnight talking through his head, for example, is Saleem himself anymore?" (ibid.,). In order to emphasise the disruption of identity in magical realist texts, Saleem's interrogating his own identity is quoted by Faris:

Who what am I? My answer: I am the sum total of everything done-to-me. I am everyone everything whose being-in-the-world affected was affected by mine. I am anything that happens after I've gone which would not have happened if I had not come. Nor am I particularly exceptional in this matter; each 'I', every one of the now-six-hundred-million-plus of us, contains a similar multitude. I repeat for the last time: to understand me, you'll have to swallow a world. (Rushdie 457-8)

2.4 Magical Realism in Post-colonial and Postmodern Philosophy

2.4.1 Magical Realism and Post-colonialism

Inasmuch as magical realism enables the clashing worlds to intertwine with each other as it does not intend to conciliate the discrepancies in associating the religious, political and cultural variety; it attracts attention of the authors all over the world due

to its destructive potential and political dimension. Therefore, magical realism has become a kind of approach in which the authors of the Boom of Latin America have had the chance to convey the economic, cultural, social and political matters and the problems of their own countries from different aspects. As Donald L. Shaw states in his *The Post-Boom in Spanish American Fiction*, these writers sought for a literary identity indigenous to their continent, that is why Latin American literature and magical realism are related to post-colonialism (Shaw 1998:5).

Most of the Latin American countries gained their independence at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Hence, it would not be right to identify Latin American magical realism as totally postcolonial as it was asserted before the introduction of postcolonial theory. Latin American countries could not establish themselves as nation-states and mostly dictators and military leaders ruled them. In another respect, newly-established states did not have the central authority and they experienced political disunity and bloody civil wars. As a result of these, Latin American countries could not fulfil the requirements of modernity. So, they were called Third World countries. In this view, it would be more accurate to classify Latin American countries as neo-colonial rather than post-colonial.

Fikret Arargüç points out that these fields are analyzed in the post-colonial studies because of two reasons: The first of them is that the conditions of the Third World countries and the post-colonial countries were almost the same. The second reason is that the scholars are inclined to assume the cultures in which the effect of colonial powers are clear as postcolonial. In this point, it can be said that as magical realism is analyzed in the post-colonial studies, the inclination to limit the magical realism by

the boundaries of Latin America seems meaningless because magical realism is an appropriate way of rendering the hybrid and the divergent cultures.

Post-colonialism makes a sweeping assumption of those who are different from itself as “the other”. Focusing on the relationship between the colonizer and the colonized, it tries to define concepts from a postcolonial aspect. Therefore, post-colonial literature became a way of shaping a new identity and to protest the colonial ideas. In *Magic(al) Realism*, Maggie Ann Bowers states:

[T]he effects of colonialism were not just the imposition of one nation’s rule over another, but it included attempts to change the colonized people’s ways of thinking and belief to accept the cultural attitudes and definitions of the colonial power. This often involved the attempt by colonial rulers to define the colonized people and their nation from the colonizers’ perspective and to impose a homogeneous, authoritative historical and cultural identity on the colonized nation. (92)

Hence, post-colonialism is not only an uprising against the rule of the colonizer but it is also a counteraction to the definitions of the colonizers. Post-colonial literature plays an important political role and challenges the authority of colonialism. From this point of view, some common points are clear between post-colonialism and magical realism. In *Colonial and Postcolonial Literature: Migrant Metaphors*, Elleke Boehmer identifies this parity suggesting:

Drawing on the special effects of magical realism, postcolonial writers in English are able to express their view of a world fissured, distorted, and made incredible by cultural clash and displacement. Like the Latin Americans, they combine the supernatural with legend and imagery derived from colonialist cultures to represent societies which have been repeatedly unsettled by invasion, occupation, and political corruption. Magic effects, therefore, are used at once to convey and indict the follies of both empire and its aftermath. (Boehmer 2005: 229)

The scholars have been discussing for a long while the ways of and the reasons why magical realist narratives are widely adapted to expressing postcolonial affairs such as cultural deformity and displacement.

Another critic who proposes that magical realism has much in common with post-colonialism is Amaryll Beatrice Chanady. She compares magical realism with fantastic literature. According to her, an important feature which is mutual in both magical realism and fantastic literature is quite clear. It is the existence of two contrasting perspectives: Both natural and supernatural elements are identified together in the context of the novel. Due to these features, two different forms of realities in the narration are undeniable. The reader of fantastic literature, at first, becomes doubtful to believe in which forms of reality. However, s/he overcomes this doubt with the rational explanation of the narrator, which causes supernatural to lose its sense of reality. Thus, in fantastic literature, two forms of realities are debased into one form which is rational. Nevertheless, in magical realism, it is quite different. The forms of realities are not debased into one form. One of the certain traits of magical realism mentioned frequently by critics is the occurrence of the supernatural, or anything that is contrary to our conventional view of reality (Chanady 18). Thence, in magical realism, the reader should accept both realities equally throughout the text and this is what makes magical realism different from fantastic literature.

The aim of a magical realist writer is to create an atmosphere in which they are seen as daily events rather than unusual because of the fact that they are presented in the daily reality. By this way, supernatural elements in the text become natural and this makes magical realism an appropriate mode for post-colonial goals.

Stephen Slemon is another critic who proposes that magical realism is a suitable mode to articulate post-colonial aims by pointing out the opposing world-views. In

her *Magic(al) Realism*, Maggie Ann Bowers suggests three post-colonial elements that magical realism can set forth:

First, due to its dual narrative structure, magical realism is able to present the context from both the colonized peoples' and the colonizer's perspectives through its narrative structure as well as its themes. Second, it is able to produce a text which reveals the tensions and gaps of cultural representation in such a context. 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 view of the colonized. (Bowers 92)

In magical realist texts, the existence of both the magical and the real is the bottom line that he aims attention at. The inclination of magical realism to these two different discourses is similar to the inclination of post-colonialism to the culture of the colonized. In accordance with the postcolonial approach, magical realism should neither praise nor criticize any perspectives throughout the novel. In this point, Stephen Slemon suggests "the texts recapitulate a post-colonial account of the social and historical relations of the culture in which they are set in" (409). It is apparent that the conflict of opposing views in magical realism reflects the connection between the colonizer and the colonized allegorically. Slemon sets forth that "the magic realist can be read as reflecting in its language of narration real condition of speech and cognition within the social relations of a postcolonial culture" (411), regarding magical realism as a war between individual voices. Nonetheless, Christopher Warnes identifies it with post-colonialism. He suggests:

[Magical realism] is a mode of narration that naturalises or normalises the supernatural; that is to say, a mode in which real and fantastic, natural and supernatural, are coherently represented in a state of equivalence. On the level of the text neither has a greater claim to truth or referentiality. (qtd. in Duncan 105)

Finally, the link between the magical realism and the post-colonialism has been interpreted by the British critics almost in the same way. In her *Lies that Tell the*

Truth, Anne C. Hegerfeldt mentions this argumentative point and argues that magical realism could easily be linked with post-colonialism. She sets forth that some critics call magical realism a “backward colonialism” which seeks to rejoice the metropolitan literature by addressing to the marginal sides (Hegerfeldt 3). In addition to this, she also states:

Magic realist fiction is very much a literature of the real insofar as it scrutinizes and recreates the experience of living in a complex and frequently confusing world. Functioning almost as a fictional counterpart to anthropological or sociological studies, works of magic realism investigate the various strategies by which individuals and communities try, and always have tried, to make sense of reality. (ibid. 7)

She accepts that it is an appropriate mode to protest the assertive viewpoint of the West and thinks that magical realism should not be limited and linked with just one movement because “it is a global mode in that it suggests that all human thought tends to take recourse to multiple [...] (ibid. 303). Furthermore, she asserts that all these do not belong to just Latin America saying “[a]s cardinal strategies of meaning-making, these are generally employed in human attempts to deal with reality, be it in a postcolonial or a Western context” (ibid. 345).

Consequently, magical realism becomes a tool for writers to express a non-dominant or non-Western viewpoint. It can be from a feminist, postcolonial or rural standpoint, in resistance to dominant cultural discourse. Brenda Cooper emphasizes:

[M]agical realism and its associated styles and devices is alternatively characterized as a transgressive mechanism that parodies Authority, the Establishment and the Law, and also as the opposite of all of these, as a domain of play, desire and fantasy for the rich and powerful. (qtd. in Bowers 97)

It is clear that magical realism is a means to convey messages against the dominant side. It is also called a battle between two oppositional systems. The oppressed attempted to express themselves highlighting certain incidents using magic in a daily

context. Also, the colonized used this literary approach against the colonizer. Thus, all these features indicate that magical realism is so suited to expressing postcolonial issues such as cultural deformity and displacement.

2.4.2 Magical Realism, Postmodernism and Postmodern Philosophy of History

Defining postmodernism is as challenging as defining magical realism. Magical realism and postmodernism, both of which can be considered as problematic in terms of not having a single definition, flourished approximately around the same period. It is of crucial importance to investigate magical realism within the scope of postmodernism as regard to their common features. Both postmodernism and magical realism assume a sceptical approach towards authoritative concepts and solid totalizations on certainty of knowledge, historiography and language. Magical realist texts transgress the constraints of the knowable and they are genuinely postmodern in terms of their refusal of binary and fixed notions that Western modernity imposes. In his article, “Magic Realism and Postmodernism: Decentering Privileged Centers” (1995), Theo D’haen says that just like magical realism, postmodernism has been acknowledged since the 1960s. The former emerged in South America whereas the latter emerged in North America around the same period. He also adds that it is the 1980s during which postmodernism “has come to stand for a general movement in the arts, and even in forms of behaviour and daily life” (192). The reason why the term postmodernism is usually preferred over magical realism to describe the works of leading writers of the West by critics is apparent. As magical realism is a literary mode that became recognized and identified particularly with Latin America which was considered as “the continent most ex-centric to the

‘privileged centers’ of power” (200), the term postmodernism has gained a wider acceptance in literary circles worldwide since postmodernism is associated with North America, undoubtedly a more privileged center of power during the time both terms emerged. Therefore, D’haen constitutes a hierarchical relationship between postmodernism and magical realism, saying “the latter comes to denote a particular strain of the contemporary movement covered by the former” (194). However, it can be said that highlighting the hierarchical superiority of postmodernism over magical realism is ironical since postmodernism is against the ideology of having a privileged center. Therefore, by marginalizing and decentering magical realism and regarding its status as inferior to postmodernism, postmodernists contradict themselves. D’haen quotes Lernout who asserts in his essay “Postmodernist Fiction in Canada” that “what is postmodern in the rest of the world used to be magic realist in South America and still goes by that name in Canada” (qtd.in D’haen 194). This quotation once more shows the interconnectedness between the two terms. D’haen identifies the qualities of postmodern fiction as follows: “self-reflexiveness, metafiction, eclecticism, redundancy, multiplicity, discontinuity, intertextuality, parody, dissolution of character and narrative instance, erased boundaries, and destabilisation of the reader” (192-193). D’haen quotes Carlos Fuentes as he aims to highlight the quality of magical realism in terms of decentering dominant discourses as he says “there are “no privileged centers of culture, race and politics” (qtd.in D’haen 194). Magical realism intersects with postmodernism since both movements refuse to speak from a particular center which is one of the most vital qualities of magical realism according to D’haen as he asserts that “It is precisely the notion of the ex-centric, in the sense of speaking from the margin, from a place “other” than “the” or “a” center, that seems to me an essential feature of that strain of postmodernism we

call magic realism” (ibid.). It can be concluded that the rejection of magical realism to speak from a particular center gives magical realism an opportunity to ignore and displace the dominant discourse voluntarily. D’haen’s main argument is that magical realism is a powerful device to assault the dominant discourses through decentering.

It is a way of access to the main body of “Western” literature for authors not sharing in, or not writing from the perspective of, the privileged centers of this literature for reasons of language, class, race or gender, and yet avoiding epigonism by avoiding the adoption of views of the hegemonic forces together with their discourse. Alternatively, it is a means for writers coming from the privileged centers of literature to dissociate themselves from their own discourses of power, and to speak on behalf of the ex-centric and un-privileged. (D’haen 195)

Magical realism intersects with postmodernism in the way of tackling history as an unreliable concept. The powerful exclude the voice of the ex-centric “the privileged center discourse leaves no room for a ‘realistic’ insertion of those that history- always speaking the language of victors and rulers- has denied a voice, such an act of recuperation can only happen by magic or fantastic or unrealistic means”(ibid.,197). Along similar lines with D’haen, Hegerfeldt avers that magical realism can be regarded as a protest against Western rationality and empiricism. She suggests that “magic realist techniques further challenge the hegemony of the Western world-view by unsettling received notions about literary genres, the use of language and objectivity of science and history, about who can be regarded as reliable, and what can assuredly be accepted as real” (ibid. 346). She arrives at a conclusion that mere rationality and science cannot explain all the dimensions of the world and human experiences. Therefore, magical realism turns out to be a beneficial complementary mode when it comes to create alternative modes of knowledge to compensate for the fixed Western worldview. She underlines the significance of magical realism in terms of its demonstrating absolute knowledge as unattainable as she says “in

making human acts of meaning-making transparent, magic realist fiction at the same time emphasizes the extent to which all knowledge is based on acts of construction” (ibid. 7). Ceaselessly demonstrating its status as a construct and fiction, magical realist works blur the line between the real and fiction, and challenge the Western claim to the possibility of reaching the absolute truth. The striking similarities between magical realism and postmodernism paved the way for magical realism to be analyzed within postmodernism due to its interest in transgressing borders, challenging all the fixed notions about the representation of the real when it comes to language, historiography and knowledge. Being based upon post-structuralist theories which emerged both as a continuation and revolt against structuralist theories of the 1950s, postmodernism is vehemently against the authoritarian ideologies, attainability of the universal truth or an ultimate reality and only one valid interpretation of a text by leaning on the post-structuralist theories of Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault, Jacques Lacan, Jean-François and Gilles Deleuze. With the advent of these newly emerged movements in philosophy and literary criticism, post-structuralism and postmodernism, the so-called reality was challenged via the linguistic turn which questioned the pre-agreed unproblematic relationship between language and external reality adopted by structuralists like Ferdinand de Saussure and Claude Levi-Strauss. The changed attitude towards language by the post-structuralists resulted in the split between the signifier and the signified, making language no longer carry an overall meaning. Bressler (2007) describes the post-structural view of the world adopted by Derrida and other post-structuralists as follows:

[...] there is no such thing as objective reality. For these thinkers, all definitions and depictions of truth are subjective, simply creations of human minds. Truth itself is relative, depending on the nature and variety of cultural and social influences in

one's life. Because these poststructuralist thinkers assert that many truths exist, not the truth, they declare that modernity's concept of one objective reality must be disavowed and replaced by many different concepts, each a valid and reliable interpretation and construction of reality. (99)

According to post-structuralists, seeking for an objective and monolithic truth is futile because reality is considered as nothing but a linguistic artefact as the concept of reality depends in consonance with society, gender and culture. *In Literary Theory and Criticism: An Oxford Guide* (2006), Chris Snipp-Walmsley, reflecting Derrida's arguments, points out that

no sign or system of signs is ever stable; meaning is always deferred and there is no guarantee for an ultimate truth deduced from a text as reality is not constructed through language; it is, according to the post-structuralist perspective, always already textual. (411)

Hence, postmodernism which can be regarded as a continuation of post-structuralism due to their kinship in terms of having the same purpose, namely embracing the notion that there are plural meanings contrary to a singular meaning and the unattainability of an ultimate reality beyond language. Hutcheon (1988) in *A Poetics of Postmodernism*, puts an emphasis on the notion that postmodernist fiction challenges "autonomy, transcendence, certainty, authority, unity, totalization, system, universalization, center, continuity, teleology, closure, hierarchy, homogeneity, uniqueness, origin" (36). In the postmodern era, the basic tenets of modernity such as the notions that the objective truth is obtainable through science, language is referential and it can fully represent the world, are shattered. Postmodern self-reflexiveness, one of the most outstanding features of postmodern fiction drawing attention to its artificiality and fictional status, challenges "[...] logocentrism – the belief in the referentiality of language, in the determinacy of textual meaning, and in the presence of a meaningful world to which language and

knowledge are related” (Zagorin 299) and its ultimate truth claims. Consequently, in postmodern novels, reality is a delusive and fictional concept.

In *Postmodernist Fiction* (1987), Brian McHale says “postmodernist fiction does hold to mirror up to reality; but that reality, now more than ever before, is plural” (39). Therefore, like fragments of a broken mirror postmodernism has the ability to reflect multiple realities, draws attention to the significance of bringing alternative realities and subjective interpretations to light. Taking its basic philosophy from post-structuralism, postmodernism is frenetically against all kinds of totalizations and history is no exempt from this. Until the advent of post-structuralist and postmodernist theories during the second half of the twentieth century, history used to be regarded as a branch of science bearing a sharp contrast with literature. The belief was that if the required procedures were followed, reaching the objective reality about the past would be inevitable. During the nineteenth century, Leopold von Ranke’s, a renowned German historian’s views on historiography were prevalent. Following ancient Greek historian Thucydides and his doctrine ‘only to say, how it was’, Ranke focused on “ a careful analysis of the documents, undertaken without imaginative inspiration to ‘distort’ the findings, subjected to ‘scientific’ notions of scrutiny and proof, and thus to be able ‘only to say, how it really was’” (Arnold 2000:54). Ranke and his followers objected to fictionalizing history, therefore, as Arnold says, “since Ranke, historians of every hue have had first and foremost in their minds the idea of ‘truth’ as something that can be approached or achieved through fidelity to their sources” (ibid.,56). Nevertheless, this empirical and dogmatic approach to history was demolished with the emergence of post-structuralist and postmodernist theories towards history. As Stuart Sim posits,

“postmodern philosophy is to be defined as an updated version of scepticism” (qtd.in Southgate 62), this sceptical approach to language and the possibility to represent the real through it, is one of the main tenets of postmodern literature, also paved the way for history to be studied segregated from science. As postmodern theory acknowledges everything as text and construct, the reception of many disciplines like history, formerly seen as science, was exposed to a drastic change. Butler explains how the clear-cut between history and literature is challenged in the postmodern era as follows:

To attempt any form of realism was to fall into philosophical error, and so the attempt to write history from the hitherto dominant positivist or empiricist point of view was doomed to failure. Once again, postmodernist thought, by analysing everything as text and rhetoric, tended to push hitherto autonomous intellectual disciplines in the direction of literature – history was just another narrative, whose paradigm structures were no better than fictional, and was a slave to its own (often unconsciously used) unrealized myths, metaphors, and stereotypes. (2002:32)

According to Butler’s postmodern attitude towards historiography, historical texts have a subjective nature, they should be regarded as mere constructs of language; therefore, they are open to multiple interpretations. History is not a concept to be written down as a scientific fact which is obtained merely through empirical methods anymore. On the other hand, in the postmodern era, history is seen closer to literature and it cannot be separated from the ideologies of the one who has produced it and the government he/she is allied with. Considering all texts including history as subjective narratives no different than literary texts, postmodernism shatters the objectivity and reliability of other disciplines like history. Hayden White, one of the most prominent postmodern philosophers of historiography in the field of literary criticism, in his seminal work *Metahistory* (1973), supports this view as he acknowledges history as an artefact that could not be independent from the historian’s subjective interpretations and in this respect history has more in common with literature rather

than that of science. Correspondingly, history cannot be reflected objectively as it bears many subjective interpretations which include hidden ideologies behind. In his seminal article, “The Historical Text as Literary Artifact”, White asserts that the analogousness between history and literature is undeniable because in order to create a plausible and consistent story out of chronicles, historians depend on some narrative techniques that are no different from the ones used in a literary work like a novel or play. According to White, during the process of converting chronicles to historical “facts”, historians turn to “emplotment” to fill in the gaps in chronicles from his/her subjective perspective. White explains this as follows:

The events are made into a story by the suppression and subordination of certain of them and the highlighting of others, by characterization, motific repetition, variation of tone and point of view, alternative descriptive strategies, and the like—in short, all of the techniques we would normally expect to find in the emplotment of a novel or play. (“Historical” 2002:194)

Correspondingly, since a historical event is turned into a “fact” by the historian using fictional techniques, the same event can be transferred to the reader in multiple perceptions and interpretations. The use of literary techniques like interpretation and characterization makes historical narratives no different than the literary texts and this personal interpretation of past events demolishes the hierarchy between them. Therefore, in accordance with the postmodern approach to historiography, the sharp contrast between history and literature which was present since Aristotle is destroyed as historical narratives are no different from linguistic fabrications, always textual, in White’s words, “verbal fictions the contents of which are as much invented as found and the forms of which have more in common with their counterparts in literature” (2002:192). In other words, it is the historian who decides which certain events are to be highlighted or concealed in regard to his political view, the authority and society

he is attached to as it is also underlined by Hutcheon in *A Poetics of Postmodernism* (1988) that “[b]oth history and fiction are cultural sign systems, ideological constructions whose ideology includes their appearance of being autonomous and self-contained” (112). By the same token, calling historical events “value-neutral” (ibid.,194), White asserts that the historical events only become meaningful “depending on a historian’s choice of the plot structure”, therefore, he highlights the textuality and artificiality of history once more. With the aim of making an emphasis on the subjective proximity of the historical narrative, in *Postmodernism in History: Fear or Freedom?* (2003), Southgate criticizes Euro-centric hegemony on historiographic discourse as he says:

It’s usually only those winners who are in a position to write history at all, and it’s they who then contrive to represent themselves as history’s agents – as the important people who have made history. In the Western tradition that has usually meant the adoption of what has come to be seen as an essentially Eurocentric position: for centuries, Europe was seen as the spatial, geographical centre, from which other parts of the world and their peoples could be judged. (37)

Southgate brings criticism to the so-called superiority of Europe to be seen as the prerogative centre of power and its totalitarian assertion to hold the power to decide what is to be inscribed as history. Consequently, it ignores the voice of the marginalised and under-privileged leaving their experiences in obscurity. In other words, it is the Western authorities who decide what should be regarded as “right” or wrong and truth depends on their choice. Echoing Nietzsche’s hostility towards scientific pretensions of historians that “all claims to truth are in reality claims to power”, according to Foucault, history is inscribed so as to reinforce and legitimate the dominant ideology (Brannigan 2007:42). For that reason, all events, which are asserted to be true, actually, have an affiliation with power and “‘the’ truth was simply a version of past events preferred, indeed imposed, by the dominant or ruling

group in society” (ibid.). For instance, in order to legitimate their own actions, Spanish conquistadors defined indigenous Amazonian competitors in South America as “monsters”:

The force of such rhetoric was realised by Baker, who foreshadowed later post-colonial perceptions, in his explication that the description ‘monsters’ was nothing but a convenient ploy – an assessment that had to be evaluated in relation to its European and Eurocentric origin. From another viewpoint, it became quite clear that the Conquistadors were simply after the Amazons’ gold, and that, by representing their victims as monsters, they hoped to justify their own murderous activities. (Southgate 2003:72)

The quotation highlights the constructed and manipulable nature of historiography by the officials once again as Southgate also underlines “when conquistadors defined their indigenous Amazonian competitors as ‘monsters’, they exemplified the wider power that can be wielded by those controlling language” (ibid. 77). As it can be understood from the quotation, historiography was monopolised by European authorities that dressed themselves in judge’s robes, deciding on what to label as “true” or not, not only excluding the perspectives or distorting the images of the people from other parts of the world but also the marginalised like women or the homosexuals who were seen as the misfits of the society. Nevertheless, founding its arguments on post-structuralist theories, concisely, claiming the textuality of reality, postmodernism has brought autumn to historiography in the traditional sense which was regarded “as an empirical search for external truths corresponding to what was considered to be absolute reality of past events” (Onega 1995:12). By backing up their narratives with meticulous research and their dependence on primary sources and archives, traditional historiography aimed to conceal “its ideological structure behind a scholarly façade of footnotes and the pretence of “facts” (in quotation marks in the postmodernist lexicon)” (qtd.in Jenkins 160). Nonetheless, the postmodern treatment of historiography sternly criticises this assertion of the direct

attainability of the past as it supports the view that we can only reach the past through its texts as Hutcheon points “[w]e cannot know the past except through its texts: its documents, its evidence, even its-eye witness accounts are texts” (*Poetics* 16). Analogically, in his *What is History?* (first published in 1961), Edward Hallett Carr focuses on the nonobjective quality of history writing by saying that “In my first lecture I said: Before you study the history study the historian. Now I would add: Before you study the historian, study his historical and social environment. The historian, being an individual, is also a product of a history and of society” (1990:44). With his words, Carr challenges the alleged observational nature of history writing and adds: “History consists of a corpus of ascertained facts. The facts are available to the historian in documents, inscriptions and so on, like fish on the fishmonger’s slab. The historian collects them, takes them home, and cooks and serves them in whatever style appeals to him” (*ibid.*,9). As it can be inferred from the perspectives of White, Southgate and Carr, history itself is a biased manmade phenomenon so it is far from objectivity and it is controlled by those who are in power to impose their own ideologies. In consequence, when viewed from the postmodern angle, history exists as a subjective literary text and the division between history and literature is subverted.

Magical realist writers’ concern with undermining official history and their postmodern treatment of historiography cannot be overlooked. Majority of magical realist texts tend to include a particular historical moment into their narratives. The global expansion of magical realism during the 1980s coincides with the changing attitude towards historiography. Just as a magical realist narrative has the potential to weaken realism reducing its power, the postmodern approach to historiography

assaults the positivist approach of conventional historiography of the nineteenth and early twentieth century and its ideological mindsets hidden under the mask of science and empiricism. Anne Hegerfeldt, a noted critic of magical realism, also addresses the issue of magical realist writers' postmodern approach to historiography as she points out:

[...] a considerable number of magic realist works may also be categorized as “historiographic metafiction” or “fantastic histories”. These works undertake rewritings of official versions of history, playfully offering alternative accounts. By telling the history from a different, usually oppressed perspective, they reveal the extent to which history never consists of purely factual and impartial accounts, but serves the interests of those who write it. Historiography's claim to objectivity again is critically examined in texts that probe possibilities of accurately knowing the past in the first place, drawing attention to gaps in historical knowledge and the way these are filled through interpretation and reconstruction. (2005:63)

As it can be inferred from the quotation, magical realism draws attention to impossibility to reach the past precisely independent from the interpretations of its producer. Thus, magical realist writers rewrite the past from the perspectives of the marginalized—usually women or the colonized and they compensate for gaps, mainly the erased experiences of the underprivileged left blank by the historians because of ideological reasons. A magical realist author calls attention to the lacking information about the past and avers that these untold histories can be written in a similar manner as a historiographer does because not only the historian but also the magical realist author fill in the blanks by means of a subjective endeavor. A historiographer compensates for these historical gaps by using his/her ideologic aims while a magical realist writer deals with the untold histories through myths, supernatural elements, folk beliefs and imagination to empower the outsiders. Moreover, the non-hierarchical treatment of the supernatural and the real in magical realist texts lessen the truth claims of official historical records. The fact that historical narratives have a fabricated nature stems from the equal approach of

magical realism to the magical and the real. Therefore, magical realism becomes a significant mode for historiographic metafiction where personal histories are inconsistent with the authoritarian perspective of official history. Bowers, another leading critic of magical realism, also draws attention to magical realism's postmodern approach to historiography in her influential book *Magic(al) Realism* (2004). Bowers says that magical realist authors do not include historical references just to situate their narratives in a certain context but "to put a question to existing historical suppositions" (73). Takolander (1995) expresses that magical realist and postmodern fiction ultimately meet in the interest of their deconstructive nature and "incredulity towards metanarratives" (qtd. in Lyotard 1984, p.xxiv) and the metarealities they portray (178). Correspondingly, magical realism problematizes history as a grand narrative; therefore, it points out the fictionality of realism and its deceptive claims to represent the truth with a truly postmodern stance. Magical realism challenges "historical marginalization by Western-centric, imperialistic, masculinist, heterosexist or otherwise biased hegemonic representations of the real" (ibid.,195). The magical and the real are treated equally, so supernatural events "really" do occur in magical realist texts at the level of the text. Composed by two oxymoronic and conflicting elements, the real and the supernatural, magical realist texts leave the perspective from which events are presented uncertain and Faris (2004) coins the term defocalization (*Ordinary Enchantments* 43). That is to say, "the narrative is 'defocalized' because it seems to come from two radically different perspectives at once" (ibid.). Giving equal importance to magical events and combining them with familiar historical moments, magical realist authors show the presence of alternative realities and inaccessibility to reach an absolute 'truth' about history itself.

Following contemporary theorists' path such as White and Carr, Linda Hutcheon, dwells on the issue of historiography in her contention of postmodernism and scrutinizes postmodern authors' propensity to intermix history and fiction with an effort to remove the borderline between them. She terms postmodern historical novels as "historiographic metafiction" in her *A Poetics of Postmodernism* (1988). Calling it "paradoxical beast", Hutcheon uses this oxymoronic term in order to define "novels which are both intensely self-reflexive and yet paradoxically also lay claim to historical events and personages" (5). Mingling metafictional self-reflexivity and historical reality in novels, historiographic metafiction draws attention to its own process of construction, thus, this blending leads to shatter the dichotomy between fact and fiction, and undermine the truth claims and hierarchical superiority of history over fiction. In her *The Politics of Postmodernism*, Hutcheon says:

Historiographic metafiction is self-conscious about the paradox of the totalizing yet inevitably partial act of narrative representation. It overtly de-doxifies received notions about the process of representing the actual in narrative- be it fictional or historical. It traces the processing of events into facts, exploiting and then undermining the conventions of both novelistic realism and historical reference. It implies that, like fiction, history constructs its object, that events named before facts and thus both do and do not retain their status outside language. This is the paradox of postmodernism. The past really did exist, but we can only know it today through its textual traces, its often complex and indirect representations in the present: documents, archives, but also photographs, paintings, architecture, films, and literature. (2002:75)

Hutcheon considers history as a verbal artifact shaped in conformity with a specific discourse. She asserts that the only way one can acquire information about the past is through texts that cannot be divorced from its creator's personal opinion and ideology. By this means, Hutcheon denies the supremacy of history as a metanarrative. Historiographic metafiction utilizes historical information within self-reflexivity of metafiction in an effort to undermine and parody the veracity of official history. By placing history and fiction side by side, historiographic metafiction

highlights the fictiveness of history and equalizes history and fiction. In this regard, since both magical realism and historiographic metafiction oppose the hierarchies and they both have an exclusive attention to problematization of official history, they match up with their quest for alternative realities and unheard histories to challenge the monolithic treatment of history. Susana Onega (1999) avers that the origin of British historiographic metafiction “goes back to not only North-American fabulation but also to Spanish-American magic realism” (4). With the aim of debunking canonical historiography, magical realist writers blur the line between history and fiction. Magical realism is often embraced by women writers as they are not given voice in the totalitarian discourses of realism. In order to demonstrate the historical cruelties towards them, they employ magical realist narrative techniques to highlight the status of realism as a linguistic construct by mingling particular historical moments with fantasy. Ebadi Asayesh (2017) also says that “female writers use magical realism in their novels when they are not able to show their histories owing to the repressive government and the patriarchal society under which they live” (177). Takolander mentions that the major stimulus of writers who adopt magical realist narrative techniques is its ability to question the partisan descriptions of realism as she says:

[...] marginal authors from around the world produce magical realist texts not because they dwell in a world of fantasy but because they have been made acutely conscious of the delusory capacities of realism and the hallucinatory nature of reality largely as a result of the lies and projections of a hegemonic center. (1995:195)

2.5. Sex, Gender and Gender Roles

Throughout history, the terms sex and gender have been used instead of one another as if they are synonyms; however, they totally have different meanings and it is

crucial to distinguish the difference between them. In order to avoid confusion, in his article “What is The Difference Between Sex and Gender?” Staughton (2017) defines sex as “biological characteristics, namely chromosomes, internal and external sex organs, and the hormonal activities within the body”. In contrast to sex, gender does not have a basis in science. According to World Health Organization, gender refers to “the socially constructed roles, behaviours, activities, and attributes that a given society considers appropriate for men and women” (qtd.in Mills, “Sex Difference vs. Gender Difference?”). It can be put forward that while sex, etymologically coming from Latin *sexus*, denotes biological discrepancies between the male and female such as the reproduction organs, genetic differences such as men’s having more testosterone and women’s having more estrogen, gender is socially and culturally constructed features associated with one sex. Fundamentally speaking, while sex is biologically determined, gender is culturally and socially fabricated. Blackstone (2003) defines gender roles as in the following:

Gender roles are based on the different expectations that individuals, groups, and societies have of individuals based on their sex and based on each society’s values and beliefs about gender. Gender roles are the product of the interactions between individuals and their environments, and they give individuals cues about what sort of behavior is believed to be appropriate for what sex. Appropriate gender roles are defined according to a society’s beliefs about differences between the sexes. (“Gender Roles and Society” 335)

Gender roles are fluid and can vary from society to society and change over time. To exemplify, today high-heeled shoes are regarded as feminine in many parts of the world. However, they were originally designed for men to use when they were hunting on the horseback. When high heels began to be worn by women, the heels of male became shorter and fatter and female heels grew taller and thinner. In time, the conception of the high heels progressively began to be associated with femininity.

Newman says that “there is nothing intrinsically feminine about the high heel. Social norms have made it so” (“Sex and gender: What is the difference?”). Similarly, pink, which is a color associated with femininity worldwide today, was considered as a color suitable for masculinity only a century ago:

A trade publication, *Earnshaw's Infants' Department*, published an article in 1918 recommending parents that “the generally accepted rule is pink for the boys, and blue for the girls. The reason is that pink, being a more decided and stronger color, is more suitable for the boy, while blue, which is more delicate and dainty, is prettier for the girl. (qtd.in Ballentine et al. 261)

However, today just the opposite is the case since pink is associated with femininity in many countries. That is, gender and gender roles are merely constructs by social norms. Gender is a significant point often used in the context of feminism.

According to many feminists, the word “woman” is not tied up with sex but with gender. They are vehemently against the idea that the differences between men and women are fixed. These differences are actually unsettled and feminists are strongly opposed to the beliefs that biological factors determine one’s gender. French feminist philosopher Simone de Beauvoir, one of the most influential figures in feminist criticism in the late 1960s with the second-wave of feminism, deals with the issue of demonstrating gender as a social construct in her seminal work *The Second Sex* (1949). De Beauvoir states that

One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman. No biological, psychological, or economic fate determines the figure that the human female presents in society; it is civilization as a whole that produces this creature, intermediate between male and eunuch, which is described as feminine. Only the intervention of someone else can establish an individual as an Other. In so far as he exists in and for himself, the child would hardly be able to think of himself as sexually differentiated. (1989:273)

De Beauvoir implies that female gender is a social construct created by patriarchal society and cultural norms. She also deals with the issue of compulsory

heterosexuality as being the norm and representation of women as passive creations of phallogentric literature.

Another feminist philosopher, Judith Butler, in *Gender Trouble: Feminism and The Subversion of Identity*, first published in 1990, says that De Beauvoir's claim shows that "woman itself is a term in process, a becoming, a constructing that cannot rightfully be said to originate or to end" (1999:43). Being in line with De Beauvoir, Butler considers gender as a process, a continuum and something unnatural. Since it is unnatural, there is no relation between an individual's gender and sex, all notions about gender is a creation of culture and society assigned to people.

CHAPTER 3

THE PASSION

3.1 Magical Realism as a Significant Mode of Historiographic Metafiction in *The Passion*

Jeanette Winterson's¹ *The Passion* can be considered as one of the best examples of historiographic metafiction since the novel commingles historical material that is the Napoleonic period, metafictional self-reflexivity, parody and magic to undermine the objectivity of official history which is usually loaded with the ideology of its writers, the truth of knowledge and traditional gender roles designated by patriarchy. Thus, the aim of this chapter is to show how magical realism as a means of historiographic metafiction plays a vital role to rewrite history in a parodic way and question the truth claims of traditional historical narratives and the fixed values of patriarchy.

Onega (2006) says that the combination of history with fantasy aligns *The Passion* with 'historiographic metafiction', the type of novel characterized with intense self-reflexivity and a relish in storytelling which Linda Hutcheon considers to be the best expression of the contradictory nature of the postmodernist ethos" (56). Since history is reconstructed with magical stories, Winterson draws attention to fabricated and fictional nature of history writing. As Noakes and Reynolds state, the novel includes a broad range of themes such as the idea of history, boundaries, love, desire, loss, memory, risk and magic (2003:49). *The Passion* sets in the calamitous years of the

Napoleonic Wars starting in Napoleon's military camp in Boulogne, France. *The Passion* is told from the perspectives of two different narrators, Henri, a sensitive and timid soldier and cook in Napoleon's army and Villanelle, a free-spirited Venetian woman who works at a casino and born with webbed feet. Nevertheless, the novel does not deal with military power and success of Napoleon contrary to the traditional historiography's aims to exalt the triumphs of those in power.

The novel includes four parts entitled "The Emperor", "The Queen of Spades", "The Zero Winter" and "The Rock" respectively. The first part, "The Emperor", begins with Henri's narration. Henri is a young and naïve soldier whose sole aim is to become a drummer in Napoleon's army; however, these dreams come to an abrupt end when he is elected as a cook for Napoleon for whom Henri bears a huge admiration and respect. Henri is commissioned to satisfy Napoleon's unquenchable desire for chicken and during his immature years in the army, he neglects Napoleon's tyrannical behaviour as Henri is fascinated by his charisma as a leader. With the passing years in the army, Henri becomes disillusioned with Napoleon's aim and insatiable ambition for power. Having witnessed the death of thousands of young soldiers, Henri feels guilty about divinising Napoleon as "the most powerful man in the world" (*Passion* 29).

The second chapter, "The Queen of Spades", begins with the second protagonist Villanelle's narration. In the meantime, Villanelle's story sets in Venice which she calls "the city of mazes". Villanelle, the daughter of a Venetian boatman, was born with webbed-feet as the first woman to be born with this quality in the entire history of Venice. This supernatural quality makes her an androgynous character blurring the

line between masculinity and femininity. Villanelle makes a living by working at a casino as a croupier and she cross-dresses for entertainment. She falls in love with a married woman, who she calls “The Queen of Spades”, signifying luck at the card table. While the mysterious lady’s husband is away, the two women have a short but passionate affair. When Villanelle runs into her lover and her husband, she realises the strong bond between them. Eventually, she admits that she will never have the same chance.

The third chapter, entitled “The Zero Winter”, sets in Russia where Napoleon’s army was defeated. Henri, still being a member of the army meets Villanelle in Moscow where she works as a prostitute in Napoleon’s army. Henri, Villanelle and Patrick, a friend of Henri decide to escape from the army and set off for Italy. On the way, Villanelle reveals the rest of her story. Being heart-broken after her affair with the Queen of Spades, she agrees to marry a plump French cook in order to leave Venice. She travels with her husband for two years before running away. When she returns to Venice, her husband finds her and sells Villanelle to Napoleon’s army as a vivandière, an army prostitute. Villanelle promises to hide Henri in Venice if he helps her to get her heart back from the Queen of Spades who literally stole Villanelle’s heart. After helping Villanelle get her heart back from her former lover’s house, Henri proposes Villanelle whom he falls for during their journey to Venice. However, he is turned down by Villanelle due to the fact that she cannot be with someone whom she cannot give her heart. When they run into Villanelle’s husband who is familiar to Henri as he turns out to be the former cook in Napoleon’s army, Henri stabs him in the heart.

The last chapter, “The Rock”, chiefly takes place in San Servelo, the asylum Henri is imprisoned upon killing Villanelle’s husband. Villanelle gets pregnant with Henri’s child but she does not want to get married. Villanelle assures Henri that she will help him get out of the mental hospital but Henri rejects.

3.1.1 Parodic Revisiting of History

Most magical realist novels are concerned with the representation of official history with the aim of rewriting and liberating it from the manipulations of the patriarchy and government. Through combining magical realist narrative techniques and known historical events, magical realist authors intend to show the impossibility of reaching an unequivocal reality about the past. With a post-structuralist attitude, they draw attention to the unattainability of an absolute truth about the past since it is constantly manipulated by the authorities. *The Passion* sets during the Napoleonic Wars, a traceable period in history. On the other hand, the way history is dealt with is extremely different from official history books and what we normally expect to read about the Napoleonic Wars.

The novel amalgamates historical material with magical realism with the intent of rewriting it with some feminist concerns, transgressing the boundaries of traditional gender roles and parodying the historical discourse constructed by the patriarchal order. In order to parody the historical narratives based on phallogocentric perspectives, to re-inscribe women’s usually neglected experiences in traditional historical accounts, demonstrate constructed nature of traditional gender roles imposed on women, to parody the hypocrisy of the clergy, to indicate the existence of many people deviating from compulsory heterosexuality in history, the use of magical

realism plays a major role in the text. Reversing the official history that generally handles the victories of statesmen or chronological accounts of wars with personal histories that of Henri and Villanelle's, outsiders of the society, Winterson transgresses the borders of a traditional historical novel. Magical realism becomes a valuable means for these characters to portray certain historical events like Napoleonic wars from different points of view since the accounts of these characters are often brushed away by the authorities due to being insignificant. Taking into consideration that hearing the voices those on the margin of the centre is hardly possible in history books or official documents, one can easily detect the biased and constructed nature of history writing. For instance, a bisexual woman like Villanelle who is very far from fitting the societal norms with her androgynous body, daring and independent character, cannot be found in any official history book. Although there were numerous vulnerable soldiers like Henri and women like Villanelle who did not comply with compulsory heterosexuality throughout history, their stories were silenced from historical accounts as they pose a big threat to political order and patriarchal society.

The first part, "The Emperor", begins with Henri's narration saying "It was Napoleon who had such a passion for chicken that he kept chefs working around the clock" (*Passion* 17) and this sentence foretells what sort of notion of history is going to be depicted in the novel. Henri, being both a witness of harshness of the war and slaughter of thousands of young soldiers just because Napoleon's unquenchable thirst for land, probably reports everything differently contrary to the official version of history which usually depicts Napoleon's grandeur. Therefore, by combining real historical figures with fictional characters and equalizing history with story by using

the mantra five times in the novel “I’m telling you stories. Trust me” (*Passion* 21, 29, 56, 85, 176) the subjective nature of history is constantly underlined. Regularly repeating the same sentence, Winterson aims to make the reader believe that historians are unreliable and she even finishes the novel with this very self-reflexive statement to indicate that all the objectivity claims of historiography are groundless. The repetition of this sentence throughout the novel connects it with historiographic metafiction’s claim “that its world is both resolutely fictive and yet undeniably historical, and that what both realms share is their constitution in and as discourse” (Hutcheon 1989:142). Winterson builds her stories on the impossibility of an unbiased and flawless account of the past because she considers that history is nothing but a fabrication of patriarchy as she says in an interview:

I think all you can do with the past is reinvent it so that people don’t feel that they are in a place that they know, because the past is not a place that we know. We weren’t there. And no matter what records are given to us, what objects, what histories, we don’t know, because we weren’t present. So to get at the past, fiction is as likely a way of interpreting it as any. And I do think that history is a collection of found objects washed up through time, and that some of them we hook out, and others we ignore. And as the pattern changes, the meaning changes. We are continually understanding our past in a different way because we are continually reinterpreting it and fiction does that very well. But you can only do it well if you let some freedom in for the imagination. You can’t do it well if you’re trying to lock yourself slavishly into your notion of the past—which will not be true anyway. (qtd.in Noakes & Reynolds 22)

In Winterson’s belief, because of the subjective nature of history, it is composed of nothing but multiple interpretations of the patriarchal order. She makes an emphasis on re-interpretability of the past without being blindly attached to what is written in official historical records and books written by the authorities excluding the “trivial” experiences of a fragile soldier like Henri and an independent woman like Villanelle who deviates from the norms of heteropatriarchal society by which bisexual/lesbian relationships are regarded as “not the usual thing” (*Passion* 110). In majority of Winterson’s novels history is an indispensable and repeated theme; however, her

works are far from being labelled as historical novels as we know in the traditional sense. As it was mentioned above, *The Passion* is a rewriting of Napoleonic era which spans a long period of bloody incidents and has a significant place in world history especially for France. However, Winterson undermines the truth claims of official history by juxtaposing historical characters such as Napoleon and Josephine Bonaparte with the fictional ones and adding magical events into her narrative. Thus, magical realism fits well with the objectives of historiographic metafiction in terms of blurring the borderline between the historical and fictional, masculinity and femininity and questioning the truth claims of historical narratives fabricated by patriarchy.

Unlike traditional historical writings, Henri's account of Napoleon focuses on trivial details about Napoleon's life such as his extreme passion for chicken, his fondness of small and short servants, his gigantic horses, his playing a game of billiards with Josephine and many other insignificant details instead of providing the reader with a full description of events about the ongoing war and the army life. Thus, the historical characters like Napoleon, whom we are imposed to regard as an almighty hero by the official history books, turns out to be ordinary people with their own weaknesses. This clarifies that the invincible images of most heroes are shattered as they are no different from fictions shaped by historians serving the authority. By making Napoleon as ordinary as Henri and throwing him out of focus, Winterson allows other voices to be heard. She undermines the past written by the so-called superior. Through the medium of Henri's diary what Winterson tries to do is to show that history can be interpreted and rewritten in multiple ways in the hands of its writer by stressing there is not a single objective truth. When in the army Henri starts

keeping a war journal with the aim of writing down what happened and Henri's account is expected to include familiar issues about battles, victories, medals and conquests; however, he cannot accomplish to be objective and his narration turns into a "parodic imitation of conventional historiography" (Kirca 2009:46) since he concentrates on unnecessary details and he does not hesitate to blend his emotions into his account. The veracity of his journal is also questioned by his friend Domino, the horse keeper in the army.

'Look at you' said Domino, 'a young man brought up by a priest and a pious mother. A young man who can't pick up a musket to shoot a rabbit. What makes you think you can see anything clearly? What gives you the right to make a notebook and shake it at me in thirty years, if we're still alive, and say you've got the truth?'
(*Passion* 44-45)

Henri disagrees with Domino saying: "I don't care about facts, Domino, I care about how I feel. How I feel will change, I want to remember that" (ibid.). He wants to remember his feelings and he is not interested in facts which will be manipulated by the authority anyway and goes on keeping the diary as he wishes. These words indicate that the way Henri writes history is far from being unbiased and chronological. He is aware of the fact that his feelings will not be written down by the historians who regard them as inferior. Privileging feelings makes Henri's account extremely different from that of Napoleon and his yes-men. Considering his feelings superior to the historical facts makes Henri an unreliable historian. The official history never writes about the feelings but the material things and numbers. Though Henri himself supplies the reader with certain dates, figures to seem objective, his emotions occupy a more significant place which is a vivid revelation of his subjectivity. To give an example, Henri records on his journal "July 20th, 1804. Two thousand men were drowned today" (*Passion* 40). Afterwards, he informs us that "in the morning, 2,000 new recruits marched into Boulogne" (*Passion* 41).

Henri's report points out the fact that the young soldiers are merely seen as commodities so as to make Napoleon achieve his objectives, mainly the lands he desires to invade. These coltish soldiers do not have any value as individuals but they are just made up of numbers in Napoleon's eyes. Therefore, in Henri's journal, feelings are superior to numbers and he does not want to forget the agonies they suffered as novice soldiers. When Henri goes back to his village, he talks about his experiences in Napoleon's grand army and tells stories to the people he encounters on the way and in his village. While telling his stories, he admits that he has altered, exaggerated and even lied about the harsh conditions and mass deaths he has witnessed in the military camp. He informs the reader about his unreliability as a historian by saying "I embroidered and invented and even lied. Why not? It made them happy. I didn't talk about the men who have married mermaids" (*Passion* 46). The marriage of the soldiers to the mermaids attributes to the catastrophe at sea, when numerous soldiers drowned in the war. Henri gives himself away when he admits fabricating stories and concealing the bitter truth to make his audience happy. Instead, he talks about the power and glory of the French against the British to please them. While writing his diary, Henri even self-reflexively admits changing some parts of his story saying "trying to convey you what really happened. Trying not to make up too much" (*ibid.*, 119). Thus, Henri's manipulation of history according to his own wishes and equalizing it with storytelling highlights the fictiveness of historical accounts and how they can be altered at one's pleasure. By drawing attention to the similarity between history writing and fiction, Henri implicates that the truth can be changed according to the perspective of the historian and there is not a single source of truth. While some events are brought into the forefront, the others are brushed under the carpet in accordance with the writer's aim. It is the

writer/historian who decides which events should be highlighted or ignored as in Henri's case making him a mistrusted historian.

As it has been already mentioned, *The Passion* sets in historical places Boulogne then Moscow and Venice both of which were under the invasion of the French during the Napoleonic wars. Juxtaposing historical figures like Napoleon and Josephine Bonaparte, General Hoche, Guy Fawkes, Madame Clicquot with fictional characters with supernatural abilities, Winterson not only subverts the clear-cut between history and fiction but also criticizes the hypocrisy of patriarchal institutions like the Church through the use of magic. In the first chapter, "The Emperor", the story of Patrick, who is an eagle-eyed, defrocked priest from Ireland and able to see fifteen miles away, is introduced to the reader by Henri. The reason why he is accepted for the army is this magical quality of him as his main duty is to act as a telescope and detect the enemy from miles away. Upon being examined by Napoleon and General Hoche, Patrick joins the French army. Patrick is ostracized from priesthood and his dismissal from the church is because of his magical left eye. Patrick learns about his long-sightedness while he is preaching; nevertheless, his eyesight is usually carnal contradicting with priesthood in the traditional sense:

Patrick was preaching a fine sermon about Hell and the perils of the flesh and his eyes roamed the congregation; at least his right eye did, he found that his left eye was focused three fields away on a pair of his parishioners who were committing adultery under God's Heaven while their spouses knelt in his church. After the sermon, Patrick was deeply perplexed. Had he seen them or was he like St Jerome and subject to lustful visions? He walked round to visit them that afternoon and, after a few chance remarks, judged from their guilty faces that they had indeed been doing what he thought they'd been doing. (*Passion* 123)

When Patrick uses his magical eye to watch an undressed girl in a village two miles away or "squinting at young girls from the bell tower" (*ibid.*,37) which is against

church rules, he is defrocked. Kılıç (2005) suggests that in many stories about Christianity, upon seeing some visions, people, who are formerly nonbelievers, become committed Christians (173). On the other hand, in Patrick's case, the additional vision Patrick has thanks to his magical left eye does not suggest him anything about religion rather it enables him to indulge in "voyeuristic pleasures" (ibid.). In addition to the parody of Patrick's representation as a religious figure, another atypical church member in Henri's life is the priest in his village who educated him before joining the army. This priest has earned money out of the ways the church forbids such as gambling and betting. He also has some items that should not be present in a priest's Bible as Henri says "I never told my mother that the priest had a hollow Bible with a pack of cards inside. Sometimes he took it to our service by mistake and then the reading was always from the church of Genesis. The villagers thought he loved the creation story" (*Passion* 28). When Henri asks him the reason why he has chosen priesthood as a profession, the priest replies: "if you have to work for anybody an absentee boss is the best. We fished together and he pointed out the girls he wanted and asked me to do it for him" (ibid.,28-9). Through portraying the Church members as unconventional figures, Winterson bitterly criticizes patriarchal values such as the Church. In her article "Women Priests" (2002), Winterson harshly criticizes the Church of England for not recruiting women and confining them to home:

We have heard so many arguments over the centuries as to why women cannot be doctors, surgeons, politicians, soldiers, members of universities, or even own their own property. Women have been legally treated as minors and as belonging to their husbands. The Church has encouraged this brutality. The Church has treated women disgracefully, although Christ did not. A religion of love soon corrupted into a religion of power. A religion founded on the value of the individual, has bundled all women together as weak, unfit, and subservient. The Church no longer burns women at the stake, it prefers to crucify them on their own ambition. Women can be priests – that is, they have reluctantly been allowed to serve at the bottom of the shining ladder. They can even rise to Archdeacon status, but they are not allowed to be

Bishops. This is an interesting division of labour, and one might be tempted to imagine that once again women are doing the housework, while men are having a career.

By depicting both Patrick and the priest in Henri's village as immoral characters, Winterson condemns the Church of England for being sexist just to maintain their power in the public eye and confining women to home. Patrick's magical eye indicates that the Church members are not as moralistic as they seem. There is an amazing resemblance between Patrick and the Anglican Church in terms of misusing religion since Patrick uses his telescopic eye for his carnal desires contradicting with the requirements of his priesthood. Similarly, in order to maintain the male-dominance prevalent in the Church, the indifference of the Church towards women contradicts with the requirements of religion which promises to be equal to all his followers. Since the Church must treat everyone equally as a basic requirement of the religion, the members of the Anglican Church contradict with themselves. While rearranging the past, Winterson utilizes magic so as to illustrate that there exist incidences and figures that have not been included in conventional historiography previously. By using Patrick's supernatural telescopic eye what Winterson aims to reveal is to undermine the images of patriarchal institutions such as the Church and the army which are exalted by the traditional historical account to maintain their authorities. What is more, through applying magical realism, Winterson succeeds in questioning the veracity and objectivity of what Henri has written in his diary about Napoleon and his military camp so far. Arostegui says that

Henri, a narrator and author of a war journal that he rewrites into his memoirs, illegitimizes history as a grand narrative and shows instead that history, like the past, is always subject to manipulation. Henri's historical discourse propounds the collapse of the holding values of patriarchy and provides the necessary space for the development of Villanelle's alternative discourse. (2000:17)

3.2 Transgressing Traditional Gender Roles through Magical Realism

The second chapter, “The Queen of Spades”, starts with Villanelle’s narration. Winterson uses multiple narratives respectively, Henri’s and Villanelle’s so as to demonstrate history as a subjective construct. Villanelle’s narration is abundant in terms of magical realism and parody. In *The Passion*, Winterson uses magical realist techniques in order to turn socially constructed feminine and masculine features upside down. In this way, she subverts the gender roles assigned traditionally to both sexes and she succeeds in criticizing traditional historiography’s aims to mirror standardized women who subjugate to the norms of patriarchy. Conventionally, in historical novels, women are depicted as individuals whose center of earth are their homes and whose mere duty in life is to get married to a suitable suitor by complying with heterosexuality, cooking, taking care of their home, children and husband. In contrast, Winterson depicts her female characters as rather independent. She places Villanelle in public spaces like casinos usually associated with men instead of placing her private places like home. Surprisingly, Winterson feminizes her male protagonist Henri by locating him in the kitchen rather than putting him in charge in the battlefield. Makinen points out that *The Passion* not only feminizes history but also “challenges the construction of gender, in attempting to rewrite not only femininity but also masculinity” (61). Stowers contends that Winterson’s tendency to feminize men in her fiction is “unusual as a lesbian strategy” which is also a prevalent approach in *The Passion* (qtd.in Makinen 61). Villanelle, the daughter of a Venetian boatman, was born with webbed-feet like those of birds which is an attribute unique to Venetian boatmen and she is the only woman to be born with this quality as she says, “There never was a girl whose feet were webbed in the entire

history of the boatmen” (67). According to a legend, whenever a wife of a Venetian gondolier expects a baby, she has to fulfil a series of rituals through acting in accordance with the instructions as follows:

[...] she waits until the moon is full and the night empty of idlers. Then she takes her husband’s boat and rows to a terrible island where the dead are buried. She leaves her boat with rosemary in the bows so that the limbless ones cannot return with her and hurries to the grave of the most recently dead in her family. She has brought her offerings: a flask of wine, a lock of hair from her husband and a silver coin. She must leave the offerings on the grave and beg for a clean heart if her child be a girl and boatman’s feet if her child be a boy. There is no time to lose. She must be home before dawn and the boat must be left for a day and a night covered in salt. (*Passion* 65)

Nevertheless, Villanelle’s mother fails to perform this ritual in compliance with the set rules. Therefore, her baby is born as the first webbed feet female in Venetian history. Arostegui asserts that Villanelle’s webbed feet are “the symbol of phallus” (2000:13). Portraying Villanelle as a female with the inherent male physical property, Winterson blurs the line between femininity and masculinity. Her webbed feet enable her to surpass the limits of established gender roles. With this unusual physical characteristic, Villanelle is also able to walk on water and this magical feature allows her to wander around the canals of Venice freely without confining her to home. In this way, Winterson questions the well-established gender roles imposed by the patriarchal order. Through her playful approach to traditional gender roles, Winterson purposefully counters the readers’ expectations and deconstructs the binarism between the feminine and masculine. Contrary to the nomic image of fragile and docile woman written mostly by men in traditional historical novels, Winterson includes the female protagonist of her novel into the scene of history by depicting her as an adventurous, uncommitted bi-sexual woman whose whereabouts are more manly rather than domestic, feminine spaces. Henri, on the other hand, represents feminine characteristics from the very beginning of the novel. When he

arrives at the military camp in Boulogne, the recruiting officer bursts his bubble to become a drummer saying he is not strong enough as he could not crack a walnut between finger and thumb. Instead, upon being tested, he is sent to the kitchen as a cook, which is a place associated with femininity. Furthermore, he is portrayed as unsuitable to harsh conditions of the battlefield. He longs for his mother and village from the start and he suffers from achluophobia as he says: “When I have to be out late at night, it’s not knives and kicks I am afraid of, though there are plenty of those behind walls and hedges. I’m afraid of the Dark” (*Passion* 49). Moreover, when he goes to a brothel along with the other soldiers in the army, he feels sorry for the women’s conditions, inhuman treatment and the humiliation they are exposed to by men. When he witnesses the solidarity among women in the brothel, he empathizes with them. All of these traits feminize Henri and demonstrates his inappropriateness for the unmerciful army life. Reversing the work places of men and women, she also challenges the expected division of labour, associating women with home and men with public spaces. As opposed to Henri, Villanelle works in a casino which is a place usually related with masculinity. In a traditional historical novel, which sets in the nineteenth century, it is almost impossible to see a female character as a casino croupier. However, Winterson twists the roles assigned to the male and the female. Villanelle leads a very different life from the meek image of women as they are usually portrayed in history. She spends most of her time outdoors day and night rather than doing house work. Conventionally constructed and adopted norms like gender roles collapse in *The Passion* which is a common theme in Winterson’s postmodern fiction. Moreover, while she is working at the casino, she cross dresses making her gender identity even more obscure. She says “I dressed as a boy because that’s what the visitors liked to see” (*Passion* 70). She also asks herself “Was this

breeches and boots self any less real than my garters?" (ibid.,82-23). Andermahr suggests that "In Butler's terms, Villanelle's performance foregrounds the process whereby any gender is assumed. Its subversive potential means she can move in and out of identities rather than being fixed and trapped by them" (2009:66). Her life style is no different than a male's as she does not indulge in cooking, cleaning or bringing up children. She even pickpockets not only at the casino that she works at but also at the night when Napoleon's birthday is being celebrated in the Piazza San Marco. In addition to being fearless, she does not display a decent woman's qualities as it is expected from her by the society. Furthermore, Villanelle's sexual orientation deviates from compulsory heterosexuality that the patriarchal society necessitates. Winterson describes her female characters as bold enough to resist the restrictions assigned by the society. Villanelle intensely falls in love with a married woman whom she calls "the Queen of Spades". The Queen of Spades occasionally visits the casino where Villanelle works. She has a short but passionate affair with the Queen of Spades whose husband is away for business. When her husband comes back, the relationship between the two women suddenly ends. Villanelle literally loses her heart and leaves it at her lover's house which can be considered as another magical realist aspect in the novel. When Henri proposes her, she cannot respond his love because her heart is already stolen by the Queen of Spades. Even after Henri intrudes into the house and gets Villanelle's heart back, Villanelle refuses Henri's proposal. "Henri's taking Villanelle's heart can be taken as a parody of chivalric romances" (Eşberk 2015:271). In chivalric romances, it is usually expected that the hero will have his beloved's heart as a reward. Henri also wishes to win Villanelle's heart as a gift but the novel dismisses such a romantic happy-ending since Henri cannot possess Villanelle's heart as a reward and eventually goes insane. Makinen also

makes an emphasis on this issue. She says that when Villanelle urges enamoured Henri to break into the house of The Queen of Spades, “the novel twists up various heterosexual romance narratives” (79). During a visit to the casino one night, Villanelle and Henri bump into Villanelle’s former husband who turns out to be the French cook in Napoleon’s army. As her husband attempts to grab Villanelle, she throws Henri her knife and then he kills her husband with it:

Attempting to repeat his adventurous role, he next hands her the heart of her brutal husband as an antithesis to the traditional ending. Such an ending to the novel, with Henri entrapped in his tower, refusing rescue, rejects traditional narrative closure and ends on an opening up of a range of possible futures. (ibid.)

According to Paulina Palmer, the motif of heart in *The Passion* is a reminiscence of “the conceits of sixteenth-century poets such as Sir Philip Sidney and John Donne” (95). In “*The Passion: Storytelling, Fantasy and Desire*”, she also adds:

Sidney’s lyric ‘My true love hath my heart and I have his’ exemplifies a common topic in Renaissance love poetry: the exchange of hearts between two lovers. Donne in ‘The Blossom’ converses with his heart on the topic of love and, in ‘The Broken Heart’, describes the destructive effect which the effect of falling in love has on it. Villanelle’s heart experiences a series of similarly turbulent adventures. She tells the Queen of Spades, in a manner reminiscent of Donne, ‘If you should leave me, my heart will turn to water and flood away’. (P 76) (Palmer 107)

Winterson uses a Renaissance literary device to portray the same-sex relationship between Villanelle and the Queen of Spades. Through applying a conventional literary device to depict an atypical relationship, Winterson seems to contend that the lack of a literary device to portray a lesbian love relationship does not mean that lesbian love should be underestimated or rejected (Kılıç 2005:182). The heart motif and the literalization of the metaphor, that is the stolen heart of Villanelle signifies that the lesbian relationship is not less worthwhile than heterosexual love. In her article, “Contentious Contributions: Magic Realism goes British”, Hegerfeldt explains literalization of metaphors in magical realist texts as she says “by rendering the metaphor “real”, the text emphasizes the power such constructions have over

human thought and human action, and the very real suffering they can inflict” (2002: 69). Magical realism enables lesbian love to exceed the limits of the depiction of love in the patriarchal system since it only acknowledges and values heterosexual love. Through the literalization of metaphor, Villanelle’s stolen heart which is captivated by her lover, Winterson also shows that the intensity of feelings and the devastating effect of breaking up after a passionate relationship is as real as heterosexual love. However, homosexual love is never represented by the patriarchal order and the texts written by men; therefore, Winterson aims to recover the personal histories of women who are engaged in same-sex relationship and shows the presence of alternative histories of them.

Upon finding out that Villanelle is pregnant, Henri thinks she will marry him this time, however, he is rejected by Villanelle for the second time. Villanelle demolishes the stereotyped family concept imposed by the society which obliges a pregnant woman to get married in such a situation. Villanelle prefers to remain as a single mother.

Villanelle, a feminine narrator, exposes the fairy tale as an ideologically laden literary genre based on sexual categories and patriarchal structures. Villanelle’s alternative fantastic discourse revises romantic notions of love, sex, marriage, motherhood and the family and creates a narrative space in which feminine desire can be successfully represented, a narrative space in which women can be mothers without having to renounce either their freedom or their sexuality. As a postmodern text, *The Passion* emphasizes the discursive and plural nature of all narratives and insists on the fact that *reality* may be endlessly rewritten because it is nothing but a linguistic construct. (Arostegui 2000:17)

She wants to live her life as she pleases and favours her independence over having a father for her unborn baby and she refuses male dominancy in her life. According to

Villanelle, a conventional family is not the only option but it is just the expectation of the society.

I told him I was pregnant
I told him he would be free in about a month.
'Then we can get married.'
'No.'
I took his hands and tried to explain that I wouldn't marry again and that he couldn't live in Venice and I wouldn't live in France. (*Passion* 148)

She rejects all kinds of social pressure without considering the limitations of traditional gender roles. As a woman living in the nineteenth century, Villanelle transgresses the boundaries of gender roles showing that getting married, having a partner or remaining single is just a matter of choice. Villanelle achieves to "subvert the traditional representation of woman in the roles of wife, mistress and mother" (Palmer 1998:110). Behaving beyond her time and subverting all the gender roles imposed on her, Villanelle once more shows that they are nothing but a construct.

According to Front:

Winterson's purpose, like other feminist writers', is to interrogate traditional views of gender, redefine femininity, reveal it as socially constructed, reclaim women's body for her own pleasure, liberate it of masculine colonizing discourse, grant her subjectivity, as well as to question family values, depict mother-daughter bond and the relationships between women under patriarchy. (2009:11)

CHAPTER 4

LIKE WATER FOR CHOCOLATE

4.1 Conceptual Framework for *Like Water for Chocolate*

Setting in the early twentieth century during the Mexican Revolution (1910-1917), in a Mexican rural region of Coahuila, on the U.S.-Mexican border, *Like Water for Chocolate*, Laura Esquivel²'s debut novel, revolves around De la Garza family and especially Tita, the youngest daughter of the family. The novel consists of twelve chapters, each opening with a traditional Mexican recipe parallel to the plot and each recipe represents a month of the year. At the beginning of each chapter, a list of ingredients and the method of cooking are given to the reader. The first chapter, entitled Tortas de Noividad, meaning Christmas rolls, commences with first person narration by the great niece of the protagonist Tita. At the very last chapter of the book, it is revealed that the novel has a circular structure and Tita's great niece, the anonymous narrator and giver of the recipes, is reading the cook book inherited by her mother Esperanza who finds it among the ashes after Tita's death due to a terrible fire. Tita's cook book is the only thing that is saved magically from being burnt and it eventually becomes a valuable book for the women in her family. The great niece uses this book to tell the love story of Tita and Pedro and Tita's struggle against the family traditions.

While most traditions promote well-being of the society such as unity and social attachment, some others have destructive effects both physically and mentally, especially on the female population of the world. Hurtful traditional acts exist in various forms in various countries. Unfortunately, there exist outrageous rules in some societies which place women to an inferior status. In some cultures, there is a discrimination between girls and boys even at birth. Son preference is important for the family as they think he will carry the family name. For this reason, boys have priority over girls as regards education, health and even nutrition which causes women to be economically and socially disadvantageous in lifelong standings in their society. These harmful traditional practices are a major obstacle before women's empowerment. In *Like Water for Chocolate*, Esquivel builds her story on a family tradition to question the long-established values and traditions against women and the society's expectations from them. This chapter deals with how Esquivel uses magical realism to reveal and criticize women's agonies caused by these traditions. She also aims to empower her female characters through the use of magical realistic techniques. According to a longstanding family tradition, the youngest daughter of the family has to look after her mother until she dies; therefore, she is not allowed to marry and start a family. In De la Garza family, Tita, as the youngest daughter of the family, is the victim of this horrible tradition against women and she is forbidden to marry her neighbor Pedro Muzquiz with whom she is passionately in love. The title of the novel denotes to the preparation of boiling water to make hot chocolate. The expression 'like water for chocolate' has a special meaning in Spanish as Loewenstein explains, "when someone is about to explode, we say that person is 'like water for chocolate'" (qtd.in Sollars and Jenkins 255). In her interview with Loewenstein (1994), Esquivel clarifies the significance of the title "like water for

chocolate” and the origin of the idiom which is very widespread in Spanish-speaking countries saying

We used to have hot chocolate with water, before the Spaniards came, because we didn't have cows. You had to wait until the water was just about to boil. That was the appropriate moment to make the chocolate. That is where the saying comes from. (qtd.in Loewenstein 606)

The water should be boiling hot to dissolve the chocolate and the boiling water represents a state of anger and sexual stimulation as Tita often experiences throughout the novel. The family tradition against her and the mistreatment of her tyrant mother is so oppressive that throughout the book Tita is on the verge of exploding out of her intense emotions. When Pedro and his father come to ask for her daughter's hand for marriage, Mama Elena, the despotic mother of Tita tells them that Tita is not allowed to get married due to the family tradition. Instead, she offers Pedro to marry Rosaura, the elder sister of Tita. In a peculiar manner, he agrees to marry Rosaura just to be close to Tita, his true love by moving to the ranch they live. Ultimately, Tita who has to comply with the rules and orders of Mama Elena, indulges in cooking. Only in the kitchen, she feels more liberated from the pressures of Mama Elena and the meaningless traditional rules she has to obey. Everything she cooks expresses her concealed feelings. Due to the fact that she cannot communicate with Pedro under the suspicious eyes of her mother, Tita finds a way to get in contact with him through her magical cooking and the kitchen stands for an inventive, magical space, a symbol for writing rather than a marginal place. Fernández-Levin affirms that “the kitchen becomes a mystical abode in which the protagonist is empowered and permitted to re-create reality in order to avoid social and spiritual annihilation” (1996:106).

4.2 Reflecting Emotions through Tita's Magical Cooking and Its Effect on Others

In *Like Water for Chocolate*, magic is mainly identified with cooking. Food functions as a narrative agent in the novel. In patriarchal societies, the kitchen has negative connotations as it is usually regarded as a confining, repressive and domestic place that imprisons women. In contrast, in *Like Water for Chocolate*, the kitchen turns into a holy and spiritual place that demonstrates alternative aspects of reality and a place where women can express themselves freely. Scott (2009) says that the novel “attempts to advance a feminist consciousness in its portrayal of the traditionally feminine act of cooking as a creative art that liberates women rather than imprisons them” (37).

Esquivel's heroines, Tita and Gertrudis, are in a battle with social constraints and in a constant search for personal liberation. In an interview with Smith for the *Salon Journal*, Esquivel declares her aim as “to communicate to people is that they should disobey the social rules that do not pertain to them, they should rebel against what is not personally true” (3). Tita, the protagonist of the novel, magically reflects her mood into what she cooks. As a remarkable cook, she is magically able to affect and change the mood of those who consume her food. According to Fernández-Levin, “Tita exhibits a perplexing duality. She is able to generate harmony or discord, love or hate, healing or illness, nurturing or painful death” (114). The magical events are prevalent from the very beginning of the novel. When Tita is still in her mother's womb, she cries so loudly that even Nacha, the half-deaf cook of the house, can hear her. Even her birth takes place on the kitchen counter while Mama Elena is chopping onions. When she opens her eyes to the world, she sheds so many tears that it results

in the flooding of the kitchen floor. She weeps so hard that when the floor is dried, a massive amount of salt remains which is enough to fill a ten-pound sack and it is later used for cooking for a long time. This remarkable juxtaposition of an irrational occurrence such as collecting the tears with an everyday purpose, using the salt present in the composition of tears, is the main objective of magical realist narratives and the fact that Tita cries intensely when she comes into the world foreshadows her fate in the kitchen and sorrowful future as it is portrayed in the novel: “Tita had no need for the usual slap on the bottom, because she was already crying as she emerged; maybe that was because she knew then that it would be her lot in life to be denied marriage” (9-10).

Tita’s father, Juan De la Garza, passes away due to a heart attack just two days after her birth. As a result, her mother cannot breastfeed the new-born Tita so Nacha assumes the responsibility to feed the little baby with oatmeal and tea. That is how Tita’s kitchen-oriented life commences. Thanks to the loving temperament of Nacha contrary to tyrannical attitude of Mama Elena, her fondness for the kitchen grows. The kitchen becomes a sacred space for Tita to magically express her inner feelings through what she cooks because other routes of expression such as speaking or protesting the nonsense family tradition are closed to her. As Mama Elena has the final say on all issues, cooking becomes a metaphor for self-expression. While Rosaura and Pedro’s wedding is being organized, Mama Elena commands Tita to prepare the wedding cake disregarding her agony and love for Pedro. Nacha tries to console her while they are making the cake and she advises her to cry as much as she wants since Nacha does not want anyone to see Tita crying the next day. Being on the verge of exploding, she literally becomes like water for chocolate. As her tears

mingle with the dough of the cake, she conveys her sorrow in the cake she makes. On the very wedding day, the magical effect of the cake manifests itself and those who eat it cannot help crying, vomiting and yearning for their lost loves. The event is presented in the novel as follows: “Everyone there, every last person, fell under this spell, and not very many of them made it to the bathrooms in time—those who didn’t join the collective vomiting that was going on all over the patio. Only one person has escaped: the cake had no effect on Tita” (39). This is the first magical incident that exemplifies Tita’s transferring her emotions to others and she discovers an alternative way of communication. Accused by her mother of adding an extra toxic ingredient into the cake, she goes to Nacha to back her about her innocence. Unluckily, she finds her one and only companion dead in the kitchen with “a picture of her fiancé clutched in her hands” (40). After Nacha’s death, Tita’s misery and loneliness in the house increase.

The gazing eyes of Mama Elena hinders any form of communication between Tita and Pedro. As Tita realizes the magical power of her cooking after the wedding cake, she begins to use it as a medium of contact with her beloved as Scott also says “Tita communicates her ongoing love for Pedro through her traditional yet sophisticated Mexican cuisine” (30). In other words, her magical cooking becomes a resistance against the formidable tradition. She can neither protest nor speak about the irrationality of this tradition so she uses cooking as a means of transferring her emotions to Pedro without the fear of being caught to Mama Elena. In the third chapter, entitled Quail in Rose Petal Sauce, this magical realist strategy is adopted by Tita once more. After Nacha’s death, Tita becomes the head cook of the ranch. Pedro gives her a rose bouquet to celebrate the first anniversary of her being the chef of the

ranch. This intimacy irritates Mama Elena and orders Tita to get away with them. Not having the heart to destroy Pedro's gift, which is very special for her, Tita holds onto the roses so tightly that her bosom bleeds. As a result, the pink roses turn red. As she walks into the kitchen, she magically hears Nacha's voice giving the instructions for a recipe, Tita has long forgotten. In order to make quail in rose petal sauce, whose instructions given from the other world by her beloved Nacha, Tita goes to the courtyard and fetches six quails. Looking after them for a long time, it is difficult for merciful Tita to exert her full strength to twist the neck of the quail so the animal runs dizzily with its half-broken neck around the kitchen. She identifies herself with the suffering quail in the hands of Mama Elena. Since her childhood, the tyrannical Mama Elena torments Tita continuously beating her, giving her a massive amount of toil and questioning every decision she makes on her life; therefore, she empathizes with the agonizing quail as it is described in the following:

She realizes that you can't be weak when it comes to killing: you have to be strong or it just causes more sorrow. It occurred to her that she could use her mother's strength right now. Mama Elena was merciless, killing her a little at a time since she was a child, and she still quite hadn't finished her off. Pedro's and Rosaura's marriage had left Tita broken in both heart and mind, like the quail. (*Chocolate* 47)

The kitchen turns into a magical place where Tita can exert her supernatural powers. "Creativity generates self-confidence, it empowers Tita to challenge and change the world that surrounds her" (Fernández-Levin 111). As she wounds herself with the rose thorns, Tita's blood mingles with the dish she makes and it arouses an aphrodisiac effect on the family members who taste it. Tita supernaturally enters the body of her lover, Pedro through the medium of food as Sánchez says "the rose-petal sauce becomes an extension of herself" (2000:224).

With that food it seemed that they had discovered a new system of communication, in which Tita was the transmitter, Pedro the receiver, the poor Gertrudis the medium,

the conducting body through which the singular sexual passage was passed.
(*Chocolate* 49)

The one who is affected by this erogenous effect the most is Gertrudis, Tita's eldest sister. After tasting the food, she cannot help sweating and feeling sexual desire. She even dreams of being abducted by a revolutionary soldier to satisfy her sexual drive whom she ran across in town in the previous week. Rather than washing the dishes after dinner, she feels profound desire to take a shower. However, the heat she feels is so intense that the water drops cannot reach her body due to the fact that they evaporate before touching her body. Consequently, the little wooden cabin where she takes a shower literally bursts into flames. Meanwhile, the rose scent pervading from Gertrudis' body, reaches the revolutionary soldier who is miles away from the ranch they live. Triggered by the smell, the soldier leaves the battlefield and rides his horse to the ranch. There he finds naked Gertrudis and takes her away. Ultimately, she is liberated from society's imposed sexual restraints on women. Tita cannot save herself from the constraints of the society; nonetheless, she emancipates Gertrudis through her own desire transferred into the food she prepares. The magical effect of Tita's food on Gertrudis is so intense that after she runs away from the ranch, she starts working in a brothel because she needs a lot of men to satiate her unquenchable sexual drive. In patriarchal societies, while men's sexual desires are taken into consideration and treated as something to be fulfilled, women's desires are neglected. The depiction of Gertrudis as a character who works in a brothel voluntarily just to please herself sexually not because somebody else forces her to do so is a parodic inversion of traditional gender roles. By bringing Gertrudis' desires into the forefront, Esquivel signifies that women's desires are no less important than those of men no matter how much the society tries to ignore.

Like Water for Chocolate is mainly set during the Mexican Revolution and reflects the political turmoil in the country. The Mexican Revolution started as a reaction against Porfirio Diaz who ruled Mexico with dictatorship between the years 1876 and 1901. He granted immense privileges to foreign companies that took the possession of controlling the national economy. Also, Diaz saw no harm in giving the lands, which belonged to the public, to big landowners. The first significant political reaction to Diaz's dictatorship came from Francisco Madero who was also a candidate in presidential elections in 1910. Thereupon, Diaz had his rival Madero suddenly arrested and won the elections again as the only candidate. Madero fled secretly to the United States when he was freed on bail soon after the elections. Upon his return to Mexico, Madero galvanized his followers into action. Among his supporters were former bandits Pancho Villa and Emiliano Zapata who assumed prominent roles during the revolution. The revolutionaries from the Northern Mexico were called viilistas led by Pancho Villa and the ones from the south were called zapatistas led by Zapata. Madero managed to take an important step towards revolution with a declaration that called the public to rebel against the dictatorship. In 1911, the mutiny became successful in quite a short time after Madero got hold of the control of the troops in the North. Whereupon, negotiations commenced and an agreement was made with the government authorities. According to the terms of the agreement, Diaz had to leave Mexico. Nevertheless, the army made up of peasants under Zapata's leadership engaged in a struggle in favor of agrarian reform against Madero government. Madero was also ousted as a result of a military coup in 1913. Jean Franco (1989) says:

[D]uring the Revolution an incipient feminist movement had taken shape. However, that war "with its promise of social transformation, encouraged a Messianic spirit that transformed mere human beings into supermen and constituted a discourse that

associated virility with social transformation in a way that marginalized women at the very moment when they were, supposedly, liberated”, a phenomenon evident in *Like Water for Chocolate*. (qtd.in Saltz 30)

Although the feminist movement started in the mid-nineteenth century in other countries, Mexican women who were also seeking social, economic and political equality found the chance to struggle for liberation only at the time of Mexican Revolution in the early twentieth century while fighting along with men for the first time in their history. In *Like Water for Chocolate*, this developing feminist movement is reflected through Gertrudis as she defies sexual repression assigned by patriarchy and Tita has a share in it through her magical cooking. Once Gertrudis is freed from sexual repressions of the society, she seeks liberation in other walks of life, mainly political liberation what was sought during the Mexican Revolution. She joins the revolutionaries and becomes a general. Gertrudis fights against the sexual oppression against women in patriarchal societies and in a similar manner, the revolutionaries revolt against the patriarchy, mainly the political dictatorship. As Franco indicates, this period was a sign of a drastic transformation for the society and “women had followed armies, fought, fled from their homes, lost their men, survived, had nursed and fed troops” (“Plotting” 102). With the character Gertrudis, women’s presence and contributions to the Revolution are demonstrated in the novel through transgressing the confinements of locating women to private spaces and the aphrodisiac effect of Tita’s dish on Gertrudis is undeniable in terms of realizing her desire for being liberated both sexually and politically. In contrast with Tita and Gertrudis’ desire to demolish social repressions and traditions, Mama Elena and Rosaura are more concerned about “decency” and “the proper way” (Ibsen 140). Obsessed with others’ opinions about their morals and manners, Mama Elena and Rosaura behave in accordance with *Manual of Urbanity and Good Manners* (1853)

by Manuel Antonio Carreño (1812-1874), which is a widely read classic manual for rules of etiquette and good manners in Latin America during the nineteenth century. This book is often cited in the book as an extension of Tita's detest for unnecessary rules and traditions that restraint women. For instance, in Pedro's and Rosaura's wedding, Tita feels so sorrowful that she wants to leave immediately. However, because of Carreño's manual of etiquette, she cannot leave with the fear of being criticized by both the guests and Mama Elena who treats this book as her bible.

She could hardly wait until everyone had finished the cake so she could leave the table. Carreno's manual of etiquette said she couldn't leave until then, so she kept her head in the clouds and gobbled down her piece of cake. (*Chocolate* 39)

Being extreme conformists, Mama Elena and Rosaura are obsessed with the idea of being criticized by others. Under the label of decency, they are the ones who behave in the most immoral way. Nonetheless, they conceal their immorality by conforming to the rules assigned by the society. Mama Elena, knowing that her daughter is passionately in love with Pedro, maintains the ridiculous tradition. Although Mama Elena is depicted as an independent woman who controls an entire ranch on her own after her husband's untimely death, according to Saltz "she is not a leader in a new feminized society, but rather a follower in the web of hegemonic, counter-revolutionary forces, of pre-revolutionary repression and authoritarianism" (32). She chooses to carry on the tradition that only cares for the elderly prohibiting her daughter to feel real love. In a similar way, Rosaura, being quite aware of the mutual love of Pedro and Tita, agrees to marry Pedro by ignoring her own sister's deep emotions for Pedro. When Esperanza, Pedro and Rosaura's daughter, is born, Tita is afraid that Esperanza will also have the same bad fate because Rosaura is an extreme follower of this tradition. Tita tries to change Rosaura's mind on this issue, however, Rosaura does not stray from Mama Elena's path even after her death. They have a

huge quarrel as Tita wants to deter Rosaura from this outdated tradition as she says “One thing is for sure. I’m not going to allow you to poison your daughter with those sick ideas you have in your head. I’m not going to let you ruin her life either, forcing her to follow some stupid tradition! (*Chocolate* 194).

Throughout the book, the examples of Tita’s transferring her emotions into what she cooks are abundant. Spanos avers that “the kitchen also emerges as a space not only of domestic confinement and artistic creation, but also a place of Tita’s revolt” (149-150). There exists a multitude of examples on Tita’s magic spells in food preparation. The only thing Tita cannot bear in her life is not being able to provide food for someone who is desperately hungry. When Rosaura has her first child Roberto, she cannot breastfeed the baby because of her poor health that is why they find a wet-nurse from the village but unfortunately this lady dies as a result of an stray bullet. No matter what remedy Tita tries to feed the baby, she cannot find any solution as the baby rejects all kinds of supplementary food. In order to soothe the baby for a while, Tita unbuttons her blouse and lets the poor baby suck her dry breast. By then Tita is magically able to feed the baby though it is impossible for a virgin to do so. This inexplicable and unprecedented incident of Tita’s breastfeeding her sister’s baby reveals the nourishing side of her. Tita appears like the Roman goddess Ceres, the symbol of fertility and plenty to Pedro who “wasn’t surprised in the least, nor did he need an explanation” (*Chocolate* 70). Upon seeing Tita’s breastfeeding his son, Pedro’s attitude towards this unaccountable incident according to the laws of science highlights the magical realist aspect of the novel again. Unlike Mama Elena’s hope that the baby will drive Tita and Pedro apart, the baby bonds them even much more than before. When she becomes suspicious of their intimacy, in order to keep Pedro and Tita apart, Mama Elena sends Rosaura, Pedro and their

baby Roberto to San Antonio, Texas. A short while after their departure, they receive the bad news that Roberto has passed away in San Antonio due to poor nutrition. While they are making Northern style chorizo, they receive the unfortunate news about Roberto's death whom Tita is extremely fond of. Once more, Mama Elena's selfishness supported by nonsensical traditions causes many people's suffering including this little innocent baby. In a stone-hearted manner, Mama Elena keeps making the sausage and she prohibits Tita's crying. When she urges Tita to put aside her sorrow and resume making sausages, Tita has a nervous breakdown and rebels against her mother for the first time in her life:

Tita felt a violent agitation take possession of her being: still fingering the sausage, she calmly met her mother's gaze and then, instead of obeying her order, she started to tear apart all the sausages she could reach, screaming wildly. Here's what I do with your orders! I'm sick of them! I'm sick of obeying you! (89)

A week later, the sausages they prepare spoil without any rational explanation, swarming with worms (90). Again, Tita transfers her emotions through food and this time she reflects her hatred for Mama Elena and her unbearable cruelty towards Tita. Not only does she ruin her life by enslaving her by a nonsense family tradition but also she denies her the right to express her feelings. Under Mama Elena's nightmarish roof, Tita has to conceal her feelings such as her infatuation for Pedro or her agony over the death of her beloved nephew, Roberto. As a result, her mood is immediately conveyed through food, this time her extreme abhorrence towards Mama Elena. Chapter five, entitled Northern-style Chorizo, ends with Tita's mental breakdown as she loses her temper upon Roberto's death. After Mama Elena beats her for her disobedience, Tita climbs up to the dovecote to be alone and suffer for her loss freely. The following day, John Brown, the family doctor of the De la Garza family, who wants to marry Tita, comes and finds Tita in an extremely miserable

situation and decides to take Tita away with him to his own house to heal her wounds both physically and mentally. Another example of reflecting moods through food can be demonstrated in the eleventh chapter, entitled Beans with Chili Tezcucana-style. Though she is unable to express herself verbally, Tita's enchanting recipes reflect both her reaction to social pressures and the changes in her own consciousness. Her extraordinary cooking ability is a powerful tool which enables her to control life and death. Thanks to her magical cooking, she is able to take revenge on those whoever does her wrong, especially Rosaura and Mama Elena. Rosaura, who has a sinister character, walks in her mother's shadow and persists in keeping the ancient traditions which cause other people's misery just because of her selfishness. Rosaura is so heartless and shameless that she even does not bother to marry Pedro, the lover of her sister. As a result of Tita's hatred for Rosaura due to her hypocrisy, narrow-mindedness and fanaticism for traditions, Tita inadvertently reflects these emotions into what she cooks so when Rosaura eats Tita's dishes, she swells like a monster and gains weight immensely. Due to her digestion problems, an unpleasant odour pervades wherever she is. Consequently, this disgusting smell drives other people away from her, including Pedro. He cannot sleep in the same room with Rosaura so they do not have a normal marriage. Eventually, she dies because of "an acute congestion of the stomach" (*Chocolate* 210). Few people attend her funeral as the odour of her body gets even worse. Mama Elena is also a victim of Tita's enchanting dishes. From Rosaura and Pedro's wedding day when the wedding cake Tita has prepared leads to mass vomiting and sadness among the guests due to the tears added to the cake, Mama Elena becomes suspicious of her adding extra ingredients into what she cooks. This suspicion becomes an obsession when Tita comes back from Dr. Brown's house as soon as she hears Mama Elena is paralyzed due to the attack of

bandits on the ranch. Thinking Tita wants to get married Dr. Brown, Mama Elena gets paranoid that Tita will poison her. From then on, before she eats anything Tita cooks, she starts drinking a glass of milk as a precaution for the fear of being poisoned by Tita. Moreover, she regularly takes purgatives and this overdose medicine leads to a horrible death in a month. According to Fernández-Levin,

The deaths of Rosaura and Mama Elena convey a symbolic warning. Their intestinal afflictions signal state of spiritual deterioration caused by their blind acquiescence to social norms. Society has demanded a terrible price on these women who are powerless and unable to find an outlet for their unhappy lives. Rosaura expires between the clean sheets of an empty bridal chamber. Mama Elena dies embittered by her awareness of a loveless, wasted and meaningless life. (113)

After Mama Elena's death, Tita commences marriage preparation with Doctor Brown. She invites John and his aunt to dinner; however, she feels unsure about the marriage decision as she is still deeply in love with Pedro. Moreover, that day she has a huge fight with Rosaura which they delayed for many years about her marriage with Pedro. In addition to this issue, they quarreled about Rosaura's conformist attitude towards the outdated family tradition that humiliates and turns the life of the youngest daughter into hell. After their first child, Roberto's death, Rosaura and Pedro has another baby named Esperanza whose name is given by Tita, meaning hope. As Esperanza is the only daughter of Rosaura and Rosaura will not be able to become impregnated again due to her poor health, Tita is afraid that Esperanza will have the same destiny like herself. Consequently, the beans that she cooks for her guests are directly affected from this situation. Her bad mood hinders the beans from being cooked and as a solution Tita has to sing to them until they get soften. The reason that prevents the beans from being cooked is attributed to Tita's bad mood and the rational thing to do in order to soften them is just to sing to them portrayed as

the only logical thing to do in a down-to-earth manner. This situation is depicted in the novel as follows:

She entered the kitchen and went to preparation of the beans, but much to her surprise she found that they still weren't done, despite the hours they had been cooking. Something strange was going on. Tita remembered that Nacha had always said that when people argue while preparing tamales, the tamales won't get cooked. They can be heated day after day and still stay raw, because the tamales are angry. In a case like that, you have to sing to them, which makes them happy; then they'll cook. (197)

4.3 Literalization of Metaphors and Employment of Hyperboles as a Magical Realist Technique

In *Like Water for Chocolate*, many things are exaggerated and they are out of proportion. For instance, in order to organize a feast for Rosaura and Pedro's wedding party, Tita needs excessive amounts of ingredients. In the second chapter entitled Chabela Wedding Cake, 170 eggs are needed to be beaten for the cake and 200 roosters have to be used for a special dish. However, these figures appear beyond imagination as it is stated in the text "When she had beaten barely a hundred eggs, the phenomenal energy required for the task began to have a bad effect on Tita's mood. To reach the goal of 170 seemed unimaginable" (*Chocolate* 28). After Mama Elena and Rosaura's respective deaths, Esperanza is able to get away with the ancient family tradition and marry Dr. John Brown's son, Alex. In the last chapter entitled Chillies in Walnut Sauce, while Tita felicitously is preparing a special dish that needs a thousand walnuts to be shelled for its sauce, she still remembers her mother who would enjoy doing such an activity "applying pressure, smashing to bits, skinning, those were among her favourite activities" (*ibid.*,208) just like she does to Tita throughout her life. A further example of hyperbole used in the novel is the multiple examples of literal flood of tears in every phase of Tita's life. Tita's

excessive crying begins even when she is in her mother's womb. Parallel to her bad fate, there is a repetitive occurrence of exaggerated crying. For instance, when she wants to tell her mother that Pedro wants to visit their house for their intended marriage, Mama Elena strictly opposes since Tita has to remain single throughout her life saying "You don't have an opinion, and that's all I want to hear about it. For generations, not a single person in my family has ever questioned this tradition, and no daughter of mine is going to be the one to start" (ibid.,14). Since there is no place for dialogue in the De la Garza family, Tita starts to weep and her tears cover all the table. Another example for her excessive crying takes place in John's house. After a six-month period without eating and uttering a single word because of her mental breakdown, Tita regains her senses when Chenchu visits her and brings her some oxtail soup. As Scott also says: "The culinary arts are also shown to possess therapeutic qualities. Tita recovers her memory after she ingests the oxtail soup prepared by Chenchu the maid" (33-34). After tasting the soup, Tita weeps so much that her tears literally flood and her tears turn into a creek and run down the stairs. Dr. Brown thinks the house floods but he is relieved when he sees that Tita cries out of happiness. Though Dr. Brown has received a Western type of education based on science and rationality, he does not show any signs of surprise seeing Tita's hyperbolic tears.

The most important hyperbole as a magical realist technique is Tita's wedding bedspread which she has started to crochet on the day Pedro first expresses his love to Tita and intention of marriage. Tita gleefully begins to crochet since she aims to use it on her own matrimonial bed with Pedro. Nevertheless, when her lover marries her own sister, this bedspread becomes a symbol of inner feelings and emotions. Tita gleefully starts working on this bedspread with an excitement and hope for her future

life with her lover, Pedro. However, due to the horrible family tradition against her plans, this bedspread becomes the mark of her agony. The day she learns about Pedro and Rosaura's arranged marriage, Tita begins to shiver not because of the cold but the extreme sorrow she feels.

She decided to use the yarn, not to let it go to waste, and so she worked on the bedspread and wept furiously, weeping and working until dawn and threw it over herself. It didn't help at all. Not that night, nor many others, for as long as she lived, could she free herself from that cold. (ibid. 21)

Tita's bedspread reflects the unfulfilled dreams, inner cold and extreme grief of the women who have to subjugate the traditions that ignore their emotions. After her mental breakdown, Mama Elena wants Dr. Brown to come and take Tita to a lunatic asylum, Dr. Brown comes to take Tita to his own house for her recovery. While leaving the ranch, the only thing Tita takes with her is this bedspread, reaching an enormous dimension, approximately a full kilometer long:

It was so large and heavy it didn't fit inside the carriage. Tita grabbed it so tightly that there was no choice but to let it drag behind the carriage like the huge train of a wedding gown that stretched for a full kilometer. Tita used any yarn she happened to have in her bedspread, no matter what the colour, textures and forms that appeared and disappeared as if by magic in the gigantic cloud of dust that rose up behind it (ibid. 91)

At the end of the novel, after Alex and Esperanza's wedding ceremony and leaving for their honeymoon, Pedro and Tita are finally able to stay alone and find the opportunity to live their love without any restrictions of traditions. Out of extreme sexual excitement, Pedro dies and Tita decides to commit suicide by chewing some matches and to ignite the same fire inside her to rejoin Pedro in death. However, in order to achieve her goal, she first has to warm up herself with the bedspread she has woven all through her life, this time covering "the whole ranch, all three hectares" (ibid.,220). She succeeds in her aim and reunites with Pedro in death and "the fiery bodies of Pedro and Tita began to throw off glowing sparks" (ibid.,221). The

hyperbolically gigantic bedspread catches fire so does the whole ranch. From miles away, people think that it is a firework display in honour Alex and Esperanza, the newlyweds.

4.4 Mixed Genres and *Like Water for Chocolate*

Like Water for Chocolate is not only sold in fiction sections but also in cooking sections of bookshops in Mexico. According to Sánchez (2000), the novel is a unique example of “generic hybridization” (213). He says the novel makes use of traditions from “popular literature, mostly from sentimental novels, Harlequin romances, nineteenth-century women’s magazines, soap operas and fairy tales. It is at the same time highly parodic of all these genres” (ibid.). Esquivel makes use of mass genres that are conventionally considered as feminine; however, she parodies these genres by empowering her heroines in her novel. Even the title of the novel, *Like Water for Chocolate, A Novel in Monthly Installments with Recipes, Romances and Home Remedies* brings to mind “the novela por entregas [serialised novel], a work of fiction usually published in instalments in magazines, and appearing in Mexico from the mid-nineteenth century onwards” (Taylor 184). These serialised novels mostly appeared in magazines along with recipes, home remedies and practical ideas for women. This genre was often ignored by the literary canon as it was not worth reading by the majority but “as sentimental escapism directed to a female reading public” (ibid.). Esquivel is revisiting this feminine form by inserting cooking recipes and home remedies into the novel’s traditional format, “enhancing its status through her novel” (ibid.). Sentimental and romantic writing is often marginalized; however, as Jaffe asserts “Esquivel was able to subvert the expectations of the genres, hence empowering the female characters in the novel” (qtd.in Uychoco 102). Esquivel

indirectly parodies the sentimental romance novels she imitates by swapping the gender roles upside down “to situate the reader within a feminist perspective” (Weldt-Basson 2009:171). According to her, this parodic reversal in *Like Water for Chocolate* contributes to “the construction of strong female characters” (ibid.,193). As Radway points out the most significant component of a romance novel is its centering around a couple who is deeply in love (1991:120). The affair between Tita and Pedro meets this criterion in the most appropriate sense. Another criterion in romance novels is that the hero is usually highly masculine, ruthless and careless to women owing to his bitter memories of the past but a nurturing aspect (ibid.,128). On the contrary, in *Like Water for Chocolate*, the major male characters in the novel are depicted as coward, fragile and uncertain compared to the female characters. For instance, Pedro is described as light years away from being an ideal novelistic hero. Though he loves Tita passionately, he does not take any action from the very beginning of the novel. He prefers to be captive of the imposed family tradition in a manner that a novelistic hero would never do. Rather than eloping with Tita or coming up with another solution to marry her, he simply accepts to marry Rosaura just to live under the same roof with Tita. During his marriage with Rosaura, Pedro’s love for Tita never fades away; however, he does not make any move to divorce his wife. As Weldt-Basson verifies “Pedro is by no means a social rebel, his lack of forcefulness, which motivates most of the novel’s action, is an inversion of the traditional male hero of romantic fiction” (192). Just as Pedro does not save Tita from oppressiveness of the tradition and her mother, he also cannot face with Mama Elena. He just complies with her orders without any further interrogation. For example, when Pedro stops complimenting Tita’s dishes, Tita feels awful as she thinks that Pedro does not love her anymore because her magical cooking is the only

means of communication with Pedro. Later, Tita learns that it is Mama Elena who forbids him to comment on Tita's dishes as it may hurt Rosaura and Pedro gives into her wishes without questioning. The other male protagonist and family doctor, John Brown, also loving Tita is again portrayed as a wimpy character. He is depicted as a kind and caring man; however, he cannot persuade Tita to marry him and show that he is a better choice than Pedro, his rival. He waits for Tita patiently, as Ibsen also states "like a stereotypical abnegada mujer mexicana" (142), meaning selfless Mexican woman. In patriarchal societies, it is mostly the woman who waits for her man who is away either for war or business purposes, but in *Like Water for Chocolate*, it is John Brown who waits for Tita's decision between himself and Pedro. On the other hand, female characters are depicted as quite strong. Unlike Pedro, Tita fights against the oppressive tradition and finds a way to communicate her beloved through her magical cooking. There is also the parody of damsel-in-distress, an archetypal character of medieval romances, which is a common theme in world literature. In these romances, the damsel-in-distress is usually depicted as a weak, beautiful and innocent young lady who waits for a male rescuer to save her from a villain or a monster. However, in Gertrudis' case, she is taken away by the viilista soldier, Juan not because she is in a great jeopardy but because she wants to be satisfied sexually as a result of the magical aphrodisiac dish Tita makes. What is more, the male hero usually asks for the damsel's hand in marriage. On the contrary, in this novel, the viilista cannot satisfy Gertrudis on his own; therefore, she leaves Juan and enters a brothel to find as many men as she can find to satisfy her sexual drive. When Tita secretly sends her clothes to the brothel she works, Gertrudis in return sends Tita a letter saying "[T]omorrow I will be leaving this place, which is not where I belong" (*Chocolate* 115). After being with many men to satisfy herself in

the brothel, Gertrudis decides to join the army. After Mama Elena's death, Gertrudis is able to visit the ranch with her troops. She not only becomes a female soldier but also manages to become a general who has a strong authority over her troops. Gertrudis even makes her sergeant Treviño prepare some deserts for her as she is herself unable to cook. Treviño, an extremely powerful soldier in the battlefield, manages to cook consulting Tita's recipes. In this way, Esquivel tries to challenge society's notion that cooking is a feminine affair. Instead, she manages to signify that these gender roles are not biologically determined but they are mere impositions and constructs of the society. After Gertrudis becomes a general, the revolutionary she marries, Juan remains in the shadow of her by continuing as mere soldier.

4.5 Transgressing Boundaries

In *Like Water for Chocolate*, the examples of transgressing boundaries are abundant as in many other magical realist texts. The first example of transgressing boundaries is on spiritual level because there is a constant connection between the realm of the dead and alive. Although Tita's guardian angel, the Indian cook Nacha, who is closer to Tita than her biological mother, passes away in chapter 2, she is by Tita's side whenever she deals with an obstacle. As mentioned before, Faris sets some primary features of magical realist texts, one of which is "the closeness or near-merging of two realms" (2004:21). This feature can be clearly seen in this novel as Nacha tells Tita what to do while helping Rosaura give birth to her first child, how to prepare a nostrum for Pedro's burns. Not only she helps Tita in her bad times but she also instructs her to make the special dish, quail in rose petal sauce with the roses Pedro gives her. As Faris also states in the novel "magic is instrumental in achieving the expression of the suppressed female desire and power" (2004:205) and Nacha aids

Tita to transfer this desire to Pedro. Another striking example of Nacha's transgressing the realm of the death is her last favor to Tita. At the end of the novel, when Mama Elena and Rosaura both die, there remains no impediment for Tita's and Pedro's togetherness. When they are finally alone at the ranch, they enter a room full of flowers and 250 burning candles. Pedro reckons Tita has done all these embellishments and Tita thinks the other way round. In fact, it is Nacha who prepares this amorous atmosphere for the two lovers who suffer a lot from the unreasonable tradition they have to obey. The phantom of Nacha is narrated in such a down-to-earth manner that her physical presence can be seen by the alive. However, in the last chapter, Tita and Pedro are so excited and love-besotted that they do not realize Nacha's presence in the room as stated in the novel "they were so filled with pleasure that they didn't notice that in a corner of the room Nacha lit the last candle, raised her finger to her lips as if asking for silence and faded away" (219). Mama Elena's ghost also visits the realm of the living. Just as Tita doubts that she may be pregnant out of wed lock, the ghost of Mama Elena appears to her. Her ghostly look is portrayed in such a realistic and earthly way that even their dog is scared by the phantom of Mama Elena. Although Mama Elena physically has left this world, she keeps interfering Tita's life and blames her for violating the tradition by sleeping with Pedro and orders Tita to leave the ranch without giving any more harm to the traditions and consequently her sister's marriage and for the first time in her life Tita expresses her hatred for tyrannical mother. Upon her death, a big secret that Mama Elena conceals for years is revealed. Tita finds some love letters belong to Mama Elena written by Jose Trevino. Tita learns the secret affair of her mother and Gertrudis is not the daughter of Juan de la Garza, Tita's father but Jose Trevino's. After learning about the relationship between their daughter and a mulatto, meaning

a person of mixed white and black ancestry, Mama Elena's parents strictly disapprove of this relationship. They force Elena to marry Juan de la Garza; however, this marriage does not hinder Mama Elena from exchanging letters with Jose. This forbidden love is not limited to letters as Gertrudis is Jose's daughter. When Mama Elena's ghost accuses Tita of not behaving like a decent woman complying with traditions, Tita tells her that she is well aware of Mama Elena's secret affair and her illegitimate child:

'Shut your mouth! Who do you think you are?'
'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've always hated you!' (*Chocolate* 180)

The moment Tita dares to utter the magic words for the first time in her life, Mama Elena's ghost permanently fades away. In Tita's entire life, this is the first time she engages in a dialogue with her mother as their relationship is solely limited to Mama Elena's monologues. These traditions are so overwhelming that though Mama Elena herself is precluded from being together with the man she loves just because the racist behavior of her despotic parents, she still does not hesitate to set up almost the same rules. Another example for the merging realms, the material and the spiritual world, is demonstrated through Dr. John Brown's grandmother, the Indian Kikapu. Losing her beloved nephew, Tita becomes insane temporarily and Dr. Brown takes her to his own house in Eagle Pass, Texas. During her stay and recovery process in John's house, Tita encounters a kind Indian woman who offers her a cup of tea and communicates with her non-verbally. Tita does not realize that she is the phantom of John's grandmother. Later, it is clarified that the lady she contacts with is John's grandmother who has been dead for many years. When Tita learns this, she does not show any astonishment. As the realm of the dead and the living are on the same level

in magical realist texts, the borders between the two is crossed once more in the novel.

CHAPTER 5

THE HOUSE OF THE SPIRITS

“Each person has his own truth, and ...all are valid”.

Isabel Allende, *Forest of the Pygmies*

“The one duty we owe to historiography is to rewrite it”

Oscar Wilde, “The Critic as Artist”

5.1 Conceptual Framework for *The House of the Spirits*

Although extraordinary and supernatural elements abound in magical realism, it cannot be totally separated from the political reality of the world. What makes magical realist writers renowned is their frequent use of political criticism. Often magical realists emerged from parts of the world where dictatorships prevailed and as a result freedom of expression was under suppression. It was not possible for a writer to criticize a dictator explicitly and get away with it. Magical realism is a means which makes this kind of critique of power structures possible in disguise. The plots which embody supernatural elements may not appear like direct political critiques; however, careful readers can read between the lines and grasp the real message hidden underneath the magic. Hence, Isabel Allende³ as a close relative of the overthrown Marxist president of Chile, Salvador Allende, chooses magical realism as a means to reflect the political realities of her country. Receiving death

threats just because of her surname and political stance, Allende was only able to write *The House of the Spirits* in exile, in Venezuela and reflect the political climate of her country under Pinochet regime and made the voices of those who were tortured due to their ideologies to the entire world.

The House of the Spirits is the debut novel of Isabel Allende and placed Allende as one of the few internationally recognized female writers came out from the “Boom” of Latin American literature which began in the 1960s. The novel deals with the family history of del Valle-Trueba family. It follows three generations of the family, Clara, Blanca and Alba respectively and their hassle with the family patriarch, Esteban Trueba as a wife, daughter and granddaughter to gain their independence. It integrates magical realist techniques to tell the story of an era full of agonies due to the military regime from the perspectives of the members of del Valle-Trueba family. In the novel, the women characters are not only in a constant struggle with the family patriarch Esteban but also with political authorities, oppressive regimes and the way they write history. Although there is no direct reference to a country name or date, it is clear that it is Allende’s home country. Meyer says that, the novel is “a direct refusal to accept the patriarchal oppression historically practiced by the upper classes and the military in Latin America” (qtd. in McDonald 24). The novel portrays the lives of two families, del Valles and Truebas, from the beginning of the twentieth century to the military coup that takes place in 1973. The turning point of the novel is the military coup that took place in the country overthrowing the nameless president in the novel. However, it is clear that the country is Chile and the president is Isabel Allende’s father’s cousin Salvador Allende. According to Faris, a majority of magical realist texts “take a position that is antibureaucratic, and so they

often use their magic against the established social order” and she also adds that “Isabel Allende builds *The House of the Spirits* in part to critique the barbarity of Pinochet’s Chilean regime” (“Scheherazade’s Children” 179-180). The novel commences with the unknown first-person narrator and the reader learns only then that it is Alba, the last generation of the family, reading the journals of her late grandmother Clara and creating her own story by using them. The novel starts with a retrospective manner as Alba reads these journals which were written fifty years ago. Alba uses Clara’s journals to write a family saga along with her grandfather Esteban Trueba before he dies. Suddenly, the first-person narration turns into a third-person narration. The reader is first introduced to Clara del Valle who starts keeping a journal when she is a little girl, her parents Severo and Nivea del Valle and her sister Rosa who has an extraordinary, other worldly beauty. At that time, her sister, Rosa the Beautiful, is engaged to Esteban Trueba. Clara is a clairvoyant and she can predict the events beforehand. However, she is not able to change them before they occur. While Esteban is working in the mines to make a fortune to get married his beloved fiancé, Rosa passes away since she drinks a poisonous brandy sent to their house to poison her father who is a politician. Thus, Clara witnesses the autopsy of Rosa and stops talking for nine years out of shock. Esteban gives up working in the mines and tells his spinster sister Férula that he wants to restore their family estate called Trés Marias which is in a remote part of the country. Sick at heart because of the untimely death of his fiancé, Esteban focuses on his work by converting his ramshackle family property into the best ranch in the region. Meanwhile, in Tres Mariás, he rapes one of the peasant girls named Pancha García and impregnates her. Esteban, being the landowner and patron in peasants’ words, keeps this hideous habit of raping all the local women on his estate. Throughout his life, he exploits the rights

of the peasants not only by raping women but making them work in bad conditions and never offering them what they deserve. He also spends his time in local brothels and has relationship with prostitutes mainly Tránsito Soto to whom he gives some money in order to leave the town and go to the city to establish her own business. After nine years in Tres Marías, Esteban goes back to the city to visit his dying mother.

Meanwhile in del-Valle mansion, Clara who is in deep silence for nine years because of the shock, speaks for the first time to announce that she will get married to Rosa's fiancé, Esteban Trueba. Two months later, Esteban visits del Valle mansion to ask for Clara's hand in marriage. The couple enters a stormy marriage and they have a daughter named Blanca and twin boys named Jaime and Nicolás. In Tres Marías, Blanca has a forbidden affair with Pedro Tercero who is the revolutionary son of the foreman of the ranch Pedro Segundo. Pedro Tercero starts preaching socialist ideas in Tres Marías and informs the peasants about their rights. This worries Esteban since he thinks that it threatens his authority on his estate. He whips Pedro Tercero in front of his father for his disobedience. Despite all these, Pedro and Blanca continue their relationship and meet by the river secretly at night. When a guest in Tres Marías, a well-off French man named Count de Satigny, asks for Blanca's hand in marriage, Blanca refuses her out of her intense love for Pedro. Count de Satigny sees Pedro and Blanca one night by the river and tells Esteban that they have a secret relationship. Esteban boils with rage and he beats his daughter Blanca. Clara tells him that he has done the same things such as sleeping with women who are not from his own class and defended Pedro and Blanca that they did it for love. Esteban slaps Clara for her words and breaks a few of her teeth. Therefore, Clara gives up speaking

to her husband again. Esteban wants to find Pedro Tercero to kill him and Esteban García, the grandson of Pancha García whom Esteban raped years ago, tells him the place of Pedro Tercero in the hope of a reward. Esteban finds Pedro; however, he is unable to kill him as Pedro runs away but he is able to chop off three fingers of him. Not knowing that Esteban García is his illegitimate grandson, Trueba does not give the reward he promised. Trueba puts the blame on Jean de Satigny and orders him to marry Blanca as Blanca is expecting a baby. However, when Blanca realizes that her husband has affairs with the workers in the house, she leaves him and goes back to her mother's house in the city. Her daughter Alba is born and Blanca sustains her relationship with Pedro Tercero secretly. Alba grows up thinking that her father has died not knowing it is Pedro Tercero. Meanwhile, Esteban becomes a senator of the Conservative Party. Clara dies on Alba's seventh birthday. After Clara's death, Esteban becomes more involved in politics. He hates Marxism and fights against socialists along with his party. Alba gets into university and meets Miguel who is also a revolutionary. She indulges in politics just because of her love for Miguel and conceals the fact that she is Senator Esteban Trueba's granddaughter. The socialists win and the Candidate is elected and Pedro Tercero joins the government. In order to damage the economy under the new government, Esteban Trueba and his conservative party is trying to find ways to get rid of the socialists. A military coup takes place which topple down the President and leads to a long-lasting dictatorship. Esteban is extremely sorry for what he has done and helps Blanca and Pedro to leave the country and flee to Canada. Alba is arrested for her political connections with Miguel and she is tortured. The colonel who investigates her turns out to be Esteban García, the illegitimate grandson of Esteban Trueba. Full of hatred towards the Trueba family and especially Esteban for ignoring him for years, Esteban García

wants to take revenge by torturing Alba. While Alba is in the solitary confinement, the ghost of her beloved grandmother Clara appears and tells her that she should write in order to survive. Meanwhile, Esteban calls Transíto Soto who has political connections as she is the owner of the biggest brothel in the city to use her connections so as to release Alba. Transíto, owing a debt to Esteban Trueba as he helped her many years ago financially to found her own business, fulfills Esteban's wishes. In the epilogue, Esteban and Alba write their story by using the journals of Clara. Esteban dies peacefully in Alba's arms, turning into a loving old man from a patriarch. Alba is pregnant but she does not know the identity of the father of her child, she thinks it can be either Miguel's child or the multiple rapes she is exposed to.

5.2 Magic as a Feminine Privilege in *The House of the Spirits*

The House of the Spirits can be regarded as abound in magical elements and those who are identified with magical powers are the female characters. The first irreducible element of magic can be considered as the green hair of Rosa the Beautiful, Clara's older sister and Esteban Trueba's fiancé. When the novel opens in a church when Severo del Valle, father of Clara and Rosa, attends the Sunday mass along with his wife and eleven children to make a good impression in front of the public though he is a mason and atheist. While they are listening to the preaches of Father Restrepo, Nivea del Valle is startled by her daughter Rosa's extraterrestrial beauty as she is surprised each time she looks at Rosa. Rosa is depicted as an other-worldly creature and she "seemed to have been made of a different material from the rest of the human race" (*Spirits* 4) with her green hair and yellow eyes. When Rosa is born, the midwife screams by saying "the most beautiful creature to be born on earth

since the days of the original sin” (ibid.) since the child is like porcelain doll without a single wrinkle. Rosa’s timeless death can be considered as the first signification of the theme of political violence in the novel. Furthermore, her death signifies the first time in the novel a family member pays the penalty of another because Rosa dies as a result of drinking the poisonous liquor that is sent to her father as a gift from his political rivals. Allende’s criticism against the political corruption and the hypocrisy of politicians are apparent from the very beginning of the novel.

The supernatural elements in the novel are mostly associated with Clara, the protagonist who has supernatural powers since her childhood. Clara is a clairvoyant, she is able to foresee events; however, she is not able to change them as in the case of Rosa’s death. She announces that someone in the family will die by mistake and nobody takes notice of her prediction. The next day, Rosa dies as a result of consuming the poisonous drink meant for his father. Shocked by her sister’s death and being afraid of making any further predictions, Clara remains mute for nine years.

They also grown accustomed to the youngest daughter’s prophecies. She would announce earthquakes in advance, which was quite useful in that country of catastrophes, for it gave them a chance to lock up the good dishes and place their slippers within reach in case they had to run out of in the middle of the night. (*Spirits* 8)

Not only she is able to predict the future but she is also able to move objects without touching, interpret dreams, recognize people’s intentions, plays the piano with her mind and communicate with the spirits. Though Nana, the nanny of Clara thinks that her supernatural powers will fade away with menstruation, Clara’s supernatural powers increase even more. After nine years of complete silence, she speaks for the first time to say that she is going to get married soon. When her father asks the

identity of the groom, she replies she will marry her deceased sister's fiancé, Esteban Trueba. Two months after this declaration, Esteban Trueba comes to ask if they have an eligible daughter for him to get married. When she marries Esteban, she even gets more indulged in the spiritual realm ignoring domestic chores. She still pays no attention to domestic matters, "she left everything in the hands of Nana and the other servants and immersed herself in the world of apparitions and psychic experiments" (ibid. 135). The intensification of her psychic abilities with marriage proves Nana to be wrong. In addition, when Clara is pregnant, she also foretells the gender of her babies. Esteban wants to have a son to continue his bloodline but Clara declares that "It's a little girl and her name is Blanca" (ibid. 100). The second time she becomes impregnated with the twins, Jaime and Nicolás, Esteban expresses his desire to have a son so that this time they can give his name to the baby. However, Clara announces that "it's not one, it's two" and says "the twins will be called Jaime and Nicolás, respectively" (ibid. 115). According to Foreman, "Allende locates Clara as the site of naming; and this wrests Adamic power from her husband, Trueba" (1995:291). Although some people do not take notice of Clara's powers of clairvoyance, the ones who heed her such powers benefit from it. For instance, during her childhood, she assists her uncle Marcos when he engages in fortune-telling. Marcos thinks that Clara's clairvoyance will be a valuable source of income and an opportunity to improve his own clairvoyance. In order to turn clairvoyance into a profitable business:

He bought a crystal ball in the Persian bazaar, insisting that it had magic powers and was from the East (although it was later found to be part of a buoy from a fishing boat), set it down on a background of black velvet, and announced that he could tell people's fortunes, cure the evil eye, and improve the quality of dreams, all for the modest sum of five centavos. (*Spirits* 16)

Marcos' fortune-telling business highly succeeds and people form long queues in front of the house. Thanks to Clara, he is able to interpret the dreams of his customers and tell them how they can locate their lost objects. Clara's supernatural powers are desired by uncle Marcos since if it is Clara whom he gets tips from, everything he tells his customers comes true. Another man who wishes to possess Clara's magical powers is Esteban Trueba. After Esteban slaps her in the face out of a sudden burst of rage, Clara refuses to talk to him from then on. Her messages are transmitted through their granddaughter, Alba. However, when Esteban goes into politics and asks Clara whether he will be successful or not, it seems like the everlasting silence is nearly broken. Clara becomes a mentor for Esteban who always takes her predictions into consideration before taking each step in politics.

"I suppose you know what's tormenting me," Esteban Trueba said finally.
Clara nodded.

"Do you think I'm going to win?"

Clara nodded again, and Trueba felt completely relieved, exactly as if she had given him a written guarantee. He gave a loud, joyous guffaw. Then he stood up, put his hands on her shoulders, and kissed her on the forehead. (*Spirits* 225)

As he completely trusts Clara's magical abilities, Esteban consults Clara in every political issue so that he can take precautions. Clara's supernatural powers is a kind of relief for her loved ones, chiefly Esteban, Blanca and Alba. When Esteban learns that Blanca is pregnant with the revolutionary Pedro Tercero's child, Esteban gets furious and tells Blanca that he has killed Pedro Tercero. Although he has not killed his daughter's lover, he lies to Blanca so as to make her forget Pedro. When Blanca sheds tears a lot, Clara relieves her pain by saying:

"Stop crying, child," she told her. "Too many tears will hurt the baby, and only make it unhappy."

Blanca replied with another sob.

"Pedro Tercero is alive," Clara added.

Blanca swallowed her hiccups and blew her nose.

"How do you know it, Mama?" she asked.

"Because I dreamt it," Clara replied.

That was enough to reassure Blanca completely. (*Spirits* 217)

The magical events in the novel are not limited to Clara. When Esteban sends his sister Férula away when he sees her in Clara's bed, they never see her again for years. While the Trueba family is having dinner, they feel a sudden draft in the room and Clara orders to have all the windows closed. Then they hear the tinkling of the door keys and Férula shows up in their dining room and not only Clara but all the family members also witness her appearance. The twins, Jaime and Nicolás are also at home and "their testimony is very important, because they were the only members of the family who lived completely removed from the three-legged table, protected from magic and spiritualism by their rigid English boarding school" (ibid.).

Everyone who witnessed the moment agrees that it was almost eight o'clock at night when Férula appeared without the slightest warning. They all saw her in her starched blouse, with her ring of keys at her waist and her old maid's bun, exactly as they had always seen her in the house. She entered the dining room just as Esteban was beginning to carve the roast, and they recognized her immediately, even though it had been six years since they last saw her and she looked very pale and a great older. (ibid. 148)

Esteban is flabbergasted when he sees Férula whom he banned from setting foot into his house six years ago. Blanca, Jaime and Nicolás exclaim simultaneously "Aunt Férula!" but she totally ignores everyone except Clara. She fondly kisses Clara's forehead and takes her leave calmly. After her departure, Clara breathes as if she were in a fit of asthma and informs the others that Férula is dead. Esteban runs after Férula calling her name in vain because there is nobody. Meanwhile, they drive to her house in the slums and find her dead body in ragged clothes.

5.3 Magic, Writing and Deliberate Silence as Tools for Female Empowerment

In *The House of the Spirits*, the female characters are in a constant struggle with patriarchy. Bressler (2007) points out that "central to the diverse aims and methods

of feminist criticism is its focus on patriarchy, the rule of society and culture by men” (167-8). In the novel, Allende’s female characters use language, mainly writing, deliberate silence and the supernatural to escape from the limitations of their oppressive society. The use of magic is an indispensable means of voice for women to challenge patriarchal history and rewrite their own histories. Although Allende’s novel is often compared with Márquez’s *One Hundred Years of Solitude* in terms of being a family saga, *The House of the Spirits* differs from its predecessor as its protagonists are all female: great grandmothers, grandmothers, mothers and granddaughters. Firstly, the restrictions the women in the novel are exposed to and how these women empower themselves through the use of magic, silence and writing will be discussed. Finally, the role of ghosts and spirits in terms of writing an alternative Chilean history during the bloody military coup from the perspectives of women to challenge the history written by patriarchs will be demonstrated.

The first fighter of the patriarchy is Nivea del Valle, the great grandmother of the family. The following generations, Clara, Blanca and Alba follow her path in their battle with male oppression, poverty and class distinction. Nivea gives birth to fifteen children including Clara and Rosa. At the beginning of the novel, when they are at church, Nivea wants the ceremony to end immediately since she feels uncomfortable in the corset she wears. Nivea is a suffragette and women’s fashion of the day is an issue that she frequently discusses with her suffragette friends and they all agree on the necessity of a radical change:

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 a waist so tight that when she removed her belt her stomach jumped and twisted for half an hour while her organs fell back in place. She had often discussed with her suffragette friends and they had all agreed that until women shortened their dresses

and their hair and stopped wearing corsets, it made no difference if they studied medicine or had the right to vote, because they would not have the strength to do it. (ibid. 6)

Clara, Blanca and Alba keep up with this tradition to fight all forms of inequality whether be it gender or class inequality. Instead of ignoring the poor living conditions of the disenfranchised and sustaining a luxurious life in the big mansion of her wealthy husband, Clara dedicates her life to the needy. She educates the women and children in Tres Marías. She especially teaches women their rights and when Esteban hears this, he becomes furious. Blanca does not stray from her mother's path as she teaches mongoloid children and feeds the poor. During the military coup, Alba also helps the sufferers of the new regime as much as she can by sheltering them, providing them with food and taking the ones who are in danger of being taken to detention camps secretly to embassies where they can flee other countries.

The female strength is mostly presented through Clara with her magical power. The realm of the spirits is a way for Clara to get away with the limitations of patriarchy. In order to escape from Esteban Trueba's domineering attitude, Clara is deeply indulged in the realm of ghosts and spirits where he can never reach and fully control her. Throughout the book, Esteban strives for Clara's love but he cannot truly possess Clara. Esteban tries to make her happy with material things such as building the best ranch in the region, decorating their mansion luxuriously and giving her diamond jewelry still Clara does not care about them because for Clara earthly matters are not important. The more Esteban tries to control her, the more she takes her shelter in her own world full of spirits. By establishing a connection with others seeking spirits she flees from a world dominated by males; particularly she befriends

the three Mora sisters and maintains this relationship throughout her life. The three Mora sisters are students of spiritualism and supernatural phenomena and they become aware of Clara's existence through their telepathic powers. Trueba, the patriarch, understands that "Clara did not belong to him and that if she continued living in a world of apparitions, three-legged tables that moved of their own volition, and cards that spelled out of the future, she probably never would" (*Spirits* 96). For Clara, another way to escape from her husband's patriarchal restriction is to find strength in silence. As a woman living in a culture that prescribes "silence as the appropriate expression of female expression", Clara does not reproduce culturally ordained silence, rather she re-inscribes female silence as a subversive alternative (Jenkins 63-64). When Esteban is extremely furious upon learning his daughter Blanca and Pedro's secret relationship which he does not approve of as Pedro is both a revolutionary and from lower-class, Clara criticizes his behavior by saying:

Pedro Tercero hasn't done anything you haven't done yourself," Clara said when she could interrupt him. "You also slept with unmarried women not of your own class. The only difference is that he did it for love. And so did Blanca." (*Spirits* 200)

Esteban loses his temper upon hearing Clara's words who reminds him of his faults in the past such as raping all the peasant women in Trés Marías including Pancha García and having many illegitimate children and grandchildren as a result of numerous rapes. Esteban's not sharing his being rapist in his own accounts in the novel can be seen as a foreshadowing of the dictatorship of Pinochet that censored the ideas of its opponents and their media. Sheffield points out in her article that, "in the 'Tres Marías' chapter, Trueba does not share the stories of his rapes of peasant women". As the text is written from both the patriarchal perspective of Esteban Trueba and women-centered perspective of Alba with the help of Clara's journals, as a patriarch Esteban does not share these shameful actions in his own accounts.

Esteban's outrage is analogous to Pinochet's military regime's and it can be regarded as a foreshadowing of the efforts to hide their multitude of sins and control the press which do not support them. It is Alba who shares his grandfather's shameful past and when Clara shows his misdeeds, Esteban slaps her and breaks some of her teeth. After this event, Clara falls into an everlasting silence and never speaks to Esteban again. However, as Thomson states "Clara subverts the typical narrative of men silencing women by choosing to be silent of her own accord – Esteban struck her to silence the truths she voiced, so when he desires to hear her voice again, she withholds it from him" (42). Although Clara retreats into a life-long silence to escape Esteban's repressions, it is her decision to remain silent rather than Esteban's and according to Jenkins it signifies "resistance" (64). Knowing that her silence is more wounding for Esteban than her words, Clara adopts silence to punish what he has done as "Esteban, humiliated and furious, remained with the sensation that something in his life had been destroyed forever" (*Spirits* 201). García-Johnson says that Clara's reaction to Trueba's physical violence was twofold. Not only she refuses to speak to Esteban, but also she locks herself in her room. Her "denial of access to the space of her room, of her body – the spaces which Trueba had violated – was a powerful weapon" (189). After this event, Clara gives up using her married name and removes her wedding ring which she has worn for almost twenty years. Thus, Clara isolates herself both physically and psychologically from Esteban's patriarchal values.

During her silent years, another realm where Clara finds her strength is writing. As a little girl, she begins writing all the important events, details and even trivialities in her journals. She is able to compose the story of her life without any patriarchal

limitation. She transfers the power of writing without any patriarchal bias and distortion to her granddaughter Alba. When a dozen of Pinochet's men in civilian attire storm Trueba's mansion to arrest Alba because of her political views and her relationship with her revolutionary boyfriend Miguel after the military coup, they burn all the books in the house but only Clara's journals are able to be saved magically from burning:

They ransacked the bookshelves in the study, sending the senator's bibelots and works art crashing to the floor. The books from Jaime's den were piled in the courtyard, doused with gasoline, and set on fire in an infamous pyre that was fed with the magic books from the enchanted trunks of Great-Uncle Marcos, the remaining copies of Nicolás's esoteric treatise, the leather-bound set of the complete works of Marx, and even Trueba's opera scores, producing a scandalous bonfire that filled the neighborhood with smoke and that, in normal times, would have brought fire trucks from every direction. (*Spirits* 401)

The act of burning the books in the bonfire represents the lack of freedom of thought and expression in Pinochet's Chile. Despite the efforts of the fascist regime to cover all their wrongdoings and corrupt acts, the fact that Clara's ribboned journals are the only intact remains of the fire thanks to the magical touch of Clara and her friendly spirits reveal her wishes to pass on her gift of writing to her granddaughter, Alba. Before the military coup, Clara sends warning messages to her family through Louisa Mora, one of the Mora sisters. Louisa Mora tells Esteban that Clara has messages from the Hereafter especially for Alba. First, she warns Esteban about the terrible times lying ahead, foreshadowing the bloody military coup. She says "There will be so many dead they will be impossible to count. You will be on the side of the winners, but victory will only bring you suffering and loneliness" (*Spirits* 364). In her further premonitions, she warns Alba saying her grandmother wants her to know that she is in great jeopardy.

Death is at your heels. Your grandmother Clara is doing all she can to protect you in the Hereafter, but she sent me to tell you that your spiritual protectors are powerless

when it comes to major cataclysms. She says it would be wise for you to take a trip, that you should cross the ocean. You'll be safe there. (ibid. 365)

However, neither Alba nor Esteban takes notice of Louisa Mora's prophecy. Only when the dictator's men come to arrest Alba, do they realize Louisa Mora was telling nothing but the truth and they should have paid attention to Clara's warnings. Clara keeps protecting Alba even when she is under custody. The most powerful use of the supernatural comes as Allende's novel reaches its climax. Throughout the novel, the supernatural is employed to empower women to go against injustices, and also to provide women with an instrument to help them to make their voices heard. The best example to this is when Alba is taken prisoner by the military regime which has overtaken the socialists. Alba comes very close to giving up all hope, as she has to endure beatings, rapes and finally captivity in the doghouse- a small, filthy, dark structure for solitary confinement. When her ghost comes from the Hereafter to give strength to her granddaughter Alba who is violently tortured during her stay in the detention camp, Clara gives her the idea to write not only to survive but also to challenge the patriarchal history which will exclude women's experiences, agonies and distort the painful experiences of those who do not support the dictatorship. Jenkins also states, Allende's use of the supernatural gives her the opportunity to undermine historical accounts of those in power and create alternative histories:

Allende's use of the fantastic exists as a counter current to the province of patriarchal control, investing women (or other outsiders) with individual authority and opportunities to articulate alternative experience. Existing outside linear, patriarchal historiography, such spirits also represent experience neither contained within nor circumscribed by such scripts. The supernatural, then, provides women writers a means to challenge monolithic histories, narrative styles, evaluative standards, and scripts that dictate what experience is worthy of record and how that experience is to be articulated. (Jenkins 1994:70)

5.4 The Role of Ghosts and Spirits in Telling Chilean History and Military Coup from the Perspectives of the Oppressed

The House of the Spirits revolves around the years of political turmoil in Chile and especially during the rule of the fascist dictator Augusto Pinochet. In spite of the fact that the name of the country and exact date of the events are never mentioned, as the story progresses it becomes clear that it is Chile, the author's home country and most of the characters in the novel are inspired by Allende's own family. Clara represents her spiritual grandmother and Esteban her own grandfather. There are also references to prominent political and literary figures in Chilean history. To exemplify, as Gabriella Foreman (1995) also states the ousted socialist president in the novel refers to Salvador Allende, who is also the author's father's cousin, the Poet in the novel to Nobel-laureate Pablo Neruda and Pedro Tercero Garcia to Victor Jara, a renowned political folk singer whose hands were mutilated and killed in Chilean National Stadium during Pinochet's brutal regime (295).

McNeese (2006) foregrounds that the tragic demise of president Allende had a profound impact on Allende's writing as he says "in Allende's first novel, *The House of the Spirits*, her uncle serves as the basis for one of her primary characters" (64). From the very beginning of the novel, the political side is apparent. The story opens in a church at the beginning of the twentieth century. Severo del Valle, Clara's father, never misses the opportunity to make a good impression; therefore, he goes to church on Sunday matins along with his wife Nivea and their eleven children. Although Severo is an atheist and mason, he shows up on Sunday masses by taking the forthcoming elections into account. Allende reveals her point of view towards politicians and their dishonesty. Another historical trace can be observed through

Esteban and his relationship with the workers in Tres Marías. Despite the fact that Esteban has the best hacienda in the region, meaning a large estate used for farming, and a great fortune, he does not possess the love of his workers. Rather than giving what they deserve for their hard work and paying money, Esteban gives them vouchers so as to fulfil their needs from the shop in Tres Marías. Nonetheless, this established system of Esteban falls into danger when socialist opinions spread among the workers of Tres Marías. One of the signals of this is the song Pedro Tercero, the revolutionary son of Pedro Segundo, the head man of hacienda, sings. The song is about a group of hens that represent the workers of Tres Marías trying to overcome the fox representing their patron, Esteban. When Esteban hears the song, he gets the impression that the song involves a rebellious tone. He recommends Pedro to learn songs simply about love. However, Pedro does not stray from his intended path and socialist ideas. In the following years, Pedro tries to enlighten the tenants of Tres Marías with the ideas like “Sundays off, a minimum wage, retirement and health plans, maternity leave for women, elections without coercion, and, most serious of all, a peasant organization that would confront the owners” (*Spirits* 155).

The more Esteban gets involved in politics, the more closely the historical events are felt in the novel. Esteban is elected as a senator in Conservative Party. From this point on, the country is put into a constant clash between Conservatives and Socialists. While the former is severely opposed to the expansion of socialism as it aroused the working class about their rights and demands, the latter supports the laborers’ rights and movements. Socialist ideas prevailing the country reach even up to Tres Marías. While Esteban is away from his hacienda for a long time as he is deeply indulged in politics, overflowing with socialist ideas, the tenants of Tres

Mariás take over the control. For the first time ever, they enjoy “the taste of freedom, and the experience of their being own patron. They divided the pastureland and each grew whatever he wanted” (ibid. 355). Upon Esteban’s arriving at Tres Mariás after three years and five months, the inhabitants, who are happy with their present situation, take him hostage. Thanks to Blanca who asks for his liberation, Esteban is saved with the help of Pedro. The socialist opinions spread not only among the workers but also among the university students. As exemplified in the novel, even Alba who is tired of listening to her grandfather’s political speeches, finds herself in the middle of the university protests with her boyfriend, Miguel’s influence who is the head of a guerilla movement and constantly talks about revolution. Alba keeps the fact that she is Senator Trueba’s granddaughter as a secret. Eventually, the Socialists were triumphant in the elections. Esteban is furious when the Socialists come into power. Esteban, whose life has changed because of the social reforms, tries to find a way to get rid of the new government with his fellow Conservatives.

Just as the military coup occurs after the Socialists seize the power in the novel, the most destructive and brutal military coup in South American history took place in Chile in 1973. Salvador Allende, the first Marxist president of Chilean history and also a close relative of Isabel Allende worked hard to bring socialism to Chile for about forty years. He was one of the founders of Chilean Socialist Party which was established in 1933. Allende became a candidate for the post of president of Chile three times but lost each time. On his fourth try, coalition with Chile’s left-wing Popular Unity Party, he was able to become the president of Chile in 1970. Both the Conservatives and the U.S. government were opposed to Allende’s Marxist-based government. From the day Allende was elected, the U.S. president Richard Nixon

and Secretary of State Henry Kissinger started to plan a military coup to overthrow Allende whom they could not prevent from being the president. After the election, Allende government started to apply its nationalization of businesses and factories, economic equality on behalf of the poor and land reform; however, these policies frightened the capitalist U.S. companies in interest in Chile. Allende's economic reforms were quite a great success and it grew the Chilean economy up to 8.6%. Nevertheless, this success did not continue the next year and this led to inflation with its destructive effects. There was food shortage and accordingly black-marketeering became widespread throughout the country. During the years 1971 and 1972, economy got even worse with the falling copper prices because almost all of Chilean export was based on copper. Although there was a chaotic atmosphere in the country, Allende continued to be popular among his supporters. When Fidel Castro of Cuba visited Chile in 1971, the U.S. and the other capitalist surroundings got even more worried about Chile's becoming a communist country just like Cuba. Kissinger said "There was no reason to watch as a country became communist through the irresponsibility of its own people, and do nothing about it" (qtd.in McNeese 57). The U.S. government donated a huge amount of money to the opposition parties with the anticipation of overthrowing Allende government. All of these led to a chaos in the country and eventually Allende government was ousted by a military coup. Under the leadership of General Augusto Pinochet, the armed forces seize the power of the country on September 11,1973. Chilean air forces bombed the presidential palace, La Moneda and the ground troops entered the palace. President Allende refused to surrender as Collier and Sater also state as follows:

Entrenched in the Moneda with a handful of stalwarts, he refused an offer of safe passage out of the country. He broadcast a final, deeply moving speech over the one radio station which had not yet fallen into military hands. (It soon did.) (2004:357)

Thus, the dictatorship of Pinochet which would last from 1973 to 1990 started.

The military commanders expected resistance, but government supporters had few arms. Opposition was scattered, but the repression was rapid and brutal. We shall never know how many died—at least 2000. It was the most violent military coup in twentieth-century South American history. The “transition to socialism” that so many on the left thought to be irreversible was about to be reversed. (Skidmore and Smith 2005:132)

Correspondingly, in the novel the unnamed president dies on the very first day of the coup at the presidential palace but the writer depicts his death not as a suicide but an assassination. As it is stated in the novel “Word spread that the President had died, and no one believed the official version that he had committed suicide” (*Spirits* 373). Whether President Salvador Allende’s death was a suicide or assassination was a matter of controversy until 2011. Autopsy has confirmed that Allende committed suicide although some figures like Fidel Castro and Gabriel Garcia Marquez thought that he went down fighting (The Guardian n.d.). Allende’s portraying the President as being assassinated in the novel shows that she finds the coup plotters responsible for his death and it signifies the end of democracy in the country. In the novel, the atrocities of the new regime immediately start. After the president dies, all of his supporters including Jaime, Esteban Trueba and Clara’s son, are arrested. As he is the son of Senator Trueba and a doctor, the military forces gives him a chance to survive and be free on condition that he abandons his own political views. They also ask Jaime for perjuring by saying “We just want you to appear on television and say that the President was drunk and he committed suicide. After that you can go home” (*Spirits* 370). Rejecting both to be a false witness and give up his ideology by saying “Do it yourself. Don’t count on me, you bastards,” (ibid.), Jaime is tortured and then killed brutally like many other people whose ideas are against the new regime. The total number of people who were tortured, raped, detained and killed was announced

as 40,018 during the Pinochet regime (CBC n.d.). As McNeese also states, under Pinochet 's dictatorship, political opponents were in constant jeopardy of "losing their freedom or even their lives" (68). Consequently, a great many people from the left-wing, who were in constant fear and danger, fled to other countries. As Collier and Sater say, by 1978, there were "30,000 Chileans in exile in Western Europe alone. By the end of the decade exiles could be counted in the hundreds of thousands" (360). There were detention camps all around the country where people were massacred. Similarly, Jaime's death is portrayed as follows:

There were other prisoners in the same condition. They tied their hands and feet with barbed wire and threw them on their faces in the stalls. There Jamie and the others spent two days without food or water, rotting in their own excrement, blood, and fear, until they were all driven by truck to an area near the airport. In an empty lot they were shot on the ground, because they could no longer stand, and then their bodies were dynamited. The shock of the explosion and the stench of the remains floated in the air for a long time. (*Spirits* 371)

In the meantime, Esteban Trueba celebrates the coup without knowing that his son, Jaime is murdered barbarically by the military force. Esteban believes that there will be a short period of dictatorship and then his party, the Conservatives, will regain the power to rule the country. Contrary to his anticipations, he realizes that he does not have a place in the new government. He goes to the Ministry of Defense to find his son Jaime but he is treated badly by the officers and thinks that they do not realize that he is Senator Trueba, which is quite clear in the following:

At first I thought that in all that chaos they simply hadn't recognized me and that was why they were treating me with so little respect, but then I realized what was going on. The officer received me with his boots up on the desk, chewing a greasy sandwich, badly shaven, with his jacket unbuttoned. He didn't give me a chance to ask about my son Jaime or to congratulate him for the valiant actions of the soldiers who had saved the nation; instead he asked for the keys to my car, on the ground that Congress had been shut down and that all the Congressional perquisites had therefore been suspended. I was amazed. It was clear then that they didn't have the slightest intention of reopening the doors of Congress, as we all expected. He asked me – no, he ordered me – to show up at the cathedral at eleven the next morning to attend the Te Deum with which the nation would express its gratitude to God for the victory over Communism.

“Is it true the President committed suicide?” I asked.

“He’s gone,” he answered me.

“Gone? Where to?”

“He’s gone to Hell!” he said, laughing. (ibid. 374-5)

This terrible treatment to a distinguished conservative senator by a rude officer is the first sign of the negative effects of the coup not only for the poor class but also the former conservative upper class. For the first time, Senator Trueba, a big supporter of the coup to save the country from communism, starts thinking whether the coup was a good idea or not as Esteban says “I had a feeling things weren’t turning out the way we had planned” (ibid.). Esteban becomes sure that the coup was a bad idea when he learns that his son was slaughtered by the military force. Esteban is not aware that Alba is under surveillance. They intrude in their mansion one night and plunder the house when they are asleep. The political police come to take Alba away by force and he realizes that his senatorship is useless anymore. He asks the soldiers “I’m Senator Trueba! For God’s sake, don’t you recognize me?” but the soldier replies him disrespectfully saying “Shut up, you old shit! You don’t open your mouth until I tell you to!” (ibid.,402). They hit Alba in front of Esteban and take her away and her grandfather cannot do anything to prevent this. They blindfold Alba’s eyes with a piece of cloth and she sets out on a journey without knowing her destination. They turn her over to a colonel by saying “This is Senator Trueba’s granddaughter, colonel” (ibid.,404). When Alba hears the voice of the colonel, she immediately recognizes that it is Esteban Garcia, the grandson of Esteban Trueba and Pancha Garcia whom Esteban exploited in Tres Marías when he was young. Esteban Garcia nourishes hatred for Esteban Trueba and his family, especially Alba. Although he is also the grandchild of Trueba like Alba, he never possesses the wealth and privileges that Alba does. When he is a young boy, Esteban Garcia visits Trueba’s house from

time to time demanding money just like many other bastards of Esteban Trueba. One day, he asks for help to enter the police force and eventually he rises to become the commander of the military coup. When his time comes, Esteban Garcia takes revenge on the whole Trueba family by torturing Alba physically, sexually and emotionally along with other officers. Alba instantly finds out that Esteban Garcia's aim is not only to find where Alba's revolutionary boyfriend Miguel is but also to take revenge for all those penniless years in despair. Day by day, the harshness of the torture increases and Alba is even given electric shocks. This inhumane treatment to Alba and the other prisoners just because of their political views can be considered as an allusion to the people killed and tortured violently in the course of military coup in Chile. As Collier and Sater say:

Activists of the UP parties were ruthlessly hunted down; some were shot out of hand; many (at least 7,000) were herded into the national stadium in Santiago, the main center for early interrogation. Detention camps were opened up and down the country. Several dozen prominent allendistas (including cabinet ministers) were sent to the bleak surroundings of Dawson Island in the Magellan Straits (360).

As stated, the supporters of the former president, Salvador Allende, were being tortured in various places around the country and one of them was Chilean National Stadium. Victor Jara, who was a leading folk singer of Chile and a fervent supporter of Allende, was killed in this stadium along with thousands of leftists, university students and academicians. As Buttry (2011) says Victor's wife, "Joan Jara pieced together the story of what happened to her husband. She interviewed survivors of the siege at the university and those detained at the stadium". According to eye witnesses, Jara's hands and fingers were broken by the soldiers and then he was mocked by them when they asked him to play the guitar. Jara replied them by singing the famous song 'Venceremos' (We Shall Overcome), which was also the song of Salvador Allende's political campaign, and the other prisoners sang along

with Jara despite the threats of the soldiers. After a little while, Jara was shot and his body was found in a cemetery with 44 bullet holes. Buttry also mentions that a short announcement of was published in one of the newspapers but the military put a ban on mentioning his name and this demonstrates that the era was full of oppression and fear.

Victor Jara's death crystallized the brutality of the military regime in Chile under General Augusto Pinochet. Through his bold music and through his death, he became a symbol for all those in Latin America suffering under the dictatorships of the 1970s and 1980s. (ibid.)

In the novel, Allende shows all these tortures through Alba. When Alba cannot stand the tortures anymore and Esteban Garcia sends Alba over to solitary confinement.

Alba wants to commit suicide and she tries "not to breathe or move, and began eagerly to await her death" (*Spirits* 413) for a quick death. When Alba is at her worst, Clara's ghost appears to her telling it is not the time to die but to survive:

When she had nearly achieved her goal, her Grandmother Clara, whom she had invoked so many times to help her die, appeared with the novel idea that the point was not to die, since death came anyway, but to survive, which would be a miracle. With her white linen dress, her winter gloves, her sweet toothless smile, and the mischievous gleam in her hazel eyes, she looked exactly as she had when Alba was a child. Clara also brought the saving idea of writing in her mind, without paper or pencil, to keep her thoughts occupied and to escape from the doghouse and live. She suggested that she write a testimony that might one day call attention to the terrible secret she was living through, so that the world would know about this horror that was taking place parallel to the peaceful existence of those who did not want to know, who could afford the illusion of a normal life, and those who could deny that they were on a raft adrift in a sea of sorrow, ignoring, despite all evidence, that only blocks away from their happy world there were others, these others who live or die on the dark side. "You have a lot to do, so stop feeling sorry for yourself, drink some water, and start writing," Clara told her granddaughter before disappearing the same way she had come. (ibid.,413-14)

Clara suggests Alba writing not only to keep her mind busy but also to show the brutalities she faces in the concentration camp. Due to the fact that she is in solitary confinement, she can merely write in her head. Clara wants her to be the voice of the voiceless crowds muted by the dictatorial regime. Through magical realism, Allende

desires to show an alternative history which is not erased or distorted by the government. When Allende started to write this novel in 1981, Pinochet was still on duty as his dictatorship lasted from 1973 to 1990 and Allende was aware that the agonies, tortures and murders the regime caused would not be written by the officials. Therefore, Clara's ghost transgresses the limits of the other world to prompt Alba to write her own story to make others aware of this bloodstained era of the history.

Gómez-Barris (2009) states how the officials ignore and disavow the persecutions:

Although some human rights organizations and efforts exerted political pressure, the military regime continued to deny the existence of torture, even until the end of the dictatorship and beyond. As government spokesperson Orlando Poblete said, "In Chile, nobody is tortured. There is no repression and our government is founded on respect for the rights of individuals." (Amnesty International Report 1987) (qtd.in Gómez-Barris 92)

Being quite aware that the new regime would conceal the brutalities, Allende wrote *The House of the Spirits* while she was in exile in Venezuela to hinder all these pains from being forgotten and to be the voice of persecuted minority. Although the novel was a great success all over the world, it was banned in Allende's own country Chile because "her novel cast the Pinochet regime in a negative light" (McNeese 79).

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

The present study has attempted to demonstrate how the British writer Jeanette Winterson in *The Passion* (1987), the Mexican writer Laura Esquivel in *Like Water for Chocolate* (1989) and the Chilean writer Isabel Allende in *The House of the Spirits* (1982) use magical realism so as to criticize and raise public awareness about the unsolved problems that still exist in various parts of the world. Each of these writers living in distant geographies focuses on a different problem existing in their societies for the same purpose: to be the voice of the maltreated, tormented, abused, beaten, suppressed and ignored by the society. To exemplify, in *The Passion*, Winterson problematizes patriarchal and monolithic historiography. Through the use of magical realism, Winterson revisits and manipulates history in order to point out that there is no way to record history without assuming an unbiased perspective. She not only applies magical realism to blur the line between fact and story and undermine the objectivity of history writing by the powerful but also to parody the well-established institutions like the army and the Church which are publicly assumed to have decent reputation. By means of magical realism, she also points out the constructed nature of traditional gender roles which are imposed by the society through demonstrating the presence of the people with different sexual orientations and their alternative realities excluded from patriarchal historiography. In *Like Water for Chocolate*, Esquivel touches upon another global problem which is traditions against women whose futures and dreams are shattered. By applying magical

realism, she calls attention to the intensity of suffering women have experienced and how their lives are ruined because of these traditions. In *The House of Spirits*, Allende revisits the atrocities the Chilean face during the military regime of Pinochet and she uses magical realism as a tool to reflect the alternative realities of the tormented in her country.

Magical realism became especially popular with the boom of magical realist novels in the 1960s in Latin America. Nevertheless, this study attempted to present the evolution process of magical realism from its emergence as a painting term in Europe in 1925 to its usage as a popular literary mode first in Latin America then worldwide. In the first chapter, the similarities and differences of magical realism to other literary genres frequently confused with it such as realism, surrealism, fantastic, allegory and science fiction are examined in detail. In order to distinguish between magical realism and the fantastic, Punter says “if a ghost sits down at your breakfast table and you are scared or terrified, *that* is horror or the “fantastic”. If, however, you say, “Oh, here is a ghost, please pass the marmalade”, *that* is magic realism” (2005:48).

Since magical realism does not invent other worlds and every magical incident happens in this world and it is narrated down to earth manner, magical realism is distinguishable from other literary genres it is often confused with. Within the scope of the first chapter, the primary characteristics of a text to be regarded as magical realist determined by Wendy B. Faris are analysed in detail with references to the most renowned magical realist novels. According to Faris, a magical realist text should include an irreducible element of magic, a strong presence of the phenomenal

world, unsettling doubts, closeness of two realms and they should question received ideas about time, space and identity. Furthermore, it is examined that some critics consider magical realism as a post-colonial mode because of its textual hybridity (magic plus realism) and cultural hybridity as well as its rise in postcolonial cultures. On the other hand, some critics consider it postmodern due to the fact that they flourished approximately the same period of time and they both have the capacity to decentre realism and offer alternative realities. As Douwe Fokkema, points out “the postmodernist device of ‘permutation’ – which he circumscribes as ‘permutation of possible and impossible, relevant and irrelevant, true and false, reality and parody, metaphor and meaning’ – is probably the most subversive one with regard to earlier conventions” (qtd.in D’haen 201). According to D’haen this device is central to the definition of magical realism. Both postmodernism and magical realism assume a sceptical approach towards solid totalizations on certainty of language, knowledge and history. One more similarity between magical realism and postmodernism is that they both accept there is lack of reliability of history. In the twentieth century, the changed attitude towards language by the post-structuralists resulted in the split between the signifier and the signified, making language no longer carrying an objective meaning. Accordingly, when viewed from the postmodern angle, history exists as a subjective literary text and the division between history and literature is subverted. Magical realist writers’ concern challenging official history and their postmodern treatment of historiography cannot be overlooked. Majority of magical realist texts tend to include a particular historical moment into their narratives, reconsider them, save them from biased representations and offer alternative accounts. Moreover, the non-hierarchical treatment of the supernatural and the real in magical realist texts lessens the truth claims of official history they deal with.

Therefore, magical realism becomes a significant mode for historiographic metafiction. In addition, within the scope of the first chapter, sex, gender and gender roles are examined. It is indicated that sex and gender are totally different concepts and being a female does not mean that one has to comply with the traditional gender roles associated with femininity and it is the same with male. Drawing attention to the fabricated nature of gender and gender roles imposed by the society is another issue that magical realism focuses on.

According to the main characteristics of modernity, reality can be studied, analyzed and known. Moreover, objective truth can be reached through science and history is no exempt. The methodology of science can and does lead to ascertaining truth; therefore, truth is demonstrable (Bressler 2007:98). Founding its philosophy on structuralism, language is referential, representing the perceivable world in the modern era (ibid.). In contrast, as Bressler also underlines, in the postmodern era, “all that is left is difference” (2007:100). According to postmodernists, every individual shapes his/her notions of reality. Therefore, reality becomes a human construct. As the trust in metanarratives collapsed in the postmodern era, there is neither a center nor a totalizing objective reality and there are as many realities as the number of people in society. “Since many truths exist, we must learn to accept each other’s ideas concerning truth, and we must learn to live side by side in a pluralistic society, learning from each other celebrating our differences” (ibid.). History, one of the grand narratives of modernity, can no longer assert objectivity, linearity, totality and authority. Thus, the experiences and voices of people who were silenced in historical accounts due to their gender and ideologies are regained. Accordingly, in Winterson’s *The Passion*, History loses its legitimacy and status as a grand narrative.

In her novel which can be regarded as a marvellous example of historiographic metafiction, she adopts magical realist techniques not only to problematize the impossibility of reaching an objective truth about historiography and reject its status as a metanarrative but also to demolish the rigid norms about gender roles. Onega claims that the habit of postmodern writers to include magical realist elements in their fiction about history is to reject the totalizing discourse of realism (1995:75). With the help of magical realist techniques to blur the line between fact and fiction, femininity and masculinity, Winterson rejects history as a metanarrative and refutes the so-called “realistic” accounts of history controlled by the dominant and gives voice to the silenced due to ideological and gender issues. Through using magic in historical narration, the magical realist authors reconstruct the history which has been erased by political and social injustice (Zamora and Faris 9). Winterson’s novels are renowned for their feminist/lesbian awareness and *The Passion* is no exempt. The novel reveals how gendered identity is a construct of patriarchy. Therefore, it problematizes the truth-value of history as a patriarchal discourse through the adoption of magical realist techniques that destroy the monolithic status of historiography. Postmodernism is a way of liberating history from the domination of monolithic, totalizing and patriarchal ideologies and it exalts multiple histories. Feminist criticism aspires to challenge the controlling patriarchal ideologies that describe “woman” only from the male perspective. Feminist criticism agrees that one another field that silences women is history. Women are not only excluded from the past but also depicted from the male perspective in the monolithic discourse of history which define them according to some stereotypical characteristics and does not let them be different. In order to carry out this aim, feminist writers including Winterson adopt postmodern narrative techniques such as magical realism, self-

reflexivity, metafiction and parody to question and undermine realism offered by patriarchal discourses and reject history as a metanarrative. The female literary tradition wishes to deconstruct conventional notion of women constructed by patriarchy. Feminist authors like Winterson intend to bring powerful women and their personal histories into existence which were excluded from conventional historiography written by men. In her article “Contentious Contributions: Magical Realism Goes British”, Anne Hegerfeldt asserts that:

Using prominent techniques of realism on the one hand, such as the doubling of the extratextual world, the imitation of non-fictional modes like history or journalism, or the abundant use of (frequently superfluous) detail, which according to Roland Barthes is fundamental to creating l’effet du reel (cf. Barthes 1968:87), the magical realist mode on the other hand introduces items that violate the realist standards it purportedly adheres to.(2002:66)

According to Hegerfeldt, realism is not sufficient enough to reflect the so called “reality” in postmodern era since language is not referential and does not claim to represent the perceivable world objectively in contrast to the core principles of modernity.

Magic realist texts emphasize the way in which all modes of thought and perception, be they rational-scientific or other, can only ever provide constructions of the world- which means that world views are never absolute or universal, but necessarily provisional and open to revision. (ibid.,65)

Accordingly, in *The Passion*, Winterson adopts historiographic metafiction and magical realism to refute the truth claims of the dominant ideology and deconstruct traditional image of women created by the patriarchal discourse which excluded the experiences of them. She urges the reader to rethink the values created by the patriarchy and legitimacy of grand narratives of modernity.

In *The Passion* which is an outstanding example of magical realism and historiographic metafiction, Winterson reconsiders and parodies official history, that is the period of the Napoleonic Wars by offering alternative accounts from the perspectives of two marginalized figures of the society, Villanelle and Henri. By means of Henri's war journal, Winterson signifies that history is ideologically laden and cannot be objectively written. In order to challenge the historical accounts provided by those in power, Henri's subjective account and his giving place to the supernatural in his war journal through Patrick's telescopic eye allows the reader to question the decent image of the Church. Patrick is a defrocked priest who misuses his magical eye for immoral purposes, that is, to peep private spaces of women and their naked bodies contradicting with his priesthood. Through including this quality of Patrick in his accounts in such an era, Winterson shatters the moral and decent image of the Church in the eyes of the public. She tries to demonstrate the hypocrisy of the Church members through this magical quality as she thinks that the Church of England does not act in accordance with the requirements of religion because they recruit only male clergy without giving women a chance so as to sustain its authority in public. Patrick's image and inclusion of his story in Henri's account not only subverts the dignity and honour of the Church members mentioned in traditional patriarchal history to maintain their authority in society but also enables the reader to question what Henri has told about Napoleon's army so far. Therefore, Winterson shows the unattainability to reach an objective account about the past as it is full of ideology of those who produce it. In Villanelle's case, Winterson problematizes traditional gender roles assigned to both sexes. She swaps the role of men and women in the society, placing Villanelle in public spaces like the casinos and the streets of the city of Venice and Henri in the kitchen of Napoleon's army as a cook.

Depicting Villanelle as a brave and independent Venetian woman whose feet are webbed which is a unique quality of Venetian boatmen and Henri as a vulnerable and homesick soldier, Winterson aims to interchange the personality traits associated with masculinity and femininity and show that sex and gender are totally different from each other since these characteristics are the constructs of the society. Inserting Villanelle's bisexual love affair in the novel and Henri's stealing her heart from the house of the Queen of Spades can also be considered as the parody of chivalric romances and the motif of heart in *The Passion* is a reminiscence of "the conceits of sixteenth-century poets such as Sir Philip Sidney and John Donne" (Palmer 95). Applying a traditional Renaissance literary device to represent a lesbian relationship, Winterson tries to show that the absence of a literary device to portray a same-sex relationship does not mean that it should be represented inferior to heterosexual love. The literalization of the metaphor, stealing the heart from the lover, indicates that homosexual relationship as important as heterosexual love which is the only respected and accepted type of love by the patriarchal order. In this way, Winterson shatters the idea of compulsory heterosexuality and shows there are other kinds of relationships that should be respected and represented as significant as the former. Homosexual love is never represented by the patriarchal order and the texts written by them; therefore, Winterson aims to regain and re-inscribe the personal histories of women who are engaged in same-sex relationship into official history. Thus, magical realism becomes a valuable tool for historiographic metafiction in terms of showing history is nothing but the construction of its producer and it enables to question all kinds of well-established rules, norms, institutions represented by the traditional patriarchal history.

In *Like Water for Chocolate*, Laura Esquivel touches upon another problem which can be regarded as the mutual shame of humanity, that is the meaningless traditions against women in most cultures. There are many agonizing traditions against women all over the world such as child marriage, female genital mutilation and many more to serve the pleasure of others. By inventing a family tradition in Mexican society, Esquivel addresses all the traditions in the world that torture women to draw attention to their primitivity since they have disruptive results in young women's lives and the need to abolish them throughout the world. It has been examined that Esquivel makes use of magical realism as a means to show how Tita has suffered throughout her life. As the youngest daughter of the family, Tita has to look after her mother until she dies. Therefore, she cannot marry her beloved Pedro. Moreover, she has to put up with seeing Pedro everyday who marries with her own sister Rosaura just to be close to Tita. Tita, who is a marvellous cook, magically transfers her emotions into what she cooks and it has been examined that through the use of magical realism, her extreme agony is reflected. When her tyrannical mother assigns her to make the wedding cake of Rosaura and Pedro, Tita cries so much that all the guests in the ceremony are affected as much as she is and she magically ruins the wedding ceremony of Rosaura and Pedro. Her magical cooking reflects the intensity of her agonies the ancient family tradition caused. So many examples of magical cooking to show Tita's suffering have been examined in the novel; however, when she cannot find another solution to communicate with her lover, Pedro, Tita's magical cooking turns out to be a powerful medium between the two. It has been shown that cooking becomes an empowering activity in the case of Tita, another person who is liberated thanks to Tita's magical dishes is her eldest sister Gertrudis. When Tita cooks the dish, quail in rose petal sauce, to strengthen the bond between

herself and Pedro, the aphrodisiac effect of the dish enables Gertrudis to become aware of her sexual desires and she wants to be liberated from the repressed desires of women imposed by the society. It has been examined how Tita liberates her sister from these limitations by bringing women's sexual desires to forefront usually neglected in patriarchal societies. It has been also analysed how Esquivel parodies romance novels in which men are depicted as strong characters and women just the opposite to recuperate the existing stereotypical images of women in literature by swapping traditional gender roles. It has also been shown that the literalization of metaphors and use of hyperboles as magical realist techniques such as the gigantic bedspread Tita begins to crochet out of sorrow and her literal flood of tears show how these traditions lead to devastating effects on young women's lives and psychologies. Furthermore, it has also been examined that how the effect of her magical cooking on her wrongdoers, Mama Elena and her sister Rosaura, empowers her to transgress the limitations of the patriarchal society and overcome the ancient family tradition. Thanks to her magical cooking, she also saves her niece Esperanza from having the same bad fate and leaves a hopeful future for the next generations.

In *The House of the Spirits*, how Allende uses magical realism in order to challenge the biased history writing of the period of political turmoil in her country has been analysed. Being the relative of Marxist president Salvador Allende who was ousted when the military coup took place in Chile in 1973, and Isabel Allende could only write *The House of the Spirits* when she was in exile in Venezuela. In the novel, the Trueba women are in constant struggle with the family patriarch Esteban Trueba who represents the absence of freedom of expression and censorship during Pinochet's dictatorship. It has been examined how these women are empowered and found an

alternative space from the domination of Esteban Trueba who silences the realities these women utter by force. In order to build psychic and emotional space, Allende applies ghosts and spirits. The use of ghosts and spirits throughout the novel yield resistance to women. It is shown that how Clara empowers her granddaughter Alba using her magical powers to write against the biased representations of the historiography written by the military regime that constantly tries to conceal their wrongdoings and injustices to those who are persecuted, exiled and killed brutally during this bloody period in history. As it is mentioned above, the Chilean government announced that “In Chile, nobody is tortured. There is no repression and our government is founded on respect for the rights of individuals (Amnesty International Report 1987)” (qtd.in Gomez-Barris 92). By taking an antibureaucratic stance to and criticism of the dictatorial regime, Allende accomplishes her aim to give voice to the victims of this barbarous period in the world history contrary to the distorted accounts of the officials and the government.

As a result, magical realism is aimed to be demonstrated as a liberating mode which draws attention to some of the bleeding wounds of the world such as excluding homosexuals by imposing compulsory heterosexuality and not sharing their stories in historical accounts, the traditions against women that make their lives miserable and finally giving voice to the persecuted that live under ruthless dictatorships.

ENDNOTE

1. Jeanette Winterson, one of the most gifted and prolific authors of our age, was born in Manchester in 1959. Upon being adopted by a highly religious working-class family, she began receiving missionary education as a member of

Pentecostal Church. Nevertheless, her mother's plans for her to become a missionary ended suddenly when Winterson's relationship with a woman was revealed. In compliance with her upbringing, Winterson was expected to subjugate compulsory heterosexuality; therefore, her deviation from heteronormative society led her to be alienated and treated as the marginal other. Her family's attitude towards her sexual orientation has had a noticeable impact on the author she has become today. Onega (2006) says that "[...] some knowledge of her life and background is indispensable for an understanding of her work, since one of the games she recurrently plays in her fictions is the confusion of her identity with that of her protagonists" (3). The title of the memoir, *Why Happy When You Could Be Normal?* (2011), refers to her mother's bitter criticism of her affair with a girl and accounts for the obstacles Jeanette went through as a teenager just because of her sexual orientation. Her evangelic mother simply neglects Jeanette's feelings and regards her homosexuality as perversion. Having been excommunicated by the church due to her sexual orientation, which contradicts with her religion-oriented upbringing and her evangelic adoptive parents' objections to her homosexuality, she had to leave home when she was only sixteen. Ultimately, her battle with hegemonic way of thinking and patriarchal norms, which can be clearly observed in her works, started at a very young age. She took various part-time jobs to support herself such as working in a funeral parlour, an ice-cream van and a mental institution. Having completed her undergraduate studies majoring in English at Oxford, St. Catherine's College in 1981, Winterson started her professional career as a writer. After meriting the Whitbread Best First Novel Award with her debut novel *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit* (1985), Winterson was granted many other

awards, John Llewellyn Rhys Prize with *The Passion* (1987) and E.M. Forster Award with *Sexing the Cherry* (1989). Furthermore, *Boating for Beginners* (1985), *Written on the Body* (1992), *Art and Lies* (1994), *Gut Symmetries* (1997), *The Powerhouse* (2000), *Lighthouse Keeping* (2004), *The Stone Gods* (2007) and recently published *Frankissstein: A Love Story* (2019) are the significant works included in her oeuvre. In 2006, she was granted an OBE (Officer of the Order of the British Empire) for her benefits to literature which accounts for her significant and indispensable place in contemporary British Literature. The beginning of her writing career in the mid-80s coincides with the publication of major works of eminent writers such as Angela Carter, Salman Rushdie, Martin Amis and Julian Barnes. As Andermahr states:

Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit came out a year after Carter's *Nights at the Circus* and Amis's *Money: A Suicide Note*, and four years after Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*. Such writers have written their apprentice works during the 1970s; Winterson's experience was different in that her first novel brought her sudden prominence. (2009:14)

She proves herself to be in the same league with the above-mentioned prominent writers of the decade by maintaining this success throughout her literary career. Merja Makinen postulates that "the main focus on Winterson's novels has been twofold: the discussion in relation to her as a lesbian writer and in relation to her as a postmodern writer" (2005:2). Her fiction constantly questions objective reality, history as a grand narrative, rigid gender roles and compulsory heterosexuality. In addition, she is fervently opposed to all kinds of labelling. She prefers to be called simply an author rather than being categorized as a lesbian or postmodernist author. In *Art Objects: Essays on Ecstasy and Effrontery*, she reveals her feelings on the issue of being judged by her sexual orientation rather than her authorship as follows:

I see no reason to read into Woolf's work the physical difficulties of her life. If I said to you that a reading of John Keats must entertain his tuberculosis and the fact that he was common and short, you would ignore me; a writer's work is not a chart of their sex, sexuality, sanity and physical health. (Winterson 1997:97)

Winterson overtly criticizes men's privileged status to be evaluated solely with respect to their work not their personal lives. Contrary to this favoured status of male authors, she propounds that Woolf, Winterson herself and many other women writers suffered from being labelled due to having physical/psychological problems or bisexual/lesbian relationships and their works could not escape from being in the shadow of their personal lives. In *Art Objects*, she says "Judge the work not the writer" (qtd.in Onega 3). Therefore, being highly aware of the underprivileged position of women, she challenges sexual expectations and oppressiveness of a patriarchal society by focusing on the constructed nature of gender in almost all her novels. The focal point of her novels is her challenging the metanarratives created by patriarchal order to form reality and knowledge. On the other hand, her work can be regarded as diametrically postmodern in terms of distrusting grand narratives such as history. Makinen epitomises Winterson's postmodern stance in her novels as in the following:

The analysis of Winterson as a postmodern writer, given her meta-narrative, self-reflexive texts that deconstruct the divisions between fact and fiction, reality and fantasy, and masculinity and femininity, and rewrite intertextual references from the Bible to fairy tales has been less a debate than a consensus. (2005:3)

The majority of British authors of the 1970s and 1980s can be regarded as quintessentially postmodern in terms of their inclination to use self-referentiality of metafiction, rewrite history from multiple perspectives and integrate history with fantasy to undermine the truth claims of hegemonic discourses.

Accordingly, in order to subvert authoritarian system of thought, Winterson adopts postmodern literary techniques such as self-reflexivity, historiographic

metafiction, intertextuality, magical realism, parody and pastiche that destroys the possibility of reaching an objective reality. In this way, Winterson calls into question all grand narratives like history, to use Hutcheon's words, she problematises "the traditional causal, closed, linear nature of narrative history" (*The Canadian Postmodern* 1988:14). Consequently, she subverts historiography written under male domination which is full of ideological implications excluding women's experiences.

Through applying magical realism to her historical fiction as in *The Passion* and *Sexing the Cherry*, she blurs the line between fact and fantasy so as to make the reader aware of the existence of alternative realities and histories. Like the majority of magical realist authors, she draws attention to how historical discourses can be altered and manipulated at the hands of those in power. Thereby, she undermines traditional historiography's claim to reflect the objective reality and shows multiple histories including marginalised figures. Her novels center around how gender is constructed and attempt to demolish traditional gender roles including marginalized characters into her fiction such as Villanelle with her vague gender identity, grotesque body and unconventional bisexual relationship in *The Passion*. The issues of gender identity and marginalised figures eliminated from history can be regarded as the most common themes in her fiction. By using magical realism, she not only weakens the possibility of reaching an objective reality about the past but also inscribe the histories of the disenfranchised like Villanelle and Henri, the protagonists of *The Passion*. She gives supernatural traits to her female protagonists to blur the line between femininity and masculinity as Villanelle's webbed-feet makes her an androgynous character whose gender identity is obscure in *The Passion*. Thus, an

unconventional and atypical character who is very different from ‘the angel in the house’, an ideal woman/wife figure, joined historiography. Ultimately, the marginalized other who strays from heterosexual norms can be regarded as one of the recurring themes in Winterson’s fiction. As a result of her postmodern ontological questioning, challenging the dichotomy between fact and fiction is one of the most common themes in her novels. Using Napoleonic wars for the background of *The Passion* and simultaneously foregrounding its fictionality with the inclusion of magical realism and supernatural characters, Winterson problematizes the tendency to separate history from fiction like the great wall of China as she says in an interview that “People have an enormous need...to separate history, which is fact, from storytelling, which is not fact...and the whole push of my work has been to say, you cannot know which is which” (qtd.in Grice and Woods 1). Accordingly, Winterson self-consciously plays with history by foregrounding its constructed nature which makes her one of the leading authors of historiographic metafiction. The role of magical realism is undeniable during the construction of her postmodern historical novels as it leads the reader to question the veracity of historical events written by the governing class.

2. Laura Esquivel, one of the most outstanding authors of not only Mexican literature but also world literature, was born in Mexico City in 1950. As Woods states, “along with Isabel Allende, she is perhaps one of the best-known Latin American women novelists” (2001:1999). As a kindergarten teacher, she began her literary career writing plays and television programs for young learners throughout 1970s and 1980s. As well as being a novelist and a screen writer, she is also a politician who serves for the Morena Party

of Mexico. Her first novel *Like Water for Chocolate: A Novel in Monthly Installments, with Recipes, Romances, and Home Remedies* (*Como agua para chocolate*), which was published in 1989, received international appreciation and it was translated into numerous languages. The success of the book “earned Esquivel the title of Woman of Year in Mexico in 1993” (Saltz 1995:30). The film version of the novel, released in 1992 and won more than twenty international awards, doubled the popularity of the novel worldwide. The novel became a best-seller both in Mexico and the United States. It was in the list of New York Times best-sellers for more than a year. After this huge success, she published many other books such as *The Law of Love* (1995), *Between Two Fires: Intimate Writings on Life, Love, Food, and Flavor* (1995), *Swift as Desire* (2001), *Malinche: A Novel* (2006) and *Pierced by the Sun* (2014). According to Sollars and Jennings, “the feminist movement of the 1960s and 1970s greatly shaped Esquivel’s perspective on gender relations and artistic expression” (2008:254). The majority of her work of art can be described as magical realism and science fiction. Moreover, Esquivel uses magical realist narrative techniques in order to criticize the traditions against women as in the case prevalent in *Like Water for Chocolate*.

3. Isabel Allende, one of the most successful, prolific and internationally recognized women writers of Latin American literature, was born in Lima, Peru in 1942 to Chilean parents. Allende’s father was a diplomat and they returned to Chile when she was only 3 years old. She was the goddaughter of the first socialist president of Chile, Salvador Allende (1908-1973) who was his father’s cousin. At the beginning of her career, she was working as a

secretary and as a part time job she was translating popular romance novels from English to Spanish. However, she was disturbed by the subject matter of the romances since the plots were always the same: “beautiful, innocent, and penniless young girl meets mature, strong, powerful, virile, and lonely man disappointed in love in some exotic setting, for example, a Polynesian island where she works as a governess and he owns a plantation” (qtd.in McNeese 40). Driven by a feminist impulse, she used to make some changes so as to make her heroines seem more powerful. As a result, she was fired from this job. She also worked as a journalist. She was interviewing with various Chilean figures. She became very popular as a journalist; however, some people criticized her style of journalism as they thought she was far from being objective. During an interview, she was advised to give up journalism completely and this critic was Pablo Neruda. One day, Allende had the chance to interview with Pablo Neruda at his coastal house called Isla Negra. Though she was very well-prepared for the interview, Neruda told her “My dear child, you must be the worst journalist in the country. You are incapable of being objective, you place yourself at the center of everything you do” (qtd.in McNeese 56). He even recommended her to become a novelist by saying “Why don’t you write novels instead? In literature, those defects are virtues” (ibid.). At that time, she could not know that in a few years she would follow his advice and become one of the first South American female world-renowned novelists. When General Pinochet, one of the bloodiest dictators history has ever recorded, came into power in 1973 and toppled president Salvador Allende, the Chilean began to experience hard times and Isabel Allende was no exempt. After the coup, Isabel Allende fled to

Venezuela along with her husband and two children for political causes as she was blacklisted by the government and received death threats because of her surname. Allende lived in Caracas for 13 years and she also worked as a journalist there. While she was in exile in Venezuela, she received the news that her 99-year-old beloved grandfather was dying in Chile. Being in exile, she was not able to go back to her country to say goodbye and she began writing a letter which would turn out to be the manuscript of her debut novel, *The House of the Spirits* (1982). When she wanted to have this novel, which would bring her the magical realist author identity, published, she was constantly rejected by the publishing houses in Venezuela. Therefore, Allende found a Spanish agency and had *The House of the Spirits* published in Madrid in 1982. *The Times* ranks *The House of the Spirits* as one of the best 60 books of the past 60 years. After earning an international success with *The House of the Spirits*, Allende wrote many more novels including *Of Love and Shadows* (1985), *Eva Luna* (1987), *The Stories of Eva Luna* (1989), *Paula* (1995), one of her most prominent works published three years after the untimely death of her 28-year-old daughter Paula. All the hardships she went through could not hinder Allende from writing. *Aphrodite* (1998), *Daughter of Fortune* (1999) and *Portrait in Sepia* (2000) were published successively. She also wrote children's books including *Forest of the Pygmies* (2005). Among her most recent books, there are *Inés of My Soul* (2006), *The Sum of Our Days* (2007) which is an autobiographical work about her own life and family members, *Island Beneath the Sea* (2010), *Maya's Notebook* (2011), *Ripper* (2014), *The Japanese Lover* (2015), *In the Midst of Winter* (2017) and lastly *Long Petal of the Sea* (2019). She received

many awards including Gabriela Mistral Inter-American Prize for Culture (1990), the Dorothy and Lillian Gish Prize, an award given per annum to an individual who has made a remarkable contribution to the beauty of the world, Chilean National Prize for Literature (2010) and Presidential Medal of Freedom presented by Barack Obama in 2014.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: TURKISH SUMMARY/ TÜRKÇE ÖZET

BÜYÜLÜ GERÇEKÇİLİĞİN ÇAĞDAŞ KADIN KURMACASINDAKİ İŞLEVİ:
JEANETTE WINTERSON'IN *TUTKU*, LAURA ESQUIVEL'İN *ACI ÇİKOLATA*
VE ISABEL ALLENDE'NİN *RUHLAR EVİ* ESERLERİ

Bu çalışmanın amacı, Jeanette Winterson'ın *Tutku* (1987), Laura Esquivel'in *Acı Çikolata* (1989) ve Isabel Allende'nin *Ruhlar Evi* (1982) adlı romanlarında kullanılan büyülü gerçekçi öğelerin romanların genel dokusu içerisinde oynadığı rolü incelemektir. Büyülü gerçekçiliğin toplumda ezilen ve susturulan kesimlerin özellikle de kadınların sesini duyurmak için özgürleştirici bir edebi tarz olduğu bu tezle iddia edilir. Çalışma romanların incelenmesi aşamasında, İngiltere, Meksika ve Şili gibi farklı coğrafyalardan olmalarına rağmen üç yazarın da büyülü gerçekçi öğeleri aracılığıyla egemen ataerkil kültürün cinsiyet yapılandırmasına direnen ve baskın gerçeklik anlayışını reddeden bir söylem yarattıklarını savunur. Büyülü gerçekçilik her üç yazara da toplumda var olan çeşitli sorunlara dikkat çekmek ve egemen gerçeklik anlayışını sorgulama fırsatı vermiştir. Winterson'ın *Tutku* adlı romanında büyülü gerçekçiliğin hem ataerkil diskur tarafından dayatılan geleneksel cinsiyet rollerini eleştirmek hem de Linda Hutcheon tarafından “tarih yazımcı meta-roman (üstkurgu)” olarak adlandırılan postmodern tarih romanlarının alternatif tarihlere izin vermesi, gerçek ve kurgu arasındaki ayrımı bulanıklaştırması açısından önemli bir araç olduğu gösterilmektedir. Laura Esquivel'in *Acı Çikolata* adlı eserinde ise büyülü gerçekçilik

pek çok toplumda halen var olan kadın karşıtı gelenekleri eleştirmek ve yine Winterson'ın romanında olduğu gibi geleneksel cinsiyet rollerini sorgulamak amacıyla kullanılmaktadır. Çalışmada incelenen üçüncü eser olan *Ruhlar Evi*'nde ise Isabel Allende büyüğü gerçekçiliği ülkesinde yaşanan askeri darbenin sebep olduğu acılara dikkat çekmek, baskıcı askeri yönetimin tarih yazımına müdahalesi ve hükümet karşıtı görüşe sahip olanların özellikle de kadınların alternatif tarihlerine ses vermek ve güçlüler tarafından yazılan tarihi ters yüz etmek amacıyla kullandığı görülmüştür. Kısacası, her üç yazarın da çalışılan romanlarda büyüğü gerçekçiliği farklı nedenlerle ancak tek bir amaç doğrultusunda kullandığı görülmüştür: Ezilenlerin ve marjinalerin sesi olmak.

Çalışmanın ikinci bölümünde büyüğü gerçekçiliğin kuramsal arka planı detaylı bir biçimde ele alınmıştır. Büyüğü gerçekçilik terimi ilk olarak 1925'te Almanya'da sanat eleştirmeni ve tarihçisi Franz Roh tarafından dışavurumcu resmi eleştirmek amacıyla ortaya atılmıştır. Büyüğü gerçekçilik çeşitli aşamalardan geçerek edebi bir tarz olarak dünya çapında popülaritesini arttırmıştır. Edebiyatta büyüğü gerçekçilik, gerçek ve gerçekdışı öğelerin, alışılmış ve alışılmamış olanın bir arada günlük hayatın bir parçası olarak kullanılması olarak tanımlanabilir. Ayrıca resimdeki büyüğü gerçekçilik ile edebi büyüğü gerçekçiliğin de birbirinden farkı ele alınmıştır. Bowers'ın kitabında ele aldığı, Roh'un resimdeki ve edebiyattaki büyüğü gerçekçilik tanımı ile bu iki ayrı akımın farkları netleşmiştir. Büyüğü gerçekçilik sadece Almanya ile sınırlı kalmamış; Bontempelli'nin iki dilde yazdığı edebiyat dergisiyle tüm Avrupa'ya yayılıp birçok yazarı etkilemiştir. Öte yandan, Kübalı roman yazarı, müzikolojist ve oyun yazarı olan Alejo Carpentier Paris'te yaşadığı yıllarda Avrupa sürrealizmine maruz kalmıştır. Kitabının önsözünde büyüğü gerçekçilik yerine Latin Amerika'ya ait bir büyüğü gerçekçiliği tanımlayan kendi terimini, harika gerçekçilik kavramını kullanmıştır. Bu

önsözde Avrupa sürrealizmi ile Latin Amerikan harika gerçekliğinin farkına değinmiştir. Ayrıca bu bölümde, ünlü Latin Amerikan Edebiyatı profesörü Angel Flores'in, makalesinde Roh'un büyüğü gerçekçiliğı ve Carpentier'in harika gerçekçiliğinin birleşiminden oluşan yeni bir büyüğü gerçekçilik tanımı ileri sürdüğüne değinilmiştir. Sonuç olarak, bu bölüm büyüğü gerçekçiliğın ne zaman, nerede ortaya çıktığını, nasıl değışip geliştini anlatmaktadır. Kuramsal arka planın devamı olarak, birinci bölümde, büyüğü gerçekçiliğın genellikle karıştırıldığı gerçekçilik, sürrealizm, fantastik, alegori ve bilimkurgu gibi diğere edebi türlerden farklarına değinilmiştir. Büyüğü gerçekçilik için tek bir tanım ileri sürülemeyeceğı gibi özellikleri için de durum farklı değildir. Zaman içinde değışen ve çeşitlenen birçok tanıma sahiptir. Büyüğü gerçekçilik dendiğinde en çok akla gelen eleştirmenlerden biri olan Wendy B. Faris, büyüğü gerçekçi bir eserin sahip olması gereken beş birincil temel özelliğı belirlemiştir. Bir eserin büyüğü gerçekçi olması için indirgenemez öge, olağanüstü dünya, rahatsız eden şüpheler, birleşen dünyalar; zaman, yer ve kimlik karmaşası gibi sıralanabilecek özelliklere sahip olması gerekmektedir. Bu bölümde ünlü büyüğü gerçekçi eserlere atıflarda bulunarak bu özelliklerin örnekleri detaylı bir biçimde tartışılmıştır.

Birbirine zıt dünyaları çarpıştıran büyüğü gerçekçilik, yıkıcı potansiyeli ve politik boyutu nedeniyle dünya çapında birçok yazarın ilgisini çekmektedir. Latin Amerikalı yazarlar kıtalarına ait olan bir edebi kimlik arayışına girmişlerdir. Bu yüzden büyüğü gerçekçilik kolonileşme sonrası döneme bağlanmıştır. Fikret Arargüç, bu alanların kolonileşme sonrası çalışmaları alanında incelenmesini iki nedene bağlamıştır. Birincisi, üçüncü dünya ülkeleri ve kolonileşme sonrası ülkeleri durumlarının birbiriyle aynı olması; ikincisi ise, uzmanların kolonileşme sonrası dönemin etkileri görülen ülkeleri kolonileşme sonrası dönem ülkesi olarak kabul etme eğiliminde

olmalarıdır. Büyülü gerçekçi bir yazarın amacı sıradan yer ve zamanda olan sıradan olayların olduğu bir atmosfer yaratmaktır. Çünkü bu yolla metindeki olağanüstü öğeler doğal kabul edilir. Bu da büyülü gerçekçiliği kolonileşme sonrası dönem için uygun bir ifade aracı yapar. Sonuç olarak; büyülü gerçekçilik, iki zıt sistem içindeki ezilen tarafın sesini sıradan yer ve zamanda olağanüstü olaylara yer vererek vurgular. Tüm bu özellikler büyülü gerçekçiliğin kültürel bozulma gibi kolonileşme sonrası dönemin sorunlarını ifade etmede uygun bir araç olduğunu göstermektedir.

Çalışmanın kuramsal arka planının bir parçası olarak, büyülü gerçekçilik ve postmodern tarih felsefesi arasındaki bağ ele alınmıştır. Öncelikle yapısalcılık-sonrası düşüncelerin etkisiyle ortaya çıkmış postmodern tarih yazımı anlayışı detaylı bir şekilde incelenmiştir. Postmodern tarih felsefesi geçmişi noksansız ve tarafsız olarak aktardığını savunan geleneksel tarih anlayışına zıttır. Postmodern tarih anlayışı, geleneksel tarih anlayışının belli ideolojik sebeplerden dolayı tarafsız olamayacağını üstünde durur. Ana felsefesini yapısalcılık-sonrasından alan postmodernizm bütün genellemelere şiddetle karşıdır ve tarih yazımı da buna dahildir. Yapısalcılık-sonrası ve postmodernist teorilerin ortaya çıkmasından önce tarih biliminin bir dalı olarak kabul ediliyordu ancak bu teorilerin ortaya çıkışı ve dile olan şüpheli yaklaşım ve gerçeğin dille yansıtılabileceğine karşı inancın azalması tarihin bilimden ayrılmasına yol açmıştır. Hayden White, Edward Hallett Carr ve Linda Hutcheon gibi pek çok postmodern tarih teorisyeni tarih metinlerinin doğalarının subjektif olduğuna ve salt dilin kurgusu olduğuna inanır bu yüzden onlara göre tarihi metinler çoklu yorumlamaya açıktır. White, *Metahistory* (1973) adlı kitabında tarihi tarihçinin kişisel yorumundan bağımsız olamayacak yapay bir olgudur ve bu yüzden White'a göre tarihin bilimden çok edebiyatla ortak yönü bulunmaktadır. Tarihi kayıtlardan tutarlı ve inandırıcı bir hikâye oluşturmak için tarihçi bazı anlatı tekniklerine dayanır ve bu

teknikler bir edebi eserde ya da tiyatro oyunundan kullanıldan farklı değildir. White'ın görüşüne göre, tarihi kayıtları gerçeklere dönüştürme aşamasında tarihçi bu tarihi kayıtlardaki boşlukları tamamlamak için kendi ideolojisini baz alarak “öykülendirme” (“emplotment”) tekniğine başvurur. Kısacası, Carr ve White'a göre tarih objektiflikten uzak insan tarafından üretilmiş yanlı bir olgudur ve kendi ideolojilerini dayatmaya çalışan güçlülerin tekelindedir.

Büyülü gerçekçi yazarların resmi tarihin gerçeklik iddialarını zayıflatmaya olan ilgisi ve tarih yazımına postmodern bakış açıları gözden kaçırılmamalıdır. Çoğu büyülü gerçekçi eser belli bir tarihi olayı konu alır. Önde gelen büyülü gerçekçilik eleştirmenlerinden Anne Hegerfeldt'e göre büyülü gerçekçi eserlerinin çoğunun aynı zamanda Linda Hutcheon'ın “tarihyazımsal üstkurgu” olarak tanımladığı postmodern tarihi roman kategorisine girer ve bu romanlar tarihin resmi versiyonlarının yeniden yazılmış halidir. Büyülü gerçekçi eserler genellikle mazlumların bakış açılarından tarihe alternatif bir bakış açısı getirirler. Büyülü olayları bilinen tarihi anlarla birleştiren büyülü gerçekçi yazarlar alternatif gerçekliklerin varlığını ve tarih hakkında mutlak bir doğruya ulaşmanın imkansızlığını vurgular. Büyülü gerçekçilik genellikle gerçekçiliğin totaliter söylemlerinde sesleri bastırılan kadınlar romancılar tarafından benimsenmiştir. Kadın yazarlar tarih boyunca kendilerine yapılan zulümleri göstermek, resmi tarih tarafından yok sayılan bastırılmış grupların sesini duyurmak, alternatif gerçekliklerin varlığını göstermek ve gerçekçiliğin dilsel bir kurgu olduğunu vurgulamak için eserlerinde büyülü gerçekçi anlatım tekniklerini kullanmışlardır.

İkinci bölümde kuramsal arka planın son parçası olarak biyolojik cinsiyet, toplumsal cinsiyet ve cinsiyet rolleri kavramlarına değinilmiştir. Genellikle biyolojik cinsiyet (sex) ve toplumsal cinsiyet (gender) eş anlamlı kavramlarmış gibi birbirlerinin yerine kullanılır ancak ikisinin farklı kavramlar olduğunu ve aralarındaki farkı görmek

önemlidir. Biyolojik cinsiyet, bireyin biyolojik olarak diğer cinsten farklılaştığı özellikler (cinsiyet kromozomları, üreme organları, hormonlar, vb.) olarak tanımlanırken, toplumsal cinsiyet biyolojik özellikleri ifade etmez. Toplumsal cinsiyet, sosyal ve kültürel yapılandırmanın sonucunda ortaya çıkan, toplumun kadın ve erkek için uygun gördüğü davranış biçimleri, faaliyetler ve özellikler olarak tanımlanabilir. Biyolojik olarak kadın olan bireylerden kadınsı, erkeklerin de erkeksi toplumsal cinsiyet rollerini benimsemeleri beklenir. Toplumsal cinsiyet rolleri, toplumdan topluma ve zaman içinde değişiklik gösterebilir. Genellikle çoğu toplumda kadınlardan kırılgan, pasif, bağımlı, fedakâr ve verici olmaları beklenirken, erkeklerden güçlü, aktif ve bağımsız olmaları beklenir. Analiz edilen romanlarda, büyülü gerçekçilik kullanımı bu toplumsal cinsiyet rollerinin ataerkil toplum ve kültür tarafından inşa edildiğini vurgular ve karakterlerin onlara dayatılan bu rollerin sınırlarını aşmalarını sağlar. Simone de Beauvoir'ın İkinci Cins (1949) adlı kitabında belirttiği gibi “insan kadın doğmaz, olur”.

Üçüncü bölümde İngiliz yazar Jeanette Winterson'ın hem büyülü gerçekçi hem de tarih-yazımcı meta-roman olarak kategorize edilen *Tutku* adlı romanı analiz edilmiştir. Bu romanda, büyülü gerçekçiğin hem geleneksel cinsiyet rollerini nasıl alt üst ettiğini hem de tarih-yazımcı meta-romanın önemli bir aracı olarak nasıl kullanıldığı çalışılmıştır. Bu roman Napoleon Bonaparte döneminde geçen çok anlatıcılı bir romandır. Romanın ana karakterleri Napoleon'un ordusunda asker olan Henri ve Venedik'te bir kumarhanede çalışan Villanelle bu dönemi toplum tarafından bastırılmış karakterlerin alternatif bakış açılarından yeniden anlatır ve resmi tarihin bir parodisini yapar. Henri'nin savaş günlüğü ile tarihin ideoloji yüklü olduğunu ve yazarının bakış açısına göre tekrar tekrar yazılabileceği bu nedenle objektif olamayacağı gösterilir. Güçlüler tarafından yazılan tarihin gerçeklik iddialarını

zayıflatmak için Henri'nin kişisel beyanından Napoleon Savaşlarının parodik bir biçimde yeniden anlatılması ve günlüğünde büyümlü gerçekçi ögelere yer vermesinin okuyucuya tarih yazımı konusunda kesin bir yargıya varılamayacağını gösterir. Günlüğünde büyümlü gerçekçi özelliklere yalnızca resmi tarihin gerçeklik iddialarına gölge düşürmez aynı zamanda Patrick gibi doğüstü özelliklere sahip karakterlerin din, inanç ve her türlü normu nasıl sorgulandığı analiz edilmiştir. Henri'nin ordudan arkadaşı olan ve papazlıktan men edilen Patrick teleskopik bir göze sahiptir, bu özelliği sayesinde kilometrelerce öteyi görebilmektedir ve düşmanı gözlemleyebilmek için bizzat Napoleon tarafından orduya alınmıştır. Patrick bu büyümlü özelliğini vaaz verirken keşfeder, bu büyümlü gözü yüzünden papazlıktan atılmıştır ve bu görüş papazlığıyla çelişecek şekilde ona şehvet dolu görme gücü sunar. Patrick bu gözü genellikle kilometrelerce ötedeki köylerdeki kadınları izlemek ve röntgencilik yapmak için kullanır. Hıristiyanlıkta görme yetisiyle ilgili pek çok hikâye vardır. Örneğin pek çok inanmayan insan belli görüşlerden veya rüyalardan sonra sadık Hıristiyanlara dönüşenlerle ilgili pek çok hikâye bulunur ancak Patrick'in durumunda bu görüşü ona röntgencilikten başka bir şey sağlamamıştır. Büyümlü gerçekçilik aracılığıyla Winterson'ın sürekli eleştirdiği Kiliseyi ve din adamlarının iki yüzlülüğünü vurgulamak ister. Romanın ikinci anlatıcısı Villanelle kumarhanede çalışan Venedikli bir kadındır. Kocasından Napoleon'un ordusuna satılan Villanelle burada Henri ile karşılaşır ve ikili Rusya'daki ordudan kaçarak Venedik'e yolculuk yaparken Villanelle öyküsünü anlatır. Villanelle sadece Venedikli sandalci erkeklerin sahip olduğu perdeli ayaklara sahip olan ilk kadındır. Bu büyümlü gerçekçi öge ona bu yanıyla kadınlık ve erkeklik kavramlarını sorgulamamızı sağlar. Perdeli ayağı sayesinde suyun üstünde ve Venedik'in kanalları üstünde rahatça yürüyebilen Villanelle'i kumarhane gibi kamusal alanlara yerleştiren Winterson, Henri'yi Napoleon'un mutfağında çalışan

bir asker olarak tasvir ederek geleneksel cinsiyet rollerini altüst eder. Ayrıca Villanelle biseksüel bir kadın olarak ataerkil toplumun biçtiği zorunlu heteroseksüelliği yıkar. ‘Queen of Spades’ olarak isimlendirdiği aşığıyla birlikte olamayan Villanelle gerçek anlamda ona kalbini kaptırır. Bu metaforun gerçekleşmesiyle Winterson’ın homoseksüel aşkın da en az heteroseksüel aşk kadar acı verici ve gerçek olduğunu vurgulamak ister. Henri’ye kalbini bu gizemli kadının evinden alması için ricada bulunur. Burada aynı zamanda orta çağ şövalye romanslarının da parodisi yapılır. Bu tür romanslarda kahramanın ödül olarak sevdiğinin kalbini kazanması beklenir. Villanelle’e âşık olan ve onunla evlenmek isteyen Henri ödüksüz kalır çünkü Villanelle evlenip toplumsal normlara boyun eğmeyi reddeder. Kısacası, *Tutku*’da büyülü gerçekçiliğin hem tarih yazımının sübjektif yönünü ortaya çıkarmak ve bu nedenle tarihyazımsal üstkurgunun önemli bir aracı olduğunu göstermek hem de geleneksel cinsiyet rollerini alt üst etmede etkili bir edebi tarz olduğu savunulmaktadır.

Dördüncü bölümde Meksikalı yazar Laura Esquivel’in *Acı Çikolata* adlı romanı ve bu romandaki büyülü gerçekçi öğelerin *Tutku* adlı romanda olduğu gibi geleneksel cinsiyet rollerinin sınırlarının aşıldığı ve bazı toplumlarda kadın karşıtı geleneklere sert bir eleştiri amacıyla nasıl kullanıldığı analiz edilmiştir. Romanın ana karakteri Tita De la Garza ailesinin en küçük kızı olarak annesi ölünceye kadar ona bakmak zorundadır bu nedenle evlenip bir yuva kurması ona yasaklanmıştır. Sevdiği erkek Pedro ona evlilik teklifi edince annesi geleneklere göre Tita’nın evlenmesinin yasak olduğunu onun yerine ablası Gertrudis’in evlenmek için uygun olduğunu söyler. Bunun üzerine Pedro sırf Tita ile aynı çatı altında yaşayabilmek için ablası Gertrudis ile evlenmeyi kabul eder. Yıllardır devam eden bu korkunç kadın karşıtı aile geleneğinin kurbanı olarak annesine karşı gelemeyen Tita, Pedro ve ablasının evliliğine şahit olmak zorunda kalır. Romandaki büyülü gerçekçi öğeler ağırlıklı

olarak Tita'nın yemek yapmasıyla ve mutfakla ilişkilidir. Romanda Tita'nın zalim annesi Elena, Pedro ve Rosaura'nın düğünü için Tita'ya pasta yapmasını emreder. Tita bu evlilik karşısında hissettiği derin kederden dolayı pastayı yaparken kendisini ağlamaktan alıkoyamaz ve gözyaşları hazırladığı harcın içine damlar. Düğün günü pastayı tadan bütün davetliler kendilerini ağlamaktan, istifrağ etmekten ve kaybettikleri aşkları için özlem duymaktan alamaz. Pastanın bu büyüğü özelliğinden etkilenmeyen tek kişi Tita'dır. Böylece Tita yaptığı yemeklerin sihirli gücünü ve bu yolla duygularını başkalarına aktarabildiğinin farkına varır. Onun hissettiklerini, duygularını ve hayattaki arzularını yok sayan bu gelenek yüzünden Pedro ile iletişime geçmenin başka bir yolunu bulamayan Tita büyüğü yemeklerini Pedro ile arasında bir bağ ve iletişim aracı olarak kullanır. Başka bir deyişle, Tita'nın sihirli yemekleri kadın karşıtı geleneklere karşı hem bir protesto hem de duygularını özgürce Pedro'ya yansıtmaya amacı taşır. Kitabın üçüncü bölümü olan Gül Yapraklı Bildircim adlı bölümde, bu büyüğü gerçekçi strateji Tita tarafından kullanılır. Nacha'nın ölümünden sonra çiftliğin baş aşçısı rolünü üstelenen Tita bu görevi devralışının ilk yıldönümünde Pedro tarafından ona hediye edilen gülleri göğsüne öyle bir bastırır ki pembe güller Tita'nın kanıyla kırmızıya döner. Pedro ve Tita arasındaki bu yakınlık Elena anneyi çok rahatsız eder ve Tita'ya güllerden kurtulmasını emreder. Ancak Tita Pedro'nun hediyesini yok etmek yerine bu gülleri kullanarak özel bir yemek yapmaya karar verir. Tita bu büyüğü tarifleyerek arzusunu Pedro'ya geçirmekle kalmaz ayrıca en büyük kız kardeşi olan Gertrudis'in de kendi cinsel arzularının farkına varmasını sağlar. Tita'nın yaptığı yemeğin etkisiyle terlemeye ve cinsel istek duymaya engel olamayan Gertrudis kendisine biçilen bulaşık yıkama görevini yok sayarak hissettiği sıcaklığı bastırmak için duş almak ister ancak su damlaları vücuduna ulaşmadan buharlaşır ve Gertrudis'in vücudundan yayılan sıcaklık nedeniyle duş aldığı kabin alev alır. Oradan

kilometrelerce uzakta savaşmakta olan Juan adında devrimci bir asker Gertrudis'in bedeninden yayılan gül kokusunu alır ve atını De la Garza ailesinin yaşadığı çiftliğe sürer. Gertrudis Juan'la kaçarak Elena annenin evinden, onun baskılarından ve kendisi için biçilen geleneksel cinsiyet rollerinden de uzaklaşır. Tita'nın yaptığı büyü lü yemeğin etkisi Gertrudis'in üstünde etkisi o kadar büyüktür ki Juan'la evlenmek yerine cinsel arzularını bastırmak için bir genelevde çalışmaya başlar. Ataerkil toplumlarda yalnızca erkeklerin cinsel arzuları dikkate alınırken, kadınların arzuları göz ardı edilir. Gertrudis gibi başka birinin zorlaması ya da ekonomik olarak kendini desteklemek gibi bir kaygısı olmayan sadece kendi isteğiyle genelevde çalışan bir karakterin tasviri geleneksel cinsiyet rollerinin parodik bir tersine dönmesi olarak yorumlanabilir. Gertrudis'in cinsel arzularını ön plana alarak, Esquivel toplum her ne kadar yok saymaya çalışsa da kadınların da cinsel arzularının en az erkekler kadar önemli olduğunu vurgulamaktadır.

Ayrıca *Acı Çikolata*'nın pek çok edebi türün bir hibridizasyonu olduğu görülmüştür. Esquivel geleneksel olarak kadına özgü görülen masal, aşk romanları ve on dokuzuncu yüzyıl kadın dergileri gibi popüler edebiyat geleneklerini kullanarak ancak bu türlerde kendilerine biçilmiş geleneksel cinsiyet rollerine boyun eğen kadın karakterlerin tersine bu türlerde pek rastlanmayan güçlü kadın karakterleri ön plana çıkarır. Feminist bir bakış açısıyla dolaylı olarak romans gibi türlerdeki cinsiyet rollerini tersine çevirerek parodisini yapan Esquivel bu türden beklenenleri de altüst eder ve bu tersine çevirme güçlü kadın karakterlerin ortaya çıkmasını sağlar. Radway'e göre bir aşk romanının olmazsa olmazı romanın merkezinde birbirine son derece aşık bir çiftin bulunmasıdır (1991:120). *Acı Çikolata*'da Pedro ve Tita bu özelliği tam anlamıyla karşılar ancak aşk romanlarındaki kahraman genellikle maskülen, merhametsiz ve çevresindeki kadınlara karşı umursamaz olarak tasvir edilir. Aksine, *Acı Çikolata*'da

ana erkek karakterler korkak, kırılgan, kararsız ve pasif olarak betimlenirler. Örneğin, Pedro Tita'yı tutkulu bir biçimde sevmesine rağmen ikisinin de hayatını mahveden bu korkunç aile geleneğiyle savaşıp Tita ile kaçmak ya da başka bir çözüm bulmak yerine ona yakın olmak için bu geleneğe boyun eğip ablasıyla evlenmeyi kabul eder. Romanın bir diğer ana karakteri olan ve Tita ile evlenmek isteyen aile doktoru John Brown da yine Pedro gibi etkisiz ve zayıf bir karakter olarak tasvir edilmiştir. Ataerkil toplumlarda kadınlara savaş veya iş gibi nedenlerle uzakta olan eşlerini şartlar ne olursa olsun özverili bir biçimde bekleme rolü biçilir ancak *Acı Çikolata*'da Tita'yı ve onun kendisi ve Pedro arasında bir seçim yapmasını yıllarca bekleyen kişi John Brown'dır. Öte yandan, Pedro'nun eylemsizliğine karşı Tita roman boyunca bu baskıcı gelenekle mücadele eder ve yemeklerinin büyüdü özelliğini yani duygularını yemek yapma yoluyla başkalarına aktarabildiğini gördüğünde bu gücü Pedro ile arasında bir iletişim aracı olarak kullanır. Ayrıca romanda, orta çağ romanslarında görülen bir arketip olan "tehlikedeki hanım" (damsel-in-distress) karakterinin bir parodisi yapılır. Bu romanslarda başı dertte olan, genellikle zayıf, masum ve güzel olarak tasvir edilen genç bir hanım kendisini bir kötü adamın ya da canavarın elinden kurtaracak bir kahramanın gelişini bekler ancak *Acı Çikolata*'da bu durum parodik olarak ele alınmıştır. Tita'nın yaptığı büyüdü ve afrodizyak etkili yemeği tattıktan sonra Gertrudis devrimci asker Juan tarafından kaçırılmayı hayal eder ancak bunun nedeni büyük bir tehlikede olması değil cinsel arzularını bastırma isteğidir. Dahası, bu orta çağ romanslarında genellikle kahraman genç kızla evlenme isteğini beyan eder aksine bu romanda Juan Gertrudis'i tek başına tatmin edemez, bu nedenle Gertrudis beklenildiği gibi onunla evlenmek yerine onunla evlenmeyi reddeder ve kendi cinsel isteklerini her şeyden önce tutarak bir genelevde çalışmaya başlar.

Beşinci bölümde Isabel Allende'nin ülkesinin politik olarak çalkantılı olan yıllarını, 1973 Şili askeri darbesini ve sonrasında General Augusto Pinochet'nin askeri rejimini ele alan *Ruhlar Evi* adlı romanında büyülü gerçekçiliği dönemin güçlülerin tekelindeki taraflı tarih yazımını ters yüz etmek için nasıl kullanıldığı analiz edilmiştir. 1973 Şili askeri darbesi sonucu devrilen ve Latin Amerika'nın serbest seçimle iktidara gelen ilk Marksist devlet başkanı olan Salvador Allende'nin akrabası olan Isabel Allende dönemin ifade özgürlüğünün yoksunluğundan ve sansürlerden dolayı Venezuela'da *Ruhlar Evi*'ni ancak sürgüneyken yazabilmiştir. Büyülü gerçekçilik içerdiği olağanüstü öğeler açısından bol olmasına rağmen dünyanın politik gerçekliğinden ayrılamaz. Büyülü gerçekçi romancıların büyük çoğunluğunun bu edebi tarzı politik eleştiri amacıyla kullandığı görülmüştür. Büyülü gerçekçi yazarlar genellikle dünyada düşünce özgürlüğünün kısıtlandığı ve dünyada diktatörlüklerin hüküm sürdüğü yerlerin vatandaşlarıdır. Bir yazar için bir diktatörü açık bir şekilde eleştirmek ve bunun bedelini ödememek mümkün değildir. Büyülü gerçekçi eserler içerdikleri doğaüstü öğelerle politik duruşlarını büyü'nün altına gizleyerek okuyucuya aktarmak istedikleri asıl eleştiriyi ulaştırır. Çok anlatıcılı bu roman Alba'nın ölen anneanesi Clara'nın elli yıl önce yazılmış günlüklerini okumasıyla başlar. Alba, anneanesinin günlüklerini kullanarak dedesi Esteban Trueba ile birlikte bir aile sagası yazar. Romanda Trueba ailesinin kadınları aile reisi Esteban Trueba ile sürekli bir çatışma içindedir. Esteban, hükümet karşıtı olanların düşüncelerini ifade özgürlüğünü elinden alan ve onları şiddet yoluyla bastıran Pinochet diktatörlüğünü temsil eder. Gerçekleri dile getiren kadınların sesini bastıran Esteban'ın otoritesinden kurtulmak için bu kadınların kendilerine nasıl bir alternatif alan oluşturdukları, roman boyunca nasıl güçlendikleri ve bu amaçları gerçekleştirmek için büyülü gerçekçiliğin rolü detaylı bir biçimde incelenmiştir. Romanda büyülü gerçekçi öğeler olan hayaletlerin ve ruhların

kullanımının kadın karakterleri güçlendirdiği görülmüştür. Büyülü gerçekçilik öğeleri yönünden zengin olan *Ruhlar Evi*'nde sihir gücü yalnızca kadın karakterlere bahşedilmiştir ve genelde Clara ile ilişkilendirilmiştir. Çocukluğundan beri günlük tutan Clara del Valle'nin geleceği görme, telepati ve nesnelere dokunmadan hareket ettirme gibi doğüstü güçleri vardır. Clara geleceği görebilir ancak olayların meydana gelmeden müdahalede bulunamaz. Örneğin, romanda yeşil saçları ve olağandışı görüntüsüyle büyülü gerçekçi özellikler taşıyan başka bir karakter olan Rosa'nın ölümünü öngörür ancak bu durumu engelleme yetisi olmadığından Rosa politikacı olan babasına rakipleri tarafından gönderilen zehirli likörü içmesi sonucu ölür. Allende'nin politikacıların yolsuzluğuna ve ikiyüzlülüğüne olan eleştirisi romanın başından beri açık olduğu görülmüştür. Esteban, Clara'nın sihirli güçlerine sahip olmak ister ve politikaya atıldığında büyü yeteğine çok güvendiği Clara'nın tahminlerini dikkate almadan adım atmaz. Clara'nın sihir gücü ailesindekiler için bir yatışma yolu olarak görülebilir. Örneğin, Esteban kızı Blanca'nın sahip olduğu çiftlikteki ustabaşının oğlu devrimci Pedro'nun bebeğini taşıdığını öğrenince çok sinirlenerek Blanca'yı üzme ve Pedro'yu unutmasını sağlamak için Pedro'yu öldürdüğünü söyler ancak bu durum karşısında Clara geleceği görme yetisiyle Pedro'nun yaşadığını ancak bir süre ayrı olmaları gerektiği konusunda rahatlatır. Roman boyunca ataerkiyle çatışma halinde olan kadın karakterlerin sihri, doğüstünü, yazıyı ve kasti sessizliği baskıcı toplumun sınırlarından kaçmak için güçlenme aracı olarak nasıl kullandığı tartışılmıştır. Romandaki büyülü öğelerin ataerki tarafından yazılan tarih yazımına meydan okumak ve kadınların alternatif tarihlerini yeniden yazması için vazgeçilmez bir araç olduğu görülmüştür. Ailenin bütün kadınları, Clara'nın annesi ve eserdeki ilk jenerasyon olan Nivea'dan başlayarak ataerki, geleneksel cinsiyet rolleri, yoksulluk ve sınıf ayrımı gibi sorunlarla mücadele

halindedir. Örnek vermek gerekirse, Nivea kadınların oy hakkını savunur ve dönemin kadınlara dayattığı korse giymek gibi onların hareketlerini özgürlüklerini sınırlayıcı etkenlerin ortadan kalkmasını destekler. Ondan sonraki jenerasyon olan Clara, Blanca ve Alba cinsiyet ve sınıf ayrımı gibi bütün eşitsizlik türleriyle savaşıma geleneğini sürdürür. Mesela Clara çiftlik sahibi eşi Esteban'ın büyük malikanesindeki lüks hayatın keyfini çıkarıp yoksulların kötü yaşam koşullarını yok saymak yerine hayatını onlara yardım etmeye ve Tres Marías'daki kadınların ve çocukların eğitimine adanır. Aynı şekilde, onu izleyen nesil olan kızı Blanca ve torunu Alba da ihtiyaç sahiplerine yardım etmek konusunda Clara'nın izinden gitmişlerdir. Örneğin, Alba sırf hükümet karşıtı düşüncelere sahip oldukları için öldürülme tehlikesiyle karşı karşıya olan yeni rejimin mağdurlarını evlerinde gizleyerek ve toplama kampına götürülme tehlikesi olanları başka ülkelere kaçırmaları için gizlice büyükelçiliklere götürerek yaşadıkları eşitsizliklere karşı çıkar.

Romanda kadının gücü genellikle Clara ve onun doğüstü güçleriyle yansıtılır. Ruhlar alemi Clara için ataerkinin kısıtlamalarından kaçmak için ayrı bir yol olarak görülebilir. Esteban'ın despot tavırlarından kaçmak için onun kontrol edemediği ve ulaşamadığı ruhlar alemine sığınır. Ayrıca Clara'nın eşi Esteban'ın kısıtlamalarından kaçmasının bir diğer yolunu ise kasti sessizlikte bulunduğu görülmüştür. Esteban, kızı Blanca'nın alt sınıftan gelen ve devrimci olan Pedro'yla ilişkisini öğrendikten sonra kendisinin de geçmişte kendi sınıfından olmayan kadınlarla ilişkiye girdiğini ve bunu aşk uğruna yapan Pedro'dan farksız bir davranışta bulunmadığını söylediğinde çok sinirlenip kontrolünü kaybederek Clara'ya vurduğunda Clara yıllar boyu süren derin bir sessizliğe bürünerek kendini Esteban'ın ataerkin değerlerinden hem fiziksel hem de psikolojik olarak soyutlar. Clara ile evliliğinden önce aile mirası Tres Marías'daki köylü kızlara tecavüz eden ancak buna romanın ikinci anlatıcısı olarak kendi

beyanında hiç yer vermeyen Esteban'ın tavrı Pinochet diktatörlüğünde hükümet karşıtı olanların düşüncelerini ve onların basın araçlarını nasıl sansürlediğinin ve onların seslerini nasıl bastırıldığının önceden bir iması olarak görülebilir. Esteban'la konuşmayı kasıtlı olarak reddettiği sessiz yıllarında Clara'nın bir başka güç bulduğu alanın yazı yoluyla olduğu görülmüştür. Bu hiçbir ataerki ve hükümet müdahalesi olmadan yazma gücünü torunu Alba'ya geçirir. Askeri darbeden sonra, politik görüşü ve devrimci erkek arkadaşı Miguel ile bağlantısı yüzünden Alba'yı tutuklayan askerler Trueba malikanesindeki bütün kitapları yakar ancak sadece Clara'nın günlükleri bu toplu yakılmadan büyülü bir biçimde kurtulmayı başarır. Kitapların yakılması Pinochet Şili'sindeki düşünce özgürlüğünün noksanlığını ve onca kitaptan yalnızca Clara'nın günlüklerinin kurtulması, Alba'ya ısrarla alternatif gerçekliklerin olduğunu gösterir.

Clara'nın hayaletinin askeri darbe sonrası alıkonan ve işkence gören torunu Alba'yı hükümet yanlısı olanların tarafından yazılan objektiflikten uzak tarih yazımının gerçeklik iddialarını çürütmek için ve yaşanan acıları bastırılanların gözünden yazması için yüreklendirmesi gerçeği değişik perspektiflerden görmenin önemini vurgular. Örneğin, Şili hükümeti askeri darbe sonrası ve Pinochet'nin dikta rejimi süresinde kimsenin işkence ve baskı görmediğini, hükümetin insan hakları ilkesine dayalı olarak kurulmuş olduğunu iddia eder. Ancak bu dönemde pek çok insan kaybolmuş, işkence görülmüş, sürülmüş ve öldürülmüştür. Allende'nin romanında suçlarının üzerini örtmek isteyen hükümetin tarih yazımından bağımsız bir gerçeklik yaratmak, resmi tarih yazımında yok sayılan hükümet karşıtı olanların, işkence görenlerin ve kadınların bakış açılarından yeniden yazmak için büyülü gerçekçiliğin önemli bir rol oynadığı görülmüştür. Büyülü gerçekçilik aracılığıyla Allende, hükümet tarafından imha edilmeyen ya da değiştirilmeyen alternatif bir tarih yazımı yaratmak ister böylece dikta rejimin sessizleştirdiği kalabalıkların sesi olur.

Sonu olarak, byl gerekilięin geleneksel cinsiyet rollerinin kalıplarını ve tarihin yekparelięini yıkmada dnya apında zellikle kadın yazarlar iin zgrleřtirici bir edebi tarz olduęu iddia edilmektedir.

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Bölümü / Department : İngiliz Edebiyatı / English Literature

TEZİN ADI / TITLE OF THE THESIS (İngilizce / English) :

The Function of Magical Realism in Contemporary Women's Fiction: Jeanette Winterson's *The Passion*, Laura Esquivel's *Like Water for Chocolate* and Isabel Allende's *The House of the Spirits*

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