

**The Magic Realism and the Exotic ‘Other’ in Pakistani Young Adult Fictions:
An Ideological Critique of the Devil’s Kiss by Sarwat Chaddha and the
Firefly in the Dark by Shazaf Fatima Haider**

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Abstract: *Magic realism is often taken as a literary form that challenges the norms and the peculiarities of realism, often associated with postcolonial texts, it is now commonly termed postmodernist post colonialism. Despite possessing the element of heterogeneity superadded with religious, folklorist, and cultural tales, it is still taken as a postcolonial device to address the issue of hybridity, rhetoric of identity, and fusion of binaries between fact and fiction. Recently, the notion of magic realism has been redeveloped with a twist in popular fiction in general and in young adult Anglophonic fiction in particular. Instead of treating it as a separate genre, the writers have seamlessly incorporated the notion of magic realism as a stratagem to support the main idea. By applying Wendy B Faris notion of magic realism from her seminal work Ordinary Enchantments: Magical Realism and Remystification to popular fiction such as The Devil’s Kiss by Sarwat Chaddha and The Firefly in the Dark, by Shazaf Fatima Haider, the research explores primarily how the notion of magic realism has been fused with the issues of the young adults and secondly, how have these young adult fiction incorporated the cultural and religious myth in their to endorse the element of othering*

Key words: *young adult fiction, Anglophone fictions, magic realism, othering*

Introduction

With the advent of surrealist art, the term Magic realism has been aptly used in the literary canon. A derivative phrase having mixed meaning is usually associated with the mythical or supernatural literature originating from countries of Latin America though it dates back to Gabriel García Márquez’s breakthrough novel *One Hundred Years of Solitude* (1967) “Magic realism” had been applied to

nearly every literary entity that involves the *mélange* of supernatural with real. The popularity of magic realism is indebted to the emergence of popular fiction mostly based on fantasy. The varied definition of magic realism as either postmodern surrealism or as a simple fantasy has further added to its vagueness as novels and fiction declared as proprietors of magic realism are not only realistic but fantastic at the same time. However, Maria Bortolussi has provided an accurate definition of the best definitions of magic realism in her essay *Towards a Revised Theory of Magic Realism*. “[i]n all classical magic realist narratives of Latin America, there is a notorious lack of any such single cause of the magic or unifying logic underlying all the magical events” (Bortolussi, 2011) . Emphasizing that even though magic realism holds no rational logic but takes supernatural, paranormal, and even mystic as normal. Thus gothic or fantasy novels follow the pattern of universal logic as they work with familiar elements. Magic spells follow certain universal rules, the werewolves become monsters only on full moons, and the vampires suck the blood of the living. Undoubtedly, the fantasy novels are set in a different world enabling the readers to live in willing disbelief, but the readers are conditioned to suspend this disbelief and create a unifying order in this disbelief. In magic realism no unifying order but multiple things occur simultaneously, in fact, there is no magic and even no realism as per the precise characterization of realism as a result they are even termed the postmodern absurd

In the contemporary globalized era, there is but little room for marginalized writers only if they subscribe to and reassert the notion of *the Other*. The celebrated canonical authors such as Rudyard Kipling set the trend of otherization of the colonized culture by presenting that culture as exotic and estrange and non-orient culture as the best, systematized and refined, and is still seen and portrayed through the same lens. That is the reason despite the popularity of magic realism, it has not been established as a genre because it is often written by the marginalized. The technique of magic realism is used by writers who are outside the dominant course and for that matter, most of them are diaspora writers. This perhaps is the reason why the best explanation of

magic realism is provided by Salman Rushdie, an Indian writer, who considers that magic realism deals with “half-made societies, in which the impossibly old struggles against the appallingly new” (Rushdie, 1981-91, pp. 301-302). The precise explanation of magic realism is possibly provided by the postcolonial diaspora writers to fill in the gaps of the cultural riddle created by the

West. As defined by Charles E. Bressler, post-colonialism “investigates what happens when two cultures clash and one of them, with its accompanying ideology, empowers and deems itself superior to the other” (Bressler, march 2011, p. 318). Imparting that colonizing culture is a dominant culture that tries to impose its value upon the native culture through whatever medium available. Further analysis of post-colonialism reveals that post-colonialism and magic realism go hand in hand as expressed in his major work, *The Wretched of the Earth*, Fanon defines postcolonial writing as “a literature of combat, because it molds the national consciousness” (Fanon, 1961, p. 1442) . The dilemma of postcolonial writers is their constant engagement in a battle against the dominant culture to get their culture recognized and that is possible only if according to Fanon, original or to be precise, the original cultural traits are to be focused on because these are “together the various indispensable elements necessary for the creation of a culture” (pp. Ibid 1444-45) . This amalgamation of new and old cultures has resulted in the creation of a culture that undoubtedly has changed the original culture. Owing to globalization and colonization, Western values, norms, and trends are still dominant while the Eastern subordinate culture has been subjected to the gaze of othering and has accepted itself as other. This stamp of othering has given them the license to write from the margin of the literary canon.

The postcolonial writers in general and diaspora writers in particular though Lau and Huggan have taken into task the repetitive and aggressive formula adopted by South Asian origin authors in their deliberate attempt to exoticize the orient culture for market gain through the systematic network. They seemed to have embraced the guidelines of the Western publisher who assigned the indigenous writer to focus on the targeted representation of the culture. Lisa Lau and Anna Cristina Mendes, in their collaborated effort *Re Orientalism and*

South Asian Identity Politics: The Oriental Other within (2011), have coined the notion of orientalism owing to (Lisa,, 2011, p. 13). Whereas Graham Huggan (1994) in his work *Postcolonial Exotic* is of the view that as a result of mutual negotiation between the publisher and the postcolonial writer, the difference is deemed to be celebrated as it is the most consumed commodity of the market because according to him “exotic” literary products have been cherished in late-twentieth-century Western multicultural contexts for their convenient “levelling out of different histories, and [their] aestheticized celebration of diversity that disguises the lack of socio-historical change” (Huggan, 2001, p. 117) . Thus the post-colonial writers deliberately contribute to the “global commodification of cultural difference”, and become part and parcel, unwittingly, of course of a “booming alterity industry” (Huggan, 2001, p. 344). From the above discussion, it can be safely concluded that the addition of magic realism in the postcolonial work is not only to authenticate a native orient culture but at the same time it is added to exoticize a culture too to assert the notion of othering.

Literature Review

The literature by the South Asian writers has been loaded with magic realism, the historical evidence reveals that as India had been a predominantly an agricultural country its older narrative forms such as Puranas have successfully interwoven ordinary with extraordinary, reality versus the mythological and even the religious myths in their work and thus successfully exploiting the narrative as well as the supernatural elements of mythological and the supernatural. Salman Rushdie’s *Midnight’s Children* (1981) is widely regarded as one of the finest and perhaps the first acclaimed text adopting the element of magic realism followed by Rushdie’s *The Satanic Verses*, *The Moor’s Last Sigh*, and *The Enchantress of Florence*, Shashi Tharoor’s *The Great Indian Novel*, Manoj Das’ *The Tiger at Twilight*, Mahasweta Devi’s long short story, *Pterodactyl*, Puran Sahay, o *Pirtha*, Amitav Ghosh’s *The Calcutta Chromosome*, Vinod Kumar Shukla’s *Dewar Me Ek Khirki Rehti Thi* (A Window Lived in a Wall), Kiran Nagarkar’s *Cuckold*, Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni’s *The Mistress of Spices* and *The Forest of Enchantment*, Anosh Irani’s *The Cripple and His Talisman*, Manil Suri’s *The Death of*

Vishnu, Raj Kamal Jha's *She Will Build Him a City* and Shubhangi Swarup's *Latitudes of Longing*.

These very well acclaimed works of Indian writers have successfully used allegory, magic, symbol, or metafiction, making their works aesthetically the finest but at the same time as Anjaria adds, "writers, have engaged politically with the pressing issues of the period and broken open the nationalistic hegemonies of meaning and discourse that clouded critical judgment" (Ulka Anjaria, 2012), p. 12) At the same time, these novels are the best seller too owing to the greater numbers of copies sold, evident from the fact that all the best-sellers novels of India are novels containing the elements of magic realism

From Pakistan, another South Asian country, Salman Rushdie's *Shame* is one of the finest and most celebrated magical realist narrations about Pakistan. The novel is themed around the political turmoil that the country was going through because of democracy and dictatorship regime and the consequences of this are felt when its impact is felt in the domestic discourse. A similar notion is portrayed in Mohammad Hanif's *A Case of Exploding Mangoes*, a political novel about the dictator regime of Zia ul Haq, This political novel has been embedded with black comedy, irony, and surrealism. The regular twist and turns in the plot and subplot further add the charm. Hanif's investigation report shows that Zia died because the crates of mangoes hoarded for him as a delicacy exploded because they contained dynamite. Hanif twisted this tale by adding that a crow hit the plane who had heard of the curse of the blind woman Zainab who had been gang raped, yet sentenced to death, follows as "May worms eat the innards of the person who is taking me away from my home. May his children not see his face in death" (Hanif, 2008, p. 214) Hanif has interwoven this magic tale and has created the surrealism in the text which according to Sourit Bhattacharya is "Hanif weaves a tale of comic-magical-grotesque order" (Bhattacharya, 2020, p. 211). In Mohsin Hamid's *Exit West* the context of civil war versus religious war is practiced in an unnamed city resembling Lahore. Most novelists have embedded magical realism within the socio-political situation of Pakistan but Zulfikar Ghose has given another twist to his magic realist tale the issues are

more in general. In his celebrated text, he uses an unidentified unnamed city in Latin America dominated by exotic landscapes taking the reader on a magical journey. Even in his theme, he mixes, dreams and prophecies and distorts yet telling the Oedipus tale which can be taken as the birth of Pakistan are all real as well as bizarre. Other notable examples from Pakistan include Nadeem Aslam's *Maps for Lost Lovers*, Daniyal Mueenuddin's collection of stories *In Other Rooms, Other Wonders*, Suhayl Saadi's *Adam Zameenzad's Cyrus Cyrus*, and Sarim Baig's stories in the collection *Saints and Charlatans*.

The Anglophone Pakistani writers have not only incorporated Magic realism craftily while depicting the socio-political situation and condition of Pakistan but the general issues of feminism have been highlighted through it as Baig (2017), in her article *Realism Vs Magical Realism in Mohammad Hanif's Our Lady of Alice Bhatti*, has established a link between magic realism and feminism as she is of the view that how Hanif Bhatti has highlighted the concept of the feminist approach and the notion of empowerment of women which can be strengthened by retaining the ways and means of realism and magical realism. Baig takes magic realism "as an oxymoron because it proposes a binary opposition between reality and imagination. In a magical realist narrative, a fight between two oppositional frameworks happens, each moving in the direction of making a different sort of fictional world from the other" (Baig, 2017, p. 89). Hanif's works begin as a realist tale depicting the oppression of females in general and minorities in particular, but as the text proceeds the narration takes the turns of magic realism where the protagonist is unconventionally transformed into a saint as she saves an infant in a maternity ward. this notion is further strengthened by, Shaheen, Qamar, and Rehman who opine in *Magical Realism as a tool for women empowerment in our lady of Alice Bhatti by Muhammad Hanif* as a result. One can unhesitatingly trace out the trend of Latin American Magical Realism in this discourse of the novel" (Aamer Shaheen, 2014, p. 114).

As magic realism gives voice to indigenous domains such as myths, religious, cultural, or even folklorist tales, it is often asserted as the declaration of narrative

primitiveness but with the colonizer's language and Eurocentric centric gaze. This notion has been objected to by Michael Taussig who is of the view that the magic realistic tale it" is represented in accord with a long-standing tradition of folklore, the exotic, and indigenismo that in oscillating between the cute and the romantic is little more than the standard ruling class appropriation of what is held to be the sensual vitality of the common people and their fantasy life." (Taussig, 1987) . As a consequence, at the end only awe and wonder dominates. Taussig concerns are further substantiated by the notion of Roberto González Echevarría who openly iterates that " in regional novels the language of the narrator is about magic, but it is not magical." (Echevarría, 1990, p. 159)

Young Adult fantasy in the U.S. has recently seen several bestselling South Asian authors. Indian American authors like Roshani Chokshi, Aditi Khorana, Rati Mehrotra, and Shveta Thakrar have located their fiction particularly gothic fiction having a South Asianic secondary world, but is more archaic yet artistic than based on factual history, an improvisation linking them with the tradition of diasporic writers. The work of graphic novelist Nidhi Chanani is filled with settler nostalgia. Pakistani American author Sabaa Tahir writes dark, horrible fantasy set in an ancient Roman world. These writers have seamlessly twisted the tenets of magic realism with issues of young adults where the myths act as a major deriving force of their themes. Being Anglophonic writers in general, and diaspora writers in particular, this addition of magi realistic tales makes their work a saleable commodity the truth of which can be asserted from the account of McOndo who narrated the real-life tale of two Latin fiction writers whose work were rejected editors Alberto Fuguet a Sergio Gomez, for lacking magic realism in their works. Which asserts the viable imposition of magical realism as a new literary device by Spanish American, African, and South Asian writers

Theoretical Framework.

I have applied the notion of Wendy B. Faris taken from her seminal work *Ordinary Enchantments: Magical Realism and Remystification of Narrative*, Faris apart from defining magic realism emphasized that it is "the most important contemporary trend in international fiction." (Faris, 2004, p. 1) She further added

that it is a very important mode of expression because it has provided the literary ground where the marginal voices are integrated with the main voices to create masterpieces. This magic realistic technique has given room and space to marginal culture to be at par with the Western discourse which she has termed “radically modifies and replenishes the dominant mode of realism in the west, challenging its basis of representation from within” (p. Ibid 1) While defining magic realism Faris is of the view that “magical realism combines realism and the fantastic so that the marvelous seems to grow organically within the ordinary, blurring the distinction between them” (p. Ibid 2). In the quote before, Faris asserts that in the combination of realism and fantasy, the distinction between the two elements is a blur but it gives birth to so marvel which appears natural and ordinary because of the tactful utilization of the realistic narrative techniques with the magical element inside making it at par with the postmodernist work. while further adding, Faris believes that magic realism “also represents innovation and the re-emergence of submerged narrative traditions in metropolitan centers” (p. Ibid 2) Faris has highlighted five characteristics consisted in it, that is, *the irreducible elements, the phenomenal world, merging realms, the unsettling doubts, and disruptions of time, space and identity*. According to Faris, *the irreducible element*, which she derived from using the opinions of David Young and Keith Holliman, is “something we cannot explain according to the laws of the universe as they have been formulated in Western empirically based discourse, that is, according to ,logic, familiar knowledge or received belief” (Hollaman, 1984). Therefore, answering the question regarding the events and the character’s motive is somehow unexplainable. One such example could be the use of magic which is a non-realistic phenomenon but is taken realistically and is represented through clear and precise methods This depiction is “like a grain in the oyster of that realis Moving further she is of the view that the undeniable oddness disrupts the reader’s point of view which the reader tries to fill in through a new logic actively engaging him in a text.

Faris further asserts that the presence of *the irreducible element* in magic realist works highlights the issue which though can be searched outside the

literary context and eventually “irreducible magic frequently disrupts the ordinary logic of cause and effect” (p. Ibid 10). These two novels exhibit the second characteristic of Wendy Faris which she termed the existence of a phenomenon world which she described as “Realistic descriptions create a fictional world that resembles the one we live in, often by extensive use of detail” (p. Ibid 14). This phenomenon is paradoxically so realistic that it retards a fiction’s adaptation into fantasy and retains its reality. In this phenomenal world, the setting of the magical element is done by depicting the reality in the world and secondly by depicting reality based on history. These realities become the anchor for magic and prevent it to become a fantasy Faris named the third characteristic as *the unsettling doubts* which is a condition where the reader “hesitate between two contradictory understanding of events” (p. Ibid 17). Hesitation is either the reader is overpowered with the empirical logic or the magical logic as the hesitation in the western reader is due to the dominance of the empirical logic. Magical realist scenes are dreamlike though they are not and the choice rest upon the reader to co-opt them as a dream or forbid that co-optation (p. Ibid 17).

The next characteristic of magic realism is *merging realms*. In this characteristic, the reader can feel the closeness and the oneness of the two worlds. It often arises from uniting the traditional world with the modern world. Eventually merging the magical world with the material world the process of unification of these worlds magic realism exists as those two worlds, a magical *space of the in-between* or a *space of uncertainty*.

Finally, the last characteristic of magic realism according to Faris is the *disruption of time, space, and identity*. A concept that she has adopted from the theoretical paradigm of Fredric Jameson's notion of the abolition of time and space In depicting individual identity. Overall, five characteristics defining magic realism give a depiction of how the narrative structure of magic realism, as a narrative technique, unites magical elements and realist narrative technique inside itself. Through that five characteristics, it is also seen the relationship between the two such as the overlap between magic and reality that makes

doubts, the meeting between magic and real inside *in-between*, and the disruption caused by the interaction of magical elements toward the concepts of realism

The elements of magic realism are well evident in the two young adult fiction *The Devil's Kiss* by Sarwat Chaddha and *The Firefly in the Dark* by Shazaf Fatima Haider . Sarwat Chaddha is a British Pakistani origin writer who is a writer of both Middle grade (MG) and young adult (YA) besides writing for the Scholastic platform series (a selection of books for students, and parents for their children). His YA novels, *Devil's Kiss* (2009) and *Dark Goddess* (2010) were successfully published in various countries and received positive critical reviews. His list of novels include *Ash Mistry Chronicles* (2012, 2012, 2013) and *the Savage Fortress* (2012- 2013) which were published in the UK and USA whereas his fantasy trilogy *Shadow Magic* (2016), *Dream Magic*(2017), and *Burning Magic* (2018) were published with Disney-Hyperion under the pseudonym of Joshua Khan. He has recently written and the bestselling *City of the Plague God*,

Shazaf Fatima Haider is the author of *How It Happened* which is a satire on arranged marriages. Her second book, *A Firefly in the Dark* is the recipient of the Children's Peekaboo Prize in India and is being adapted for a television series. She is currently working on her third novel about marriage and divorce

The *Devil's kiss* by Sarwat Chaddha revolves around Billi Sangreal who is the youngest member of the Knight's Templar. She has been brought up unusually. Despite being a young girl who is barely fifteen, she spends her time in training as a young soldier, in an archaic fashion against the unholy, which her order is constantly at war with. The Templars apart from the fighter are the custodian of the ancient mirror of Solomon and one of the ancient enemies, The Angel Michael has resurfaced searching for the mirror to unleash the deadliest of the plague, the death of all firstborns of England by luring Billi and entrapping her in his fake love. The only way to safeguard from this catastrophe is to sacrifice the dearest person which Billi does. Similarly, the plot of *The Firefly in the Dark* is about a young girl Sharmeem who is forced to move to her grandmother's ancestral home after the serious accident of her father but things started taking an ugly turn when she came to know that her maternal ancestors have made a

strong pact with the supernatural which she has to adhere while befriending with juggnu, she can overcome the tragedy and rescue her entire family. The study intends to explore that the writers of young adult fiction have immaculately fused the elements of magic realism with the issues of young adults but with a twist and with an attempt to endorse cliché thereby making their aesthetic products, a commoditized object too.

Content Analysis

The very first element which Faris has described is the irreducible element which she has coined taking ideas from David Young and Keith Holliman, is “something we cannot explain according to the laws of the universe as they have been formulated in Western empirically based discourse, that is, according to logic, familiar knowledge or received belief” (p. Ibid 7). The irreducible factor gives a wider space to introduce the factors which are non-explainable giving the writer the margin to remain hush and silent and the at same the time a psychological room to digest and understand these elements. This element is evident in the selected texts. *The Devil's Kiss* begins with the protagonist going through an ordeal where Billi has to kill a ghul boy aged seven to eight years enjoying a swing late at night, but she is tempted by the innocence of the boy and does not want to harm him, but realizes her mistake only when felt the coldness of the body and nearly misses a fatal blow of that ghul before he is killed by her father Arthur. This is one of the first of the many incidences mentioned in the text where Billi and the other night Templar are hunting the ghuls who are spread across the city. The surprising thing about these killings is that they take place not in isolated deserted place but mostly in public places like hospitals, parks, and even in big towers located in the center of densely populated places. The irreducible factor is that before their cremation or deaths, the ghuls would utter a shriek that was so loud that the protagonists felt as if they are nearly deafened but that shriek was never heard by anybody except the Knight Templars. Similarly, when by accident the mirror of Solomon is opened and the entrapped souls are released temporarily, it creates havoc and jolt in the basement which is located in a compactly populated area, and yet no news

appears anywhere. With the unleashing of the deadliest plague, the death of the firstborn, the ghuls kept on devouring the children but not a single piece of news is stated in the outside sources or the media. The final battle between the holy and unholy takes place in the middle of London and yet it goes unnoticed. The novel runs around the concern and issues of Billi, who is a young adult and wants to enjoy the normal routine life of partying, shopping, and roaming about in the street with boyfriends, her quest for identity and finally leading a life on her terms. she has added the elements of magic realism but with a twist and turn

Shazaf Fatima Haider's *The Firefly in the Dark* again follows the same pattern a teenage girl learns that she is from a family who possesses magic from the matrilineal lineage and that she had to protect her family and especially her father from the clutches of the demon who is parasitically living and nourishing in her father. The main plot is superadded with lots of ancient, mythical and religious tales or narration. The overarching tale is about a lone traveller and his marriage with a jinnee, resulting in the birth of a child called Amluq, followed by another tale of Jinn, the companion of sharmeen, his guardian and protector, his mischievous past and finally his repentance. The last tale in this selection is that of a married girl Nainatara who faced domestic violence and eventually found solace and peace in the company of a jinn.

The magic realism in these novels is created by adding myths and tales about jinns who have been given various names such as *ghuls*, *amluqs*, or *labartu*, All South Asian mythical mythological creation but with a holy connotation. As per Arabic mythology. "Ghuls are the female vampire demons that eat the flesh of the dead if it cannot find an easy meal in the graveyard, its shape shifts into a beautiful woman to trick the male travelers" (66). Jinns or the types of jinn have holy significance as they were being preached by Prophet Mohammad. The addition of types of jinn serves a dual purpose it provides a magical realistic dimension to the texts but through this fantasy, the ideology of the superiority of the East over the west is circulated. For Claire Chamber and Sue Chaplin (2005) there has been a paradigmatic shift in the portrayal of vampires as they are no longer being portrayed as evil or bloodsuckers, malicious beings in *Buffy the*

Vampire Slayer (1997), *True Blood* (2008), *Being Human* (2013) but more like as a victimized being or rather “as ‘an unwilling victim of circumstances and a complex mix of rage, retaliation and redemption” (M. Williams 33). The most popular of these Vampire Series *the Twilight Saga* (2008-2012), has portrayed the protagonist Edward Cullen as an epitome of an ideal hero. Chadda has described ghuls

you need to choose to surrender your soul to become a ghul....you must offer your soul willingly to someone capable of consuming it, an Ethereal' usually a devil, it then passes some of its essences into the now a soulless body, it is not an easy transfer it takes a lot out of the ethereal. Even a single trade can weaken one for years. (85).

Asserting that ghuls have adhered to this trait as per their own choice. Chadda cashes the ideology of the ghuls as the demonic vampire and more precisely the oriental Vampire. Billi is the ghuls slayer and not the Vampire Slayer. The same notion echoes in *The Firefly in the Dark*, where the jinnerie , the amluq and the labartu are all oriental demons, even the jugnu before assuming the role of a guide possessed all the attributes of demonic yet exotic oriental jinns who are jinns as per their own choice, seductive molester and revenge taking demon and not the romanticized one like Edward Cullen, they all synonymize phantasm, but the orient phantasm to creates the element of estrangement by drawing the attention of the readers and at the same time to dispense the ideology of othering. the ideology of othering is dispensed very effectively.

Chadda and Haider join the league of writers as Lord Byron in his poem *The Giour*(1813), Edgar Allan Poe *The Bells* (1848),Neil Gaiman *The Graveyard Book* have mentioned jinns as demonic ugly creature to be assassinated .The use of jinn and its type assert Zizek's who highlighted that that specific myths or fantasies then a “specific twist, a particular content which is promulgated as ‘typical’ of the universal notion, is the element of fantasy, of the phantasmatic background/support of the universal ideological notion” (Zizek 29).

It is evident in both the texts that the mysterious and incomprehensible things have been narrated in a very ordinary way and have been fused seamlessly in the main narrative. Despite being set in the modern contemporary setting; the writers have interwoven a magical tale in the contemporary time zone in a seamless manner. The modern London is under the attack of ghuls and demons, the archangel Michael has descended down from heaven to protect his allies demons and ghuls and to rescue them from the mirror where they have been entrapped since king Solomon time. The presence of the ancient sacred relic in an ordinary house protected by Elaine an ordinary elderly, Jewish lady having no magical or mystical power is yet another surprising event. Last but not the least the final ordeal of human versus evil, where a handpick of human fight against the army of evil ghuls and defeat them. Billi, the protagonist's combat with the archangel Michael and her victory over him. The interesting thing is that all these events occur in the present-day London. This fusion of a mythical world and its creation alongside the present world with its creation and advancement creates what Faris has termed as irreducible element in a similar fashion. Similarly, in *The Firefly in the Dark*, Shazaf Fatima has shown a well-to-do family having all the modern facility of life, living in one of the main areas of the Lahore. Yet they are under the attack of the ancient lambartu, thriving upon the soul of the living, who can only be killed with the help of an Amluq living in a timeless zone. The ancient myth of a pact of comradeship made between the jinn and the human to protect each other against the evils, the protagonist's friendship with a jinn having the ability to change form and shape, the protagonist's journey upon a giant eagle standing just outside her house without being noticed by anyone to the seven skies to seek the help of Amluq, her tiresome battle with the demon amidst the shouts, cries, woes, and whirlwind is but unheard by anyone in the vicinity where she lives. there is magic and chants and sermons but there are drips and oxygen cylinders and ECG machines all are but to create the element of irreducible.

According to Wendy Faris, this odd combination of reality with unrealism is a method that constantly engages a reader in the text. The process of empirical

logic and the technique of magical realism leads to the process of disruption and forces the reader the connection with the previous logic and eventually leads to the postmodern phenomenon of writerly text which she emphasized as “ writerly texts, texts co-created by their readers (pp. Ibid 9-10) and in the forthcoming lines she reiterates that “irreducible magic frequently disrupts the ordinary logic of cause and effect” (pp. Ibid 9-10) . this irreducible elemnt exist with a purpose and intention and that is to create the notion of other and the assertion of Binaries between the East and the West.

The second characteristic of magic realism is the realistic side that Faris calls *the phenomenal world* which she describes as “Realistic descriptions create a fictional world that resembles the one we live in, often by extensive use of detail” (p. Ibid 14) while further elaborating this notion, she is of the view that this phenomenal world is created by using mysterious elements that echo throughout the novel. To differentiate from fantasy, Faris states that this phenomenal world that creates the magic realism is based on two aspects, firstly it is based on reality and secondly, that reality has its origin in history. This phenomenon is vividly visible in both novels. In *The Devil’s Kiss*, the mythical history of Solomon’s relic and entrapment of the evil forces in the magical mirror is echoed throughout the novel as narrated by Elaine as, “ It was King Solomon that defeated them .Given perfect wisdom by God, only he was strong to trap grigorI---In the Cursed Mirror,---And that’s where they are, to this day. All of them that is , but one” (Karim, 2009, p. 56) . The historical event does not end in history but its impact in the real world is echoed. The same evil forces are mistakenly released in the contemporary world, due to which there is widespread of the deadliest plague, the death of the firstborn and the unleash of ghuls and demons led by arch-angel Michael himself thus a historical narration is reproduced realistically with demon’s battle with the human, the causalities and sacrifices of the human and the victory of human over the devil, in short everything of the past are spilled over the present. In *The Firefly in the Dark*, the historical narration of the creation of the jinn, the pact between jinn and humans coexist in harmony in this globe, the birth of Amluq as a result of the union

between human and Jinn, the existence of labartu, a deadliest evil thriving upon the life of both Jinns and the humans, is narrated in detail by Naani as “ A Labartu, a fire demons that lives on the first breath of newborns. It sucks their life and is regenerated” (Haider, 2018, p. 7) . It is not merely an ancient tale, the lambartu finding an existence in this contemporary world through the Bunyan tree, the breaking of the secret pact between humans and jinns because of the murder of the crow in this very world, the transportation of Amluq from the seventh sky to Sharmeen’s house and tiresome combat between Lambartu and the protagonist occurring in this world is bringing the history in the contemporary world. The oscillation between the two worlds makes these two stories not a product of fantasy and imagination but of magic realism.

The two novels also possess the other characteristic of magic realism as indicated by Faris and that is *the unsettling doubts* which is “hesitate between two contradictory understanding of events” before categorizing the irreducible element as irreducible (p. Ibid 17) . The hesitation is directly proportional to the cultural background of the readers and for the western readers these unsettling doubts endorse their notion of superiority of the West over the East. The hesitation creates a dream-like atmosphere or the impact of hallucination because magical realist scenes may seem dreamlike, but they are not dreams, and the text may both tempt us to co-opt them by categorizing them as dreams and forbid that co-optation (p. Ibid 17) But at the same time they cater the mind of the Western reader to assert that East is different and exotic and yet at the same time West is superior over the East which is also achieved by this *merging realms*. In merging realms there is union of magical world with the material world and the reader can feel the association with both of them. In *The Devil’s Kiss* despite being a narrative of the Templars, (the *knights of a spiritual military order established in the early 12th century in Jerusalem for the protection of pilgrims against the unholy*) fighting against the ghuls, werewolves and the vampires in a traditional combat style using swords and spears. Yet this battle takes place in the hospitals and parks and the final battle takes place with the use of cars and trucks and modern machinery, the injured and wounded are provided with the modern and the

latest medical equipment all indicating the contemporary material world. The writers have chosen a typical Eastern evil, the ghuls, who have to be killed by the Arthurian sword that too by a staunch Christian. The Archangel can only be killed by applying the Christian belief of self-sacrifice. It is one of the fundamental concepts of self-sacrifice is one of the fundamental concepts of Christian faith where they believe that self-sacrifice is the idea of associating and joining your sacrifices and suffering to that of Christ. They take this idea from the Bible which states "Whoever wants to be first must be your slave – just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (pp. Matthew 20: 27-28). Satisfying the Western superiority. In *The Firefly in The Dark*, the technique of exotic is used by the writer. She has interwoven mythical tale where a lonely traveller named Samarkand went on a voyage and at night took a shelter under a tree which was supposedly the dwelling place of a Jinnerie. She was attracted by the innocence of him, appeared before her as "same(beautiful) woman, naked and trembling before him" (Haider, 2018, p. 7). She tempted him love her which he did. The tale is exotic at the same time it endorses the stereotype cliché associated with East, where the males are lecherous, interested in sex, and from wherever they get, the land is exotic, the tales and narration are illogical and nonsensical from a metafictional perspective, if fiction is exhausted in this world, then perhaps these texts create another contiguous one into which it spills over, so that it continues life beyond the grave, so to speak (p. Ibid 20).

The recurring idea going in the texts is the creation of the biospheres where there exists an intermediate space of uncertainty or unrealism. It is no more a real or a metafictional world but the world of merging or the unification of two worlds and the logical reality is not a matter

The fictions also prescribe another characteristic of magic realism which Faris termed as *disruption of time, space, and identity*. Quoting one of the fundamental arguments of Jameson "the emergence of a new space and a new temporality" (Jameson, p. 708) because for Jameson realism's spatial homogeneity eradicates the traditional systems of sacred space. Similarly the new time and

even the space substitute “older forms of ritual, sacred, or cyclical time.” (p. Ibid 708).

The ancient gothic or horror had either religious and sacred attachment or historical accounts but according to Faris these sacred spaces are not watertight; they leak their magical narrative waters over the rest of the texts and the worlds they describe, just as that exterior reality permeates them (Faris, p. 24). The temporal space and time add multiplicity to the character and “the multi-vocal nature of the narratives and the cultural hybridity that characterize magical realism extends to its characters, which tend toward a radical multiplicity” (Faris, p. 25). These multi-vocal transforms the individual and provides it with the identity which is its true identity

Overall, five characteristics defining magic realism give a depiction of how the narrative structure of magic realism, as a narrative technique, unites magical elements and realist narrative technique inside itself. Through that five characteristics, it is also seen the relationship between the two such as the overlap between magic and reality that makes *doubts*, the meeting between magic and real inside *in-between*, and the disruption caused by the interaction of magical elements toward the concepts of realism

Conclusion

The contemporary popular fiction writers have presented the Asian/ mythical tales by adding the element of magic realism very artistically. But it appears that these tales adorned with magic realism have not been presented as “a battle between two oppositional systems takes place, each working toward the creation of a different kind of fictional world from the other. Since the ground rules of these two worlds are incompatible, neither one can fully come into being, and each remains suspended, locked in a continuous dialectic with the ‘other,’ a situation which creates disjunction within each of the separate discursive systems, rending them with gaps, absences, and silences.” (Selmon, 1995) Nor has it been dealt in a manner to reconcile the past with the present and to find solace and to relive in the stories and myths as the postcolonial writers have been censured of. The motive appears to be only one and that is to create an element

of estrangement which according to Marcuse , a cultural theorist is “The things of everyday life which are lifted out of the realm of the self-evident...” (Brecht 76). Once a product becomes estranged it gains the status of a saleable commodity. In the contemporary globalised era the commodification and standardization goes hand in hand. The use of magic realism is simply to add the element of phantasm. This according to Zizek is is “specific twist, a particular content which is promulgated as ‘typical’ of the universal notion, is the element of fantasy, of the phantasmic background/support of the universal ideological notion” (Zizek 29). While arguing further, Zizek asserted that every entity of literature tends to have an “authentic particular content as well as its distortion with relation to exploitation and domination” (29). It is the distorted version which act as stand-in to serve as a battle ground for the ideological hegemony, the universal gets its concrete form and particular content act as the stand-in and as contingent, which is precisely resultant of the political tussle of the ideological hegemony. The distorted image has to have the element of phantasm to make it estranged and yet to produce the concrete universalism. The addition of magic realism is simply to act as a stand in to assert the postcolonial ideology of othering and that too by adopting the postcolonial mimicry to make it compatible in the market. The best mode is ethnicization of nationals which is more profusely consumed in the market.

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