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Literary Research Paper

CRITIQUING THE NATURE OF MAGIC REALISM IN LAURA ESQUIVEL'S *LIKE WATER FOR CHOCOLATE*

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Abstract

This qualitative study critiques magic realism in *Like Water for Chocolate* of Latin American novelist Laura Esquivel. The magic realistic images and events have been found closely relating to the Mexican socio-political context in the novel. The novel's major themes consist of power of passion and desire of struggle for liberty. Magic realist exaggerations have been found with the points of love and memories manifested through the power of food. The study used content and document analysis approaches for data collection and analyses. All data have been logically interpreted. The text was the primary source, and all books, articles, and websites used in the research have been considered secondary sources of information. The study investigated the nature, motives, and characteristics of Esquivel's magic realist images, events, and actions in the novel.

Keywords: Magic realistic images, Mexican socio-political context, struggle for liberty

1. Introduction

The novel *Like Water for Chocolate* has twelve chapters representing all the months in a year. Each chapter presents a recipe for food. The narrative starts with an explanation of the preparation of the specific recipe for telling the tales of matriarchal puritan authority over children's life and love, complicacies of love triangle, frustrated love, filled with obstacles of family tradition, strange, magical and fairy-tale situations through a series of events ending up with the forbidden lovers Pedro and Tita making love in the tunnel leading them to the after-world where most the family spirits arrive and a fire from inside Tita burns everything out in the ranch leaving the recipe book Tita recorded her wisdom in. The study records the images and events created prepared with magic realistic effects and critically analyses different uses of magic realism in the novel. It also evaluates the techniques, nature and overall style of the author in her use and application of magic realism in *Like Water for Chocolate.*

2. Magic Realism: Origin and Characteristics

Magic realism is a literary style that claimed popularity worldwide in no time, mainly having been related to Latin American literature during and after the Boom. Franz Roh was the first to use Magical Realism as the title for his book in 1825 'to refer to paintings reflecting an alternate reality' (Bowers, 2004). Roh used his concept of magic realism in explaining and criticizing the style of the new post-expressionist paintings and defined- "Magical Realism is the procedure of realizing from the

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inside out to unravel the mystery that hides and throbs in the world" (Bowers, 2004). However, the general understanding of magic realism is that it is a form of writing in which the writer blends the 'magical' with the 'real', combining the natural with the supernatural and exaggerating ordinary elements with extraordinary fantastic effects to produce a magic realistic representation using a variety of artistic techniques (Zamora and Wendy, 1995). The common characteristics of magic realism include fantasy, absurdity, magical elements, and effects that the characters feel normal, but it is felt para-normal and unexplained to readers. Myths, legends, saga, customs, beliefs, and superstitions are used as common techniques and tools of exaggeration (Cooper, 1998). Also, magic realism involves history, politics, exploitation, deprivation, torture, death, revolt, revolution, and everyday affairs, e.g., food, eating, bathing, cooking, etc. Characters die, their spirits return, and they communicate with living people in such literary style, having no line between the real and the unreal.

3. Problem Statement

The novel, *Like Water for Chocolate*, narrates the life events of Tita De La Garza, who loved Pedro Muzquiz. But, traditionally forbidden to marry, Tita had to surrender all her emotions and desires and was enslaved by her mother Mama's tyrannical system. Tyrant Mama made Pedro marry Tita's oldest sister Rosaura. However, in a state of trauma, Tita had to be in an asylum. She decided never to return to the farmstead but was compelled to return and serve Mama, who continued depriving, exploiting and destroying her until she died. Tita agreed to marry John but Pedro's living on the ranch facilitated him to meet Tita, and Tita received him with her virginity. This triggered the return of Mama's ghost. At the ultimate development of their love, violent spirit of Mama came and threatened Tita to leave the ranch. At the extreme point of tyranny, Tita revolted with the ultimate spirit of identity and strength and declared liberty with potential fury and forces of words. Mama's spirit was driven out and Tita won liberty. Rosaura died, and now Pedro and Tita joined in their long-cherished love, ignited with power of emotion and fire of attractions. They launched their journey of love and continued traveling into eternity.

Magic realism filled every chapter of the novel, *Like Water for Chocolate* from Tita's entry (birth) into the world until her departure to the after-world. Thus, the story starts with the magical event and ends with Tita and Pedro's journey to the after-world in a super-magical atmosphere. Therefore, the novel has been crafted through different magic realist events, images, manifestations, and effects from the beginning to the end. But research works on Esquivel's *Like Water for Chocolate* have been found too scanty to provide information about Esquivel's magic realist style, motives, goals, characteristics, and elements of her overall magic realist images and style reflected in the novel. Few works on the novel could be found in Latin America, and hardly any research *was* conducted in South Asian countries, including India or Bangladesh.

The study, therefore, endeavors to investigate how Esquivel has created effects in producing magic realistic representation; to what extent she has added magic realist tools, e.g., myths, legends, saga, customs, beliefs, superstitions for exaggeration and to what extent does she blend reality with magical reality. The study, further, attempts to know whether the author has borrowed themes and ideas from her nation's history, politics, and cultural contexts. Thus, the study critically and analytically discusses the nature, types, motives and style that Esquivel has used in embedding magic realism in the novel.

4. Objectives

The general objective of the research is to discuss, analyse and explain the nature, types, effects, and style of applying magic realism in the '*Like Water for Chocolate*' by Esquivel. The study has two specific objectives:

(a) to focus on the emergence and essential characteristics of magical realism and
(b) to identify and analytically explain the construction, motives, effectiveness, and nature of magical realism in Esquivel's novel.

5. Rationale

The study is significant for having intentions and inspiration to generate knowledge of Latin American author Laura Esquivel's style of forming and applying magic realism in *Like Water for Chocolate* which would help expand the understanding of Latin American literature. The analyses, interpretation, and description of the constructions of magical events, effects, and images in the novel would create new insights about nature, functions, and power of Esquivel's magic realism. Moreover, there could be hardly any research work found in Bangladesh on Esquivel's magic realism, which showed the field as a less explored ground, and it was the primary justification of the study.

6. Literature Review

According to Brooks (2014), Laura Esquivel's works have been empowered with magical realism in which the character's tears could send the wedding guests through grief and agonies. Tita became so aflame with the passion that she could set fire to the shower and said, "Tita was literally 'like water for chocolate', she was on the verge of boiling over" (blogspot.com). Brooks added that food remained at the heart of the novel's contents, including the specific recipe, preparation, and food consumption processes which were magically linked to Tita's sensuality as well. But he did not mention the essential characteristics, capabilities, and innovative quality. The present study, so, had to observe the structural patterns of the food and recipes (as innovative, effective, and exaggerated in food-based imageries). The study explored the imageries in the novel and explain their structure and inner meaning.

According to Crown (2017) *Like Water for Chocolate* presents magic realism mainly through suppressed love of Tita and Pedro, ruled by an oppressive mother. He considered that Esquivel's style of applying magic realism highly suited to the magic realist genre. To some extent, a classic fairy-tale like Cinderella and her magical effects allowed the expression of the real. The study, therefore, had to see how Esquivel managed realistic grounding to the production of effects, imageries, atmospheres, and themes of her magic realism.

Salts (1995) made a controversy that the character of Tita embodies a powerful woman with supernatural qualities. The study was inquisitive to know whether she was a supernatural or magic realist character since magic realism adds supernatural elements to reality but does not become supernatural. Thus, the study explored what alchemy Tita conveyed to the dishes that influenced the marriage guests to feel sad and shocked while eating them.

Flores (1995) further found Esquivel's revolutionary theme always in the background of the story revealing pains and sufferings of the freedom lovers involved in the war against the antagonism of the traditional system of dictatorship (Flores, 1995). So, the study inquired whether Esquivel had employed magic realism by keeping reality implicit through exposing magical effects explicitly.

Guenther (1995) stated that Gertrudis and politics had been characteristically associated with the revolutionaries for escaping tyranny and oppression relating sexuality and politicization. So, the study had to critically evaluate Gertrudis' character as a rebel against the patriarchal system and patriarchal power structure of society. Duke (2011) found resemblances between Tita and Gertrudis and differences between Rosaura and Tita, stating that the Mama-Rosara relationship lacked affinity. So, the study analysed these relationships to reach a point of view regarding their domesticity, superficiality, and affinity.

Elezabeth (2010) marked that Esquivel emphasized the food metaphor in creating magic realist events, actions, and images. The researcher felt it required to know how the food metaphors were applied and what techniques and goals created such events. Elezabeth (2010) also found Mama's extraordinary physical and emotional forces to rule the ranch. So, the study was keen to know whether she had contact with herself, female nature.

Duke (2011) pointed that Rosaura was ever ready to accept and obey the rules of Mama. So, whether she was a conformist, and if so, to what extent of conformity she supported to establish had to be found out. The researcher was curious to see if Mama was a dictator like the government and Rosaura the obedient tool like military forces to suppress the revolutionaries. Duke further (2011)

commented that Esquivel's domesticity was more visible and realistic than their magical revelations and so, the researcher tried to enlist the realistic units of everyday life used for magical revelations throughout the text to form magic realism in the novel. The above discussion revealed a good amount of research gaps that the study attempted to fill with new knowledge and findings.

7. Methodology

The study is qualitative using interpretative (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005), exploitative, descriptive, and explanatory methodology (Casula, Rangarajan & Shields, 2020). A multi-method in nature, the qualitative method accommodates several first-hand experiential materials (Silverman, 2013) and methods (Silverman, 2005; Flick, 2007). It explores both the objective nature and subjective interpretations of individual attitude, behavior, impulses, and reaction to the phenomenon, events or situations (McIntyre, 2005:127; Creswell, 2009; Goodwin & Horowitz 2002:35–36). Following these imperatives, this research primarily uses text and content analysis approaches for data collection and interpretation. Exhaustive descriptions followed by critical discussion in light of the existing principles or theories of magical realism have been used for this methodology (Persaud, 2010; Galvan, 2013). Secondary data were used from articles and reviews of the novel and author's life. All data were logically interpreted. Books, articles, and websites used in the research were the secondary sources of information.

8. Discussion and Analysis

Tita's magical birth implied further uses of magic-realism in the forthcoming events and episodes of the novel. Tita had a super-sensitive conscious of perceiving the world around with extreme sensitivity at her prenatal stage: "When she was still in my great-grandmother's belly, her sobs were so loud that even Nacha, the cook, who was half-deaf, could hear them easily" (Esquivel, 1995: 5). The use of magical effects through images of smell and sound was simply abrupt. Readers feel instantly strange and refreshing due to experiencing paranormal occurrences to their least expectations. The kitchen table of the ranch was where Tita was born. She was ushered into the world through a great tide of tears. Her entry into the world was unbelievable, stressing magic realist effects. After her birth, the flood of tears dried up, leaving around ten pounds of salt to be collected. The salt was supposed to be used for cooking. The attitude of the family members through which they received the strange occurrence of Tita's birth helped establish the magic realistic occurrence as a natural thing. The words in the story e.g., "great tide of tears" denoted magical element and separated the incident from reality.

The second chapter of the novel named February, depicts Tita overwhelmed with grief and mourning due to the marriage between her sister, Rosaura's and her love Pedro. Everyone present in the party was touched by the sudden turn of the lively environment into a grief-stricken one. All present felt and displayed the emotional state of wretchedness, hurt and longing for the couple, Tita and Pedro in love. The storyline continues to narrate the event as, "The moment they took their first bite, everyone was flooded with a great wave of longing" (Esqivel, p.39). The guests felt heavy pain and became sick and vomited. The vomiting was so hard that Rosaura was "swept away in a raging, rotting river for several yards" (p.39). Rosaura felt disgusted and vomited as profusely as an eruption of a volcano. Thus, Tita held control over food to advantage herself though not intentionally. It is not possible in reality, but Esquivel used magic realism as an effective tool to reveal Tita's intense longing and her wrath against Rosaura. She conveyed powerful messages through a comic effect of a lady in wedding garments being swept away by a sea of vomit, reflecting humour, contributing to lessening magical effects by adding realistic ingredients and thus made a good balance of 'magic' and 'reality'. Nacha tasted the cake to realize if the cake was salted with the tears of Tita but found the cake did not lose its flavour. Now Nasha began to reminisce the injury that she had from her loss of love that made her sick with so awful a pain that she could not continue to enjoy the wedding ceremony. Each of the guests, eating the wedding cake, had the same feeling of pining that had hit Nacha earlier. She was vomiting heavily as a result of her anguish. Thus, the wedding party ended up in a mess. It was not a coincidence that the real situations turned into magical reality when Pedo and Rosura were being

given reception. Coincidentally, Tita was suffering from melancholy and wretchedness for her ultimate loss.

Pedro, having married Rosaura, Tita's sister, had the chance to contact Tita. In consequence of the suppressed emotions of Tita, magic realist incidents associated with fantastical thoughts of the novelist started occurring after the marriage of Pedro and Rosaura. There were many places in *Like Water for Chocolate* in which the framework of magic realism was rigorously formed and used. When Mama Elena decided to marry Rosaura off to Pedro, Tita, being aware of this, had to stand on a 'nothing to say' situation for her mother's tyrannical authority. She was in an impossible confusion to see her own sister being married off to the same person she loved. She fell into a state of silence, keeping all her feelings locked into herself. Her confusing state was reflected through the image of a ghost in the posture of Rosaura- "When she looked at Rosaura, who was writing out some invitations, she saw only a snowy ghost" (Esquivel, 1995: 34). Tita's complete awareness of the reality of her pain was that Pedro and Rosaura had no chance to be in love but were getting united, which was opposite to her self and to her core emotion and warmth of love. Opposite to her condition, Rosaura, the bride was felt like a white snowy ghost to Tita because Tita could very well sense a severe coldness into the heart of Rosaura for Pedro and vice-versa. This created the uttermost confusion in Tita. Her being blinded by the 'white' color implied her inability to accept Pedro's marriage to her sister.

The next few scenes were blended with magical and realistic elements by Laura Esquivel: Gertrudis enjoyed the delicacy of a special sauce recipe with quail when Tita went to shower. She felt her "body was giving off so much heat that the wooden walls began to split and burst into flame" (Esquivel, 1995: 51). Esquivel significantly used the image of fire as the symbol of release of an intense and suppressed passion of her characters in the novel.

However, food was often used to change the characters' emotions and characterize their behavioural patterns. With this Esquivel made the prime example of how the Mexicans value food- the central element for themes in the Latin American culture. All through the novel, food plays the leading role. The title of the novel also reflects the implication of food. 'Like Water for Chocolate', a Mexican expression, stands for "the highest boiling point". In Mexican culture, water instead of milk is used to make chocolate. Generally, lumps of chocolate are melted in boiled water. The title metaphorically describes Tita's craving for sexual indulgence involving Pedro. Tita was 'like water for chocolate', as if she were "on the verge of boiling" (Esquivel, 1995: 152). Tita was used to conveying her dominant passions to others, especially, by cooking food. Likewise, food could heal as well. More essentially, cooking of food has always become an object to remind the relationship of Tita with Nacha, who acted as her substitute mother. Nacha gave her good advice, and Tita inherited all the recipes of foods from her. Tita had to cook the wedding food. And while cooking, she penetrated her emotions into the food. And the wedding guests, after eating the food, reacted in the manner she was struggling with. She conveyed a bizarre type of chemistry to her dishes to affect the guests being entertained with the foods. As soon as her sister Gertrudis tasted the sauce, she became soaked with pink. She was sweating; her sweat was coming out of her body, smelling rose. Three images, i.e., pink sweat (image of sight), rosy smell (image of smell), and evaporating water (image of touch), have simultaneously represented magic realist elements and helped the narrative express the situational feelings of the characters, especially the victim herself. Although very unlikely to occur in reality, the facts were narrated elaborately projecting such vivid images of magical elements in the character of Gartrudis that there occurred a suspension of disbelief. Pedro had provided the rose petals that were mixed up with the quail. Tita's strong feelings had slid into the quail, and her feelings for Pedro were echoed in the manner of Gertrudis.

Besides images of taste, sight, and smell, Esquivel created images of touch through using the 'water drops' of the shower, as media, falling on her body during the bath. Gertrudis rushed to wash as the meal was over. Still, she was physically erupting unbearable heat-producing drops of water, which was evaporating before they reached her, setting fire on the wooden walls of the bathroom.

Esquivel's style of prudently using magical elements was found in Chapter IV. Rosaura gave birth to her son, fell sick, and had no milk to breastfeed her son. The baby needed milk. Rosaura's sickness

allowed Tita to undertake a motherly role for the baby. The child was crying for hunger, and Tita attempted breastfeeding the infant though aware that she was still a virgin. But to her utter surprise, an impossible thing occurred –"She removed the boy from her breast: a thin stream of milk spayed out" (Esquivel, 1995: 70). It was indeed magical because it was impossible for anyone like Tita, who was unmarried but still performed it. However, Tita's deep shock for Pedro was very unhappy, and "the milk in her breasts had dried up overnight from the pain of her separation from her nephew" (Esquivel, 1995: 84). Her nephew's death magically reacted to her physique, which appeared to be marvellous.

Tita had a mental collapse while knowing that Rosaura's son had died from eating something. She was sent away from home to an asylum. Thus Tita escaped from her imprisonment of Mama and felt free but remained silent. Now she was- "seeing her hands no longer at her mother's command, she didn't know what to ask them to do; she had never decided for herself before… she would like them to carry her far away" (Esquivel, 1995: 99). These statements about Tita demonstrate that her going quiet was the consequence of her grief and shock and a result of a new personality turn of taking charge of herself by herself. The dominance of mother Mama upon her was so much that it made her long for flying away somewhere. Tita decided never to return home. But Mama was sick in bed in chapter VII. Tita was forced to return home to take care of Mama. In this chapter, the novel has presented interesting use of magic realism. Once, due to the sickness of Chencha, Tita had to prepare an oxtail soup for her mother. Her mother, Mama tasted it and felt it severely bitter. She spat out the soup and angrily ordered her to take it away. Tita realized Mama's attitude and her inner feeling was portrayed magic realistically -"Inside she felt the effects of snuffing the flame: smoke was rising into her throat, tightening into a thick knot, clouding her eyes and making her cry" (Esquivel, 1995: 120). No sooner had she started to feel Mama's situation than the magical event occurred in her own body- she felt a burning sense inside her belching a smoke making a huge knot into her throat and both the fire and the smoke created a cloud in her eyes making her cry. With this, Esquivel portrayed the condition of women in Mexican society. The author used many culinary traditions seriously considered in the Mexican culture. Mexican women used to play significant roles in domestic life and had to possess the 'know how' of preparing food. They had to cook dishes in every single occasion customarily with all troubles. And Tita's condition could be compared to the farmers and indigenous people who the rulers had neglected during the Mexican Revolution. The rulers decided to ensure the rule of law through a land reform that grabbed the peasants' land – their only means of living. The rulers never cared for the people, as Rosaura and Mama didn't care for Tita. Gertrudis didn't care about the family tradition and got frantic for personal liberty, and she fled the family to join the revolution as many Mexican women did. Tita, compelled by tradition, was always fighting against Mama as the hard-working women struggled for freedom and rights during the Mexican revolution. Another day Chencha and Tita planned to befool Mama by offering Tita food. Mama felt it the same bitter- ". . . when Mama Elena was given some of it to eat, she immediately detected a bitter taste. Furious she threw the tray on the floor…" (Esquivel, 1995: 122). Mama felt it so for its originally being prepared by Tita. Thus, the magical effects were authenticated that more primarily it occurred between Mama and Tita. Most of the magic realistic incidents took place in domesticity using the domestic affairs, atmosphere and events.

Mama took a severe syrup and died of its reaction. Now her spirit began to come and dominate over Tita again. Mama's ghost appeared in chapter IX. Tita was making the King's Day Bread. Mama's ghost appeared as ". . . a strong gust of wind banged the kitchen door wide open, causing an icy blast to invade the room" (Esquivel, 1995: 157). Mama's ghost has been used to represent the inter-generational tradition of family roles. The return of Mama's ghost thus expressed a strong desire to ensure those roles compellingly by Tita. The visit by Mama's spirit and threatening Tita occurred for Tita's preference to making love with Pedro. Such a decision would affect the familial traditions which Tita was traditionally supposed to fulfill. When Tita-Pedro relationship saw a development through physical relation, Mama's spirit was furious. She came and ordered Tita to leave her house. Tita, this time, rose calm and firm, saying to the spirit- "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!" (Esquivel, 1995: 180). The strength of Tita's claim and statement frightened the ghost of Mama, which shrunk into a small shape of rotating light. Instantly, Tita felt a significant change in her body. Her swollen belly, due to pregnancy, was reduced and her breast pain lessened. "The inflammation in her belly and the pain in her breasts began to subside. The muscles at the centre of the body relaxed, loosening violent menstrual flow" (Esquivel, 1995: 180). The magic realist effects have thus demonstrated the crucial relationship between Tita and Pedro and Tita's being pregnant secretly. The abortion was a magical reward that transformed Tita into the real, providing her with emotion to control her body. The rotating shape of light changed into a tiny fireball and finally burst through the window, which fell onto the yard outside and made an oil lamp blast near Pedro, setting fire to his body. Thus, Tita's spirit became free after her long struggle had completed. The last chapter described- "The floor was shaking, the lights blinked off and on… Receiving no answer, he opened the door: there he found Rosaura, her lips were purple, body deflated, eyes wild, with a distant look, singing out her last flatulent breath" (Esquivel, 1995: 210). These described Rosaura's death with realistic magic effects.

The next feature of Esquivel's magic realism is blending history with magical elements. Her characters have been living in magical atmospheres and traditions. The house and the kitchen's atmosphere, mingled with traditional thoughts and beliefs, suspended the disbelief of magical happenings blending fantasy with real-life situations. Esquivel has essentially been able to raise political points by invoking supernatural feelings or events within the thoughts of life. The characters have been set against the background of the Mexican Revolution during 1910-1917 when peasants, farmers, and natives banded together by political leaders like Pancho Villa, Emiliano Zapata, and so on to reject the dictatorship of old order for reviving democracy. They claimed that Mexico should be meant for every man and woman, a state good to man's everyday life. Esquivel has used the Mexican upheaval to reconnoitre underlying motifs of manliness as well as gender identity through probing the ways and means the individuals used to achieve the revolutionary goal of personal liberty.The Mexican Revolution was used as a unique feature of the novel as less of a theme than of a concept. The revolution is an implicit concept making life harder in the ranch. Mama's cruelty to Tita, Tita's hardships, and food represented individuals' feelings. The revolution meant changes, conflicts, and the rebels' struggle against the government. There have existed conflicts in the story accordingly.

Mama could be seen as a symbolic representation of old government executing old traditions and laws. Tita is the perfect example of the individual victims of tradition, failing to exercise free will and liberty to think, consider and choose. Tita, as young rebel, disagreed with Mama's rule all along, that caused troubles, anguish, wrath and demise on the estate resembling troubles of death and doom by the war which was going on in Mexico. Tita was compelled to reject her love and accept going against her will i.e. complying with tradition. The connection between Tita's liberty and people's liberty is that both had to be resolved through revolution. The main story and the events in the background, both, had to go through a certain period of change, and that is why this particular period of time, in the opinion of critics, was chosen for the story. Nacha appeared as the positive force for Tita in the form of wisdom and advice i.e. the revolutionary sense to change.

Unlike Tita and Gertrudis, Mama and Rosaura were portrayed as the 'superficiality of domesticity' as Ibsen (1995) claims. They were always worried about "decency" and "the proper way". Mama Elena and Rosaura have been found distant from femininity. Opposed to Tita, they couldn't cook or raise children. Rosaura did not have sex with Pedro until Pedro decided to. Rosaura was prone to continue family traditions, inheriting and practicing the system of forcing. She, like Mama, forced her own and only daughter to sacrifice her choice and emotions like Tita.

In every chapter of the novel, there are instances of supernatural or surreal occurrences amidst the realistic environment. The coincidence of magical events with real-life situations, e.g., "the phosphorescent plumes of fire forming when Tita and Pedro make love for the first time, and the chickens beginning to fight and erupting into a powerful tornado immediately after Tita and Rosaura argue about Pedro." The magic realist moments consistently occurred after anything significant

happened. Thus they have had temporal significance. Esquivel used them to indicate moments of importance. Esquivel used many of them in hyperbole, emphasizing powerful emotions that a character might be experiencing during the moment.

Tita succeeded in re-entering the glowing underpass to encounter Pedro in a supernatural world of spirits. "The final union of their bodies and spirits" set "fire to the entire ranch, and the only remnant left of their love was the recipe book in which Tita recorded her wisdom." The narrative ended with magical conclusion: "Little by little her vision began to brighten until the tunnel again appeared before her eyes. There at its entrance was the luminous figure of Pedro waiting for her. Tita did not hesitate. She let herself go to the encounter, and they wrapped each other in a long embrace; again, experiencing a romantic climax, they left together for the lost Eden. Never again would they be apart. At that moment, the fiery bodies of Pedro and Tita began to throw off glowing sparks. They set on fire the bedspread, which ignited the entire ranch. The animals had fled just in time to save themselves from the inferno! The darkroom was transformed into an erupting volcano" (245).

Esquivel's style of applying magic realism implies keeping the 'Real' implicitly as the undercurrent waves of the apparent story, which has been crafted with explicitly comprehensive images of the real in various forms of the 'magical,' i.e., imageries and sensuousness corresponding to the five sensory perceptions instantly felt by readers or spectators. Esquivel applied her food metaphors as media like a transformer, the instrument to transfer food's ideas, feelings, emotions, and impressions. In the novel, characters convey dismay, despair, pain, love, and affection using the most valuable media. Esquivel blended the ordinary and supernatural involving fantasy, metaphor, and symbolism. Her straightforward style of telling the tale of unrequited love and its casual involvement led the atmosphere to the magic realist tradition extraordinarily. Through an exploitative reading of the text and analysing different other critics, the researcher found that Esquivel has, most significantly, been able to make her political points for readers, audience, and viewers through magic realist imageries from within the domesticity, which made the magical revelation realistic, demonstrating life from the most ordinary everyday world. Her political points tend to reach our own homes because she considered the domestic space of the commoners in which we all live our daily life. By touching people's domestic space, she invited the common mass to empathize with her revolutionary characters and called the attention of the masses to the magical effects of her story. The ultimate goals of her magic realist imageries were to interfere and move the readers' minds.

9. Findings

Magical realism is the dominant feature of *Like Water for Chocolate* depicted through supernatural events and phenomena. Esquivel followed the purest form of magic realism after Borges. Esquivel's approach to magic realism is different from Borges or others. She integrated magical realism into everyday life, as though it were normal for one to encounter her magic deals with food, cake, soup, water, etc. Esquivel conveyed powerful messages through magical effects reflecting humour by adding realistic ingredients, thus making a good balance of 'magic' and 'reality'. The images have significantly been used as the symbol of her characters' intense and suppressed passion and sometimes as a release from suppression. Food, playing the leading role, has been used as a power to change characters' emotions and characterize their behavioural patterns. Vivid imageries of Esquivel's magical elements in domesticity have established the suspension of disbelief. An essential feature of Esquivel's magic realism is blending history, politics, and traditions, including blending the ordinary with fantasy and the supernatural. The Mexican revolution has remained as an implicit concept behind the magic realist imageries in *Like Water for Chocolate.* Esquivel applied food metaphors as media or transformers to convey food's ideas, feelings, emotions, and impressions, expressing dismay, despair, pain, love, and affection.

10. Conclusion

Esquivel excels in crafting magic realism with a candid style in creating magical realism with messages and transmitting them to her readers' worlds with a practical approach of blending real reality and unreal supernatural. She does it following her fashion of presentation of food, beverage,

and culinary traits and tricks as part of the Mexican culture. She shows mastery of one of the greatest fiction-makers in Latin American literature by blending gastronomy and the supernatural. When telling us the love story between its protagonists, Esquivel shows her great capacity of using fantastic, magical, unreal, and supernatural elements and makes her narrative feel real to real-life readers, mainly of Mexican bend of mind and imagination. True though, most of the episodes in the story are unreal; the tactic she projects them made the readers construct their world of fantasy and fun with a "willing suspension of disbelief," to coin a phrase from S.T Coleridge. The unreal in Esquivel's art shapes up as real; the supernatural deems to be natural; the unimaginable perceived imaginable. This is the fascinating part of Magical Realism, which Esquivel presents artistically in her novel to get away from the dull and monotonous reality into an alternate world of reality through a fusion of fun, fantasy in a fairy-tale frame to introduce colour, cosmetics, and craft to get away from monotony and frustration of routined life. Esquivel's magic realism consists primarily of symbolism and domesticity.

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