

Feminist space in magical realism: coexistence of magic and feminist tropes
in Joanne Harris' *Chocolat* and *The Lollipop Shoes*



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**Feminist space in magical realism: coexistence of magic and feminist tropes
in Joanne Harris' *Chocolat* and *The Lollipop Shoes***

**A Thesis submitted to
The Department of English and Humanities
Of
BRAC University
By
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**In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
For the Degree of
Bachelor of Arts in English
April 2019**

Declaration

It is hereby declared that,

1. The thesis submitted is my own original work while completing degree at Brac University.
2. The thesis does not contain material previously published or written by a third party, except where this is appropriately cited through full and accurate referencing.
3. The thesis does not contain material which has been accepted, or submitted, for any other degree or diploma at a university or other institution.
4. I have acknowledged all main sources of help.

Student's Full Name & Signature:

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Student ID

Approval

The thesis titled “Feminist space in magical realism: coexistence of magic and feminist notions in Joanne Harris’ *Chocolat* and the *Lollipop Shoes*” submitted by Jessica Islam of Spring’ 19, has been accepted as satisfactory in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Bachelor of Arts in English on 10th April 2019.

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Ethics Statement

All the rules and ethical issues have been considered before conducting this study.

Dedication

To my family, who have always been there for me through thick and thin.

Abstract

This thesis is an opportunity to explore the significance of magical realism beyond its conventions. Within the post-colonial perspective, the concept of magical realism may express feminist notions through the blend of magic and reality. Additionally, the term, 'magical feminism' as a sub genre of magical realism tends to develop this feminist discourse.

Therefore, this dissertation is a discussion on the depiction of magical realism aligned with feminist concepts in Joanne Harris' novels *Chocolat* and *The Lollipop Shoes*. Closely reading these novels from this *Chocolat* series, this paper further aims to unravel the eccentric blend of myth, magic, fantasy along with the themes of travelling and repression associated with feminist tropes.

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Author's Biography

Joanne Harris was born in Barnsley in 1964; she was a daughter from a French mother and an English father. She studied Modern and Mediaeval Languages at Cambridge. She was also a teacher for fifteen years. During the time, she published three novels, including *Chocolat* (1999), which was made into an Oscar-nominated film later starring Juliette Binoche. Since then, she has written fifteen more novels, two novellas, two collections of short stories, a *Dr Who* novella, guest episodes for the game *Zombies, Run*, the libretti for two short operas, several screenplays, a musical and three cookbooks.

Joanne Harris is a French author. Her books are printed in over fifty countries and have won variety of British and international awards. She is an unearned Fellow of St Catharine's faculty, Cambridge, also has unearned doctorates in literature from the schools of Sheffield and Huddersfield, and has been considered for the Whitbread Prize, the Orange Prize, the Desmond Elliott Prize and therefore the Royal Society of London for Improving Natural Knowledge Winton Prize for Science, similarly as for the Fragrance Foundation awards for fragrance and perfume journalism, for which she also received a present in 2017. Joanna Harries is an acclaimed modern English author who is thought to be somebody writing under mixed genres. She is recognized for her bestselling novel *Chocolat*, the book was additionally shortlisted for Whitbread Novel of the Year Award and has won many different awards. Her books cover a large varies of subjects during a single text, which makes it difficult to categorization her work. The key themes addressed in her written material represent the mother/child relationship, food having sheer emotional quality and magic and also horror hidden in ordinary things. For her extraordinary contribution to English literature, Joanne Harris has been awarded unearned

doctorates in literature, Scriptor Award and her book adaptation *Chocolat* was appointive for many BAFTA and Academy Award awards.

Introduction

Cold winter days, a cup of hot chocolate and some fascinating books on magic and fantastical elements often happens to be a part of one's amusement. As a student of Literature, this is a great opportunity where I get to explore particular areas in depth. The style of fiction that paints a world at once believable and unbelievable with a spice of extraordinary parts is termed magical realism, magical genre, or marvelous realism. Typically it is referred to as 'fabulism' in relation to the conventions of fables, story and allegory. The terms are largely 'informative' instead of 'critically rigorous.' Irene Guenther tackles the German heredity of the term, and also the way it is associated with literature. Magic realism is commonly related to postcolonial literature, notably authors like García Márquez, Miguel Angel Asturias, Jorge Luis Borges, Elena Garro, Juan Rulfo, Rómulo Gallegos, and Isabel Allende. In English literature, their chief proponents embrace Salman Rushdie, Alice Hoffman, and Nick Joaquin. This thesis will look at a French counterpart of this genre.

Magical realism can be seen as an art form in most places of the world; however this form and movement was spearheaded by Latin American authors. Just as the fantastical and magical elements are presented as normal, however, the usual construction of reality is put into question. Essentially, magical realism is a chance for authors to show an alternative to an established reality, which is often considered to be an incredible and powerful tool against political regimes. As more and more authors around the world took their cue from the authors of Latin America, the genre has become blended and conflated with other genres. Magical feminism, which happens to be a sub genre of magical realism, is explored through the novels of Joanne Harris.

Significantly, Pelayo notes that,

In magical realism the mythical elements of oral tradition are incorporated into an otherwise realistic fiction. The social and economic problems that Garcia Marquez disguises with a touch of magic realism are both past and present problems facing the individual and the community. If the reader fails to see through the disguise, it is because the narrative's emphasis is placed, not on the story, but rather on how the story is told. (20).

Moreover, the Latin American authors tend to describe magical realism as stories which are concerned in moving beyond reality or more than what is present in real life. One of the best examples can be Garcia Marquez's magic realist novel *One Hundred Years of Solitude* published in 1967.

To consider Harris' works, it is in her triumphant novel, *Chocolat* which gave a strong voice through Vianne for the repressed and burdened characters of society. She explores the conflict between faiths and the occult that additionally extended to the series of novels she published afterwards, named *The lollipop shoes and Peaches for Monsieur le Curé*. Specifically, she casts the representatives of religious faith in a negative light and they occult to be somewhat positive. Conversing about magic and faith, Harris states that, "Historically it's about the systematic suppression of indigenous beliefs by the early Christian Church." Thus, this dissertation will demonstrate Harris' elaboration of notions of feminism which will be shown to be aligned with the depiction of religion and magic, as oppressive and liberation forces, respectively.

This dissertation will be discussed in the following order and synopsis of each chapters are as mentioned; **chapter one** will demonstrate the way in which Harris uses the magic realist techniques to show the alignment of travel and the notion of feminist attribution. It will carry the discussion regarding the origins of the term ‘Magical feminism’ and its resulting emergence.

Magical feminism was a term initially employed in 1987 by Patricia Hart to explain the works of Isabel Allende. Further the recent essential works on the topic mark such students as Ricci-James Adams or Kimberley Ann Wells. The term ‘Magical Feminism’ refers to magical realism in a feminist discourse. Magical realism's crucial assumption is the coexistence and effective merging of fine contradictory worldviews, additionally a sort of a mix of the scientific and rational with the religion and magic. It contributes equal metaphysics standing to real figures and spirits, everyday occurrences and supernatural events. In its nature it is that the subversion of monolithic cultural, social and political structures. It is a thought to be the “natural” mode for the writers who are in between, particularly the postcolonial.

It is also the same from the post-colonial perspective that the magic and supernatural parts serve to interrupt reality giving voice to the ‘Other’, the oppressed groups. In the case of magical feminism, the role of the ‘Other’ is assumed by the women who are marginalized. Additionally, throughout this chapter, it will carry on with the discussion on Harris’ illustration of the character, Vianne, who drifts around the places of Europe together with her daughter Anouk, their traveling being the essential theme associated with the event of feminist conventions or tropes.

Chapter two will focus on the way in which Harris weaves travel and religion with patriarchy in depth. Taking aid from the texts, it will demonstrate the way religion can be traditionally seen as a patriarchal system, which is a system dominated by men. In patriarchy, men are considered as those who dominate both in sociological and literal terms. The chapter will, moreover, continue with exploring the implication of aligning religion with patriarchy, such as the way in which religion is seen as negative system and to be precise, more of a system which suppresses women. Harris explains how women are portrayed to be very different than man. Their capabilities are still measured by their gender. Moreover, men are seen to be much more superior to women in terms of intelligence and creativities. Further, she also questions the issue that it is considered to be useless for women if they are good readers. To quote from one of her interviews;

For too long, women have been judged primarily on their looks rather than their abilities, and, even now – in a world in which we can hardly move for political correctness – men and women are still viewed slightly differently in the world of music, literature and the creative arts. There is a patronizing smirk from the world of literature when a woman writes a romantic novel; but when a man does the same thing, he is being sensitive and insightful, making a valuable statement on the nature of relationships. In *Runemarks*, the same thing happens; a boy who reads is intelligent and will go a long way; a girl who reads is “clever”, which is useless in a girl – even potentially dangerous (Harris, Joanna. September 3, 2012).

The following chapter, **chapter three**, will continue with the theme of chocolate being a liberating force. Harris in her novel portrays Vianne Rocher, a young single mother who is a spirited and energetic woman, and believes that chocolate is the key to happiness. Whereas, Pere Reynaud, the local priest, is opposed to all of it, and seems to portray a character who is 'dominant, arrogant, contemptuous and theologically-rigid.'. The novel gives emphasis to the celebration of chocolates which is aligned with mother and daughter relationship and independence. Vianne's existence is the ultimate threat because it is 'distracting and colorful' and also 'indecent and sensuous' at times (Harris, Joanna.2012). On the other hand, Pere Reynaud thrives on control and boundaries, and Vianne was a treat to his practice of control over himself. Not to mention, Pere Reynaud is a megalomaniac, whose lust for powers so heavily reliant on religious rhetoric that even he does not recognize it. As the novel progresses and he loses more ground, he eventually descends into complete insanity. At the same time, the feminine protagonists of Harris's novels are strong, powerful and sexual. They have a fundamental allegiance with the 'flora and fauna' and an uncompromising awareness of their own inherent talents. These accomplishments are showcased in numerous guises in Harris' novel. Moreover, when the novel was printed, Harris was even asked to write down cookbooks by a big range of readers because of the fascinating description regarding chocolate, baking and recipes, which was some way for Vianne to grasp the attention of the different individuals through her passion for chocolate and preparation within the novel *Chocolat*. Thus, this chapter focuses on Vianne's fondness towards chocolate where a feminist voice is additionally associated with chocolate and cooking at the same time. Further, Harris' picturesque description within the novel shaped it into a magical one, and made it more interesting.

The following chapter, or the **fourth chapter**, will carry the symbolic representation in the novel. The use of supernatural elements and magical occurrence in *Chocolat* and *The Lollipop shoes*, enabled Vianne to hold onto her spirit of adventure. This particular section will depict the symbolism of wind, and an imaginary friend of Anouk, Pantoufle. Their beliefs in ancient recipes of making the finest sweet to unravel the hidden yearnings and all these questions Vianne's existence in different parts of Europe. Moreover, the symbolic occurrences connect with the character itself and thus shed light on femininity through such portrayal by Harris. However, in *The Lollipop Shoes*, the mother and daughter are in a different place, Paris. Vianne is exhausted by fighting the battles of being "different" and she has decided to conform as Harris portrays her to be in the next novel to *Chocolat*, which is *The Lollipop Shoes*.

Therefore, in essence, this dissertation will enable the readers to explore various issues discussed by Joanna Harris in her novels which include magical elements aligned with feminist tropes both simultaneously. Additionally, the discussion will further enhance the reading of magical realism and also magical feminism, considering the supernatural occurrences as the as well as feminine tropes and conventions.

Chapter one:

i) Magic Realist Techniques

Magical realism often uses magical elements to question about reality. These stories are opposed to stories that are firmly in the fantasy or sci-fi genres and separates from our own reality. There is a deformation that has an effect in the very fiber of the prose which forces the readers to question what is real and often opens up the prospect of reality that may not have been thought before reading the story. The realities are being questioned that can be societal, familiar, mental, and/ or emotional. The book, *Chocolat* is popular magic realism for women. It is about an interesting stranger, Vianne Rocher, who arrives in the French village of Lansquenet and opens a chocolate parlor directly opposite to the church; Father, Reynaud criticizes her as a serious moral danger to his society, especially as it is the beginning of Lent, which is the traditional season of self-denial. Considering, the aspect of Vianna who is seen as a threat in the society in opposition to the church, it is to point out that Magical feminism have been one of the major highlight of the Harris' Novel where Vianna is not established as every other women in the society but her way of living on own terms seems to be a conflict in the norms of the village, Lansquenet. Therefore, the novel marks this aspect of feminine attributes and that women living in her own terms are not treated well but are said as to be the 'Other' even though they are a part of the society. The term 'Magical Feminism' refers to magical realism in a feminist discourse. In this case of magical feminism, the role of the 'Other' is assumed by the women who have been marginalized. Vianne with her daughter Anouk travels from one place to another, not staying anywhere for so long with imaginary friend Pantoufle and puts up a business of chocolate shop in the little villages.

Vianne and her daughter were going wherever the wind takes them and after years of travel, they both begin to long for a more stable home. They, blown in by “ a sly wind from the north” (*Chocolat*, 2000) , perceived as both the exotic ‘Other’, the travelling agnostic who hand out the ancient cacao recipes against a “ mysterious and almost primitive” musical score as well as the “ultimate female other” whose gradual improvement of the Comte’s notions of stability almost pushes her from the label of ‘Other’. Yet, through her cooking and baking, Vianne fully embraces and applies her inherent weaknesses and marginalization as a weapon to unify the town, thus this challenges this subjective gender binary poised on females.

ii) Freedom In Terms Of Women’s Liberty;

To consider freedom in terms of women’s liberty, number of critics distinguished women’s freedom practices. To look into its depth, on treating women in a certain way, Karen Vintges states in the book *A New Dawn for the Second Sex* under the title of ‘Women’s Freedom Practices in World Perspective’ the following words;

‘Feminism’ is often criticized for being inherently white and Western – a critique that largely corresponds with mainstream feminism’s claims that women in the West are the liberated, autonomous subjects that women from ‘other cultures’ are yet to become. Chandra Talpade Mohanty (1991) and Lila Abu-Lughod (1986, 2002) famously criticized Western feminists for a priori victimizing non-Western women, instead of approaching them as agents. Sawitri Saharso (2000), in a similar vein, argued that Western feminists should take different models of self into account, rather than imposing a Western view, in informal and formal, even violent ways. According to Saba Mahmood (2008), ‘feminism’ today ‘runs the risk of becoming more of a handmaiden of empire’ (Mahmood 2008: 82).

Refer-ring to the American invasion of Muslim countries to bring freedom and democracy, especially to their female inhabitants, she concludes that we face a 'collusion of empire and feminism in this historical moment' (84, cf. 89).

Not only in *Chocolat*, the concept of this women centric novel has been taken further to Harris' next sequel named *The Lollipop Shoes* where the character Vianna, read as a conflict, an entirely personal one, within herself. Moreover, this is not to mention that religion does not bring in from time to time in this book. Rather in this book Vianne is battling something more insidious than just an intuition. In the novel, *The Lollipop Shoes*, the author presents Vianna as someone who is struggling within herself; precisely she is in fighting to get over her past; her guilty secrets and small betrayals. Most of all she is now struggling to overcome her worst fears. Harris also assures that this book does not leave magic behind, apart from *The Lollipop Shoes*, being a book with all the feminist attributes, Harris states in an interview, '*Lollipop Shoes* is a little more explicit. In this book, magic is everywhere, although there are still "rational" explanations if you choose to look for them.'(Harris, 2012) The author, therefore, ensures her readers with certain explanations when she was asked about the sequels that was yet, connected to both magic and femininity. As magic realist books, both of the Harris' books are full of magical elements and these magical elements are often symbolic in the lives of the characters. The characters mainly represent the marginalization of women. The characters are profoundly addressed towards woman those who needs to speak up for their own capabilities and that of what they want to persuade or aim for.

Simon De Beauvoir argues an article that,

‘Women are marginalized as the ‘other’ and that a girl has to follow societal standards of femininity. She has to decorate herself for men and present herself like a doll, because that is what is expected of her. She acts in what Sartre calls bad faith, because she does not define herself.’ (127)

According to Simon De Beauvoir, women are told by the society that how they should behave and act. It is also marked that woman herself permits the society to define their roles rather than stepping up for themselves. Therefore, she, a woman, is not free and has to follow certain standard. De Beauvoir further highlights about women who are bound to follow the conventions that they were introduced to and are always expected to behave like one in the society regardless of the fact that how they want to be. Moreover, in *Chocolat* and in the novel *The Lollipop Shoes* is it quite visible that how Vianne is treated as an outsider as she used to live in her terms and that the church defines her to be a sinner with no morals as she decides not to act like a woman that a society expects her to be. However, De Beauvoir, who comes from the existentialist tradition, she also argues that women are free to break from this role of what she is expected to be and by what they are defined. In this aspect, De Beauvoir is like Sartre, who argues that, ‘existence precedes essence and that one can become whoever he wants to be.’ Thus, Sartre, defining one’s role as what one desires to be not by any rules or norms. The readers of both the novels, *Chocolat* and *The Lollipop Shoes* soon encounters that Vianne and her daughter Anouk lives in their own terms, no matter how much negativities they receive from the village, they still decides to live on their own terms and that they think of it as one’s will.

iii) Comparison In Terms Of Vianne's Image

The Lollipop Shoes is a sensual fantasy; Harris writes with an original and satisfying poetic flair; this is the sequel to *Chocolat*. The chocolatier, Vianne Rocher, is a free spirit with magical powers who has two daughters called Anouk and Rosette. In this novel, mother and daughter are in Paris. Vianne is exhausted of fighting the battles of being "different". She has decided to conform and accept a lot of things that she did not thought of earlier. It is sensible shoes all the way for Vianne and Anouk in the dull chocolate shop they run in Montmartre, courtesy of their impetuous, rich landlord Thierry. He is besotted with the poor "widow" and wants to take this seemingly weak clutch of females under his broad masculine wing. Harris in this novel has chosen Montmartre for a reason and that it is the last "village" in Paris. But that village is rather fraudulent. It is a tourist trap, pretence, just as most of the characters in this book are pretending to be something other than them. The most consummate of these fraudsters is the novel's mesmeric villainess named Zoïe de l'Alba, who a witch and a stealer of identities, whose methods are as likely to engage the internet as a crystal ball. Unlike Vianne, Zoïe developed her magical powers without the guidance of a similarly empowered mother. She called a "system" from the occult books in her ineffectual mother's New Age London bookshop.

She is practical where Vianne is considered as more 'whimsical,' 'greedy' and 'independent.' Vianne is domestic and tied to her children. If *Chocolat* dealt with what single young women want (romance, love, freedom, and success) *The Lollipop Shoes* tackles how those dreams must be compromised in motherhood. Vianne no longer desires to blow along on the feckless breeze but she is aware about her daughters to have the security of a home and a father. She is terrified that their blooming supernatural abilities will put them in danger and set them apart from their peers.

She accepts Thierry's ring but Zoïe wants even more from her than Thierry does, and charms her way into her life. It is cold-hearted Zoïe who wears the lollipop shoes of the title and she is the one who encourages Anouk to explore the powers that her mother suppresses and tempts Vianne back into making her own irresistible chocolates.

Chapter Two

i) The Implication Of Aligning Religion With Patriarchy

The role of religion in growing patriarchy in the society is all too obvious. This is to state that religion is the most influential force and the most important and a nurturing factor behind patriarchy would not be an exaggeration. Columnist Katha Politt has suggested in '*Free Inquiry*', a publication of the *Council for Secular Humanism*, 'that religion is the '*original*' rule book of patriarchy. Indeed, if patriarchy is the social normal, it is largely because it develops its legitimacy from religion, the most important rule book pertaining to societal do's-and-don'ts in any community. Almost all organized religions propagate the idea of male superiority. They paint women as physically, mentally, emotionally and sexually inferior to men. The latter get special rights and privileges on account of being '*naturally*' superior to their female counterparts.' Thus, the implication of aligning religion with patriarchy is to show that religion is seen as a negative system and to be precise, more of a system which suppresses women. Harris explains how women even now are seen to be very different than man. Their capabilities are still measured by their gender. Moreover, men are seen to be much more superior to women in terms of intelligence and creativities. In the article, 'Women's Position in the Patriarchal Society Essay,' it is stated that;

There are only two genders in the whole world, one is male and the other is female. There are lots of advocates and sociologist who has spoken for the equality between men and women but till now the goal of equality has not been achieved yet. Women have always been dominated by the men in the Patriarchal society where men are the head of the household and the rule makers. Men are the supreme authority and women are the

followers. When we hear these things, even in the 21 century it is not the new or surprising things because it is still being practiced in our society and there aren't any women in the world that had not been through this discrimination at least once in their life time. (Bartleby 7)

According to the author's words, it was quite unnatural to look at women who had their own wills and ambitions, rather their genders defined their do's and don'ts. The demand for qualities are taken down rather women were dominated and it had been additional seemingly to always see a male dominated society wherever women were looked down upon. However, the origin in *Chocolat* appears vital, once Vianne earns the immediate rage of the Auguste Comte De Reynaud by opening a chocolate shop throughout the Lent, a season of rigorous discipline and denial. The conflict between Vianne and chocolate takes a new turn within the village. Vianne endears herself to the current tiny phase of the community by dead reckoning their favorite chocolates and treating them royally. The outline of the novel wherever Lansquenet may be a tiny, quaint French city, an area that holds quick to its traditions, thanks for the most part to its great mayor, the Auguste Comte De Reynaud, whose brand of Christian religion is inhibitory, austere, and distrustful of strangers. Vianne evangelical enjoyment of life, this outsider has the natural endowment for reaching bent different pariahs within the integrated village. As it was stated in an interview by 'The Norse Mythology Blog';

For too long, women have been judged primarily on their looks rather than their abilities, and, even now – in a world in which we can hardly move for political correctness – men and women are still viewed slightly differently in the world of music, literature and the creativearts.

There is a patronizing smirk from the world of literature when a woman writes a romantic novel; but when a man does the same thing, he is being sensitive and insightful, making a valuable statement on the nature of relationships. In *Runemarks*, the same thing happens; a boy who reads is intelligent and will go a long way; a girl who reads is “clever”, which is useless in a girl – even potentially dangerous. (Harris, Joanna. September 3, 2012)

Therefore, it is to talk about the inequalities in the power distribution between men and women result in a condition of subordination and danger throughout a woman's life. The impact on girls’ physical and psychological wellbeing is enormous. It is stated that;

Girls are usually married to older men, isolated from their family of origin, forced to skip school, unable to negotiate with their partners about any aspect of their life, including decisions about contraception and their own health. Within their new households, women face pressure from their partner and, often, extended family, to contribute to household production and reproduction. It is in fact within the household that one of the most common forms of violence occurs: physical and psychological violence inflicted by an intimate partner (IPV). Up to 70% of women worldwide have experienced some form of violence from an intimate partner (WHO, 2013).

ii) Victim Of Domestic Violence In Harris’ Novel

The tightly knit village in Harris’ novel, includes Josephine who is a victim of domestic violence; Armande Voizin, an elderly woman who has been denied access to her grandson by her prissy daughter Caroline; and Guillaume Blerot, who yearns to court a widow.

Her husband in world war I. Vianne endears herself to this segment of the community by guessing their favorite chocolate and treating them with loyalty. In almost all organized religions, restrictions exist over a woman's choices over her body, sexuality, lifestyle, clothes, and just about everything. Sexuality and reproductive rights are especially the problematic area with regard to women. Almost all religions advocate '*sexual exclusivity*' for women while exonerating men from the same obligation.

What is alarming is how deeply this religiously-endorsed patriarchy seeped into the common psyche and behavior. Incidentally, it is said that, "the Supreme God in all religions is always envisioned as a male. Scriptures are mostly written and interpreted by men who tweak and translate them to suit their own vision of the desirable social-order and preferable gender-dynamics in the same. Religious organizations, spiritual and temporal, are dominated by men and are largely off-limits for women." Harris, taking number of aspects into considerations, have showcased a woman with dignity and worth who travels around the world and even after facing such struggles of living in the conflicts; religion and patriarchy she decides not to give up on her wills and own passion although she is questioned and warned number of times.

Chapter Three

i) Chocolate Is The Key To Happiness

Harris in her novel portrays Vianne Rocher as a young single mother who is very positive and energetic woman and someone who believes that chocolate is the key to happiness. The novel emphasizes on the celebration of chocolates that is associated with mother daughter relationship and independence in life. In *Chocolat*, this chocolate plays a major role in the novel.

Chocolate has a rich history, and that it is involving centuries-old Mayan and Aztec rituals, Spanish colonizer or settlers and, surprisingly, Catholic priests. Before it was handed out in heart-shaped Valentine's gifts or as served with marshmallows in a favorite winter drink, chocolate had to shed its association with unholy indulgence and weather the critiques of religious clerics. Experts on the earliest confection said its confrontations with faith make chocolate's history even sweeter, recalling that complaints about its consumption once made it all the way to the Pope. Carla Martin, a lecturer at Harvard University notes "Somebody wrote to the pope (in 1577) from the Americas ... asking if Catholics were allowed to drink chocolate when they were supposed to be fasting. He didn't respond! It's rumored that he thought it was a hilarious request not even worthy of a response," (127)

Luckily for sweet tooth's, attitudes like the Pope's eventually won out, making the way for chocolate to become the much-loved dessert as it is today. Moreover, in the novel *Chocolat* Pere Reynaud is considered to be a controlling, arrogant, contemptuous theologically rigid priest.

It is not just the notion of serving chocolate during Lent that offends him, or that by doing this Vianne weakens Pere Reynaud's iron-clad moral control over the town. Vianne's terrible presence is considered as the final threat and as a result of it, it is distracting and vivacious and indecent and aesthetic. Pere Reynaud thrives on control and Vianne threatens his board over himself. That is to not say that Pere Reynaud could possibly be a cartoon, and however from readers purpose of understand writing, he is a egoist whose lust for power is therefore heavily swaddled in non secular rhetoric that even he does not acknowledge it. Within the novel, once Vianne decides to hold a chocolate competition on Easter, in association to it, Pere Reynaud angrily finally snaps and breaks into her search to sabotage her work. Weeks of futile self-denial, Pere Reynaud incorporates a complete mental breakdown at the sight of most delicious food and he gorges himself, fully abandoning his evil set up, his dignity, and his season quick to shove sweets into his face instead solely to be demeaning woken up by his parishioners the following morning, covered in dissolved chocolate. However, due to the various ways that these antagonists were developed, within the novel, Pere Reynaud's breakdown is Vianne's final triumph, it is considered to be an excellent chocolate-coated scene in the movie as well of Schadenfreude as he gets his desserts within the most delightfully literal and public way which is attainable, once that he flees into the night, was never to come back. It comes across as tragicomic and sympathetic, a proud man who is finally admitting to weakness. He believed that he can control modify or change into better and higher everything if he believes and works hard enough; solely to find he is even a human and fallible as his townsfolk. Further, the novel progresses and he loses a lot of ground, he eventually descends into complete mental disease. In *Chocolat*, the author observes the actual fact.

The fact that it is a little mouthful sweet that can change people, relationships and interactions among them and therefore the nature of the entire city. It is a story of temptation, desire, asceticism and emotions, wherever intolerance, prejudice and social phobia which occupy some necessary positions, similarly, it is also that the most important character, Vianne, tries to convict the others to not be frightened of their own temptation. Her attempt to express herself in a dynamic manner is discovered in her impassioned concern with food, particularly chocolate which is used as a tool for freedom.

ii) A Conflict Between Church And Chocolate

The struggle of two main contraries becomes much more than a conflict between church and chocolate it becomes an exorcism of the past, a declaration of independence, a showdown between dogma and understanding, pleasure and self-denial. The story is mainly about “the conflict between indulgence and guilt, with chocolate as the central metaphor” (Joanna-harris.co.uk). As Lane says in an interview, “*Chocolat* was a dark, dreamy fairy-tale stuffed with loving descriptions of truffles and marzipan birds, upon which bikini dieters could safely binge” (2001)

The attitudes of the main characters towards food show a lot about their personalities, attitudes and motivations. For example, it is evident at the moment when Reynaud is describing a display window of The Chocolaterie Artisanale. It seems almost perverse to him, because it is the beginning of Lent, the traditional season of self-denial:

On a white marble shelf are aligned innumerable boxes, packages, cornets of silver and gold paper, rosettes, bells, flowers, hearts and long curls of multicolored ribbon. In glass bells and dishes like the chocolates

the pralines, Venus's nipples, truffles, *mendiants*, candied fruits, hazelnut clusters, chocolate seashells, candied rose-petals, sugared violets... Protected from the sun by the half-blind which shields them, they gleam darkly, like sunken treasure, Aladdin's cave of sweet clichés. And in the middle she has built a magnificent centerpiece. A gingerbread house, walls of chocolate-coated *pain d'épices* with detail piped on in silver and gold icing, roof tiles of florentines studded with crystallized fruits, strange vines of icing and chocolate growing up the walls, marzipan birds singing in chocolate trees... And the witch herself, dark chocolate from the top of her pointed hat to the hem of her long cloak, half-astride a broomstick which is in reality a giant *guimauve*, the long twisted marshmallows that dangle from the stalls of sweet-vendors on carnival days. (Harris 2007: 33)

The story looks at issues of community and moral standards through Pere Reynaud's complaints. His strict and frugal attitude could be called Reynaud's "*brigade anti-chocolat*" (Ibid. 160) "All I want is to guide them, *mon père*, to free them from their sin. But they fight me at every turn, like children refusing wholesome fare in order to continue eating what sickens them... Left to their secret indulgences, their solitary vices" (Ibid. 23-24).

Reynaud's personality sees his desire for acceptance in asceticism: "Suddenly the morning odour of baking... is more than I can bear; the smell of hot fat... a shaft from hell. I myself have touched neither meat nor fish nor eggs for over a week, subsisting on bread, soups, salads and a single glass of wine on Sunday, and I am cleansed, *père*, cleansed" (Harris 2007:

68). Reynaud wonders “If only I could, I thought. Walk out from my hiding place and join them. Eat, drink – suddenly the thought of food was a delirious imperative, my mouth filling enviously. To gorge myself on pancakes... Is this temptation, *père?*” (Ibid. 176).

At the end of the story Reynaud does not resist the temptation: “... the brief resistance of the chocolate shell as it meets the lips, the soft truffle inside... There are *layers* of flavour like the bouquet of a fine wine, a slight bitterness, a richness like ground coffee; warmth brings the flavour to life and it fills my nostrils, a taste succubus which has me moaning” (Ibid. 311).

The female protagonists of Harris’s novels are presented as strong, powerful and sexual. They have an intrinsic adherence with the natural world and an uncompromising awareness of their own intrinsic abilities. These accomplishments are showcased in various disguise across the course of Harris’s work; culinary expertise, physical agility, horticultural skill and a knack for the performing arts are all proficiencies accredited to Harris’s female characters. In the article, ‘Let them eat candy’ in the newspaper of The New York Times, it is stated that,

‘Harris’s knowledge of the culinary arts seems to be grounded in experience: the dust jacket tells us that she is part French and part English and “was born in a sweetshop.” Her descriptions of exquisitely presented food make her a worthy successor to that doyenne of 17th-century fairy tale writers, Marie-Catherine d’Aulnoy, who also filled her stories with delectable accounts of feasts, festivals and magic.’ (Ramous 1999),

Vianne, as Harris portrays her to be someone who helps people to ease their everyday life’s burden: “I sell dreams, small comforts, sweet harmless temptations, to bring down a multitude of saints crash-crash-crashing amongst the hazels and nougatines” (Harris 56).

The Bible calls for temperance. The theme of food is embodied by the spiritual nourishment.

Pere Reynaud refers to the Bible where some references to food could be found.

Though, there meaning is symbolical. The first mentions of the principles of the food chain in Bible could be found in the Old Testament Genesis 2: “16 And the LORD God commanded the man, ‘You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; 17 but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will certainly die” (Genesis2011). It continues in Genesis 3:

4. ‘You will not certainly die,’ the serpent said to the woman. 5. ‘For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.’ 6. When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. 7. Then the eyes of both of them were opened... (2011)

However, Dawn Tindle in “The Magic of Everyday Things: Magic Realism in the Works of Joanne Harris” says, " permeated beneath these personal attributes are characteristics that categorise the protagonists as ‘magic women’. The ability to foretell future events; to read the thoughts of other characters; to predict the favorite chocolates of new customers; the use of cantrips and forked fingers to ward off the ill wishes of one’s enemies - these are all crafts mastered by Harris’s ‘magic women’ and are all characteristics seeped in the historical and sociological connotations of witchcraft, evil and magic." (8)

Moreover, considering the aspect of Harris' publication of the novel *Chocolat*, the innate descriptions of rich cocoa recipes and details descriptions of Vianna's exploring chocolate recipes grew readers' interest in Harris' writing about meals and food. Therefore, after huge response and quite a number of requests Harries decides to publish cookbooks for her reader.

Chapter Four

Magic abounds in Harris's novel

In the novel, *Chocolat*, the story is connected to the modern period of the early nineties at the earliest. The town of Lansquenet is just such a small, out of the way backwater that it still maintains an old-fashioned, timeless quality. Anime June in “Book-To-Film Review: "Chocolat," by Joanne Harris” talks about the similar representation of book to film; to note that Vianne, who has travelled everywhere the world, is portrayed as a force of contemporary idea in a much forgotten town that is somehow incomprehensible in sixty years of social development. The novel may be an illustration of romanticism and magical realism and additionally regarding to what is smartly, effectively, and with efficiency explains Vianne's motivations, intentions, and also the importance of chocolate in her life. Vianne reveals she's the daughter of a French health professional and a South American woman who belonged to a tribe of wanderers obligated to follow the summons of the air current and dispense sacred cocoa themed remedies from city to town. Vianne grew up following the wind and learning the ways that of chocolate from her mother however faced hassle continuing that tradition together with her lonely, sullen daughter. However, there is no real specific reason for why Vianne and her mother, and consequently Vianne and Anouk, keep on the move from city to town with their dynamic their identities. The implication is that it is as a result of Vianne and her mother are probably witches, in addition as an ingrained worry on her mother's part that staying too long in one place which enables "The Black Man" (an prototypical symbol of the church and also the authorities) to take Vianne away. (2012)

The symbolic depiction of such magical elements in the novel makes it more interesting at the same time. Moreover, in the following sequel, two of them are yet to be found as travelers, settling themselves into a different place and also molding themselves into new identities. *The Lollipop Shoes*, on the other hand, is more like an adult fairy tale, but Harris writes with an original style and a sense-savoring fluency. She mentions, a city square is "tight" like "a neatly-made bed", a school bully becomes "an angry bowling ball", and the "horsey" scent of sanded wood is teased out. Everywhere there are charms of spices; frangipani, nutmeg, vanilla and cardamom. It is a sensory fantasy. Harris writes with an original and satisfying poetic flair. Security here is considered being a high price, and Vianne has also made some major sacrifices. She has given up her mother's ways. She has given up on the magic that she and her daughters shared once. She has given up her own identity, and in the novel *The Lollipop Shoes*, she is living under the name of Yanne Charbonneau. She has even given up making chocolates the demands of motherhood and are just too much and now orders her stock, just like everyone else. Most importantly, she has given up true love in the person of Rosette's father, Roux and is considering marriage to her reassuringly conventional landlord Thierry, who promises her financial security and a home for her children. Meanwhile, Anouk, who is now called as Annie, is on the cusp of adolescence. She is a misfit and a loner at school; she hates Paris, hates the "new" Vianne, and desperately misses the intimacy she and her mother once had together. Rosette is about four years old, with physical and behavioral problems that are only intensified by her mysterious and disturbing accidents. Vianne's decision of concealing her magical nature was that she now feels that she is doing the right thing, but she is dissatisfied. There is friction with Anouk, their money is short; there is a constant pressure from her landlord, Thierry le Tresset, and she no longer has the fondness to make hand-made, quality chocolate. However, there is another character, Zoïe de l'Alba.

She comes into their lives, bringing her magic and enchantment. She seems to be exactly what Vianne herself used to be once in the novel *Chocolat*, just as a benevolent force and a free spirit, helping people wherever she goes. But Zoïe is a thief of identities, maybe even a collector of souls. She has her eye on Vianne's life, and begins to move slowly into the family. She soon works at the *chocolaterie*, helping and understanding everyone as Vianne used to do once. But as Vianne's life begins to improve little by little under Zoïe's influence, it becomes clear that all this must come at a terrible price. Finally, Vianne is forced to confront Zoïe on her own ground, to get back her magic and her identity and to fight back. Zoïe de L'Alba is a shadowy figure in *The Lollipop Shoes*. She has many personas, but the one she uses to seduce Vianne and Anouk is charming, free-spirited. She loves shoes, which she uses to read other characters (just as Vianne uses chocolate to do the same). However, underneath the charm, her brutality and greed emerge. She is unusual among Harris' other characters and that her motives are never made entirely clear throughout the novel. Moreover, she remains a mystery until the end. It is stated by Ramous in the article, 'Let them eat candy' published in *The New York Times*, that;

Magic abounds in Harris's novel, but don't look for the magic realism of "Like Water for Chocolate." Though Vianne is no stranger to candles, incense, incantations and the tarot, she casts a cold eye on the supernatural. "People who know nothing of real magic imagine it to be a flamboyant process. . . . And yet the real business is very undramatic; simply the focusing of the mind toward a desired objective. There are no miracles, no sudden apparitions." The revelations here are psychological as well as psychic. Even the tarot tells Vianne what she already knows: "The fear of loss -- Death. The fear of displacement -- the Tower. The fear of transience -- the Chariot."

Magical realism has become a popular narrative mode because it offers to the writer wishing to write against totalitarian regimes a means to attack the definitions and assumptions which support such systems (e.g. colonialism) by attacking the stability of the definitions upon which these systems rely. As the postcolonial critic Brenda Cooper notes, 'Magical realism at its best opposes fundamentalism and purity; it is at odds with racism, ethnicity and the quest for tap roots, origins and homogeneity' (1998). This is the key to its recent popularity as a mode of fiction, particularly in Latin America and the postcolonial English-speaking world. Rather than being a recent phenomenon that most people associate with the emergence of Latin American literature, the history of magic (al) realism stretches back to the early 1920s. Although the terms have gone through many and often radical changes of meaning, the resilience of the terms lies in their usefulness to describe a particular attitude to non-scientific and non-pragmatic beliefs in a world which is universally influenced by science and pragmatism. However, attitudes to the concept of magic produce a wide variety of magical realist and magic realist works. Magic and the magical are constructs created in particular cultural contexts. It follows that magic realism and magical realism have as many forms of magic and the magical in them as the number of cultural contexts in which these works are produced throughout the world. In magic realist and magical realist works of art 'magic' can be a synonym for mystery, an extraordinary happening, or the supernatural and can be influenced by European Christianity as much as by, for instance, Native American indigenous beliefs.

Conclusion

In essence, *Chocolat* is as delectable as its title, but for all its sensuality it is ultimately concerned with the spirit. It is a fable of deceptive simplicity and blend of magic. This is to conclude, both the novels carries the representation of magical feminism with the inclusion of magic and feminine tropes.

The protagonist, Vianne is a woman of mystery, and just like the beginning to wonder whether there is something sinister about her or her chocolates, the perspective widens and deepens. It is to mark that the mysteries that concern in the novel and the representation of each of the characters are shady. The setting of the village is inviting, yet it is actually a somber place. Vianne does not hide that she is an unwed mother but however, she refuses to attend church. There is something downright pagan about the subversive power of her chocolate; there is got to be a story about her that she does not care to reveal. The novel, *Chocolat*, is a book which is a widespread genre for women. It is regarding a motivating stranger, Vianne Rocher, who arrives within the French village and that she opens a chocolate parlor directly opposite to the church; which seems like a contradiction to Father, Reynaud, he also criticizes her as a significant ethical danger to his society, particularly because it is that the starting of lent, and is that the ancient season of self-denial. Considering, the side of Vianna who is seen as a threat within the society in opposition to the church, it is to means that charming feminism are one in all of the major highlight of the Harris' novels wherever Vianna is not accepted as every other women within the society however her means of living on own terms appears to be a conflict in the norms of the village, Lansquenet by which the novel has progressed and it

puts emphasis on the aspects of femininity and also magic as a part of the characters and a major theme to portray for the author, Harris herself.

[To the contrary, the sequel, *The Lollipop Shoes* in Harris' portrayal tends change in terms of the identities of the characters; it is quite a bit different, although it is acceptable that the author is returning back to the same characters after years. It would have been difficult for Harris to keep up with the connections and conventions of the characters but yet, it strongly remained. The names of the characters might have been brought a little change from Vianne to Yianne and from Anouk to Annie for readers to connect but the resemblance is still there. The portrayal of their mother daughter relationship and more of magic has been given emphasis to. In this novel, *The Lollipop Shoes*, the character Vianna, is also read as a conflict, and this is considered to be entirely personal one which is within herself. This is also not to mention that religion does not bring in form time to time in this book. Rather in *The Lollipop Shoes* book Vianne is battling something more insidious than just an intuition or uncertain things. In the novel, the author presents Vianna as someone who is struggling within herself; precisely she is in fighting to get over her past. She is getting over her guilty secrets and small betrayals. Most of all she is now struggling to overcome her worst fears. Harris also assures that this book does not leave magic behind, that is, *The Lollipop Shoes*.

In conclusion, number of issues were discussed in relation to feminine conventions and tropes *Chocolat* is yet again considered in the novel, and the inclusion of a new character, Zozie de l'Alba, just like Vianne, who have also been introduced but considered to be more of a mysterious version of Vianne. It is thus apparent that both the novels carry the representation of magical feminism with the inclusion of magic and feminine tropes.

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