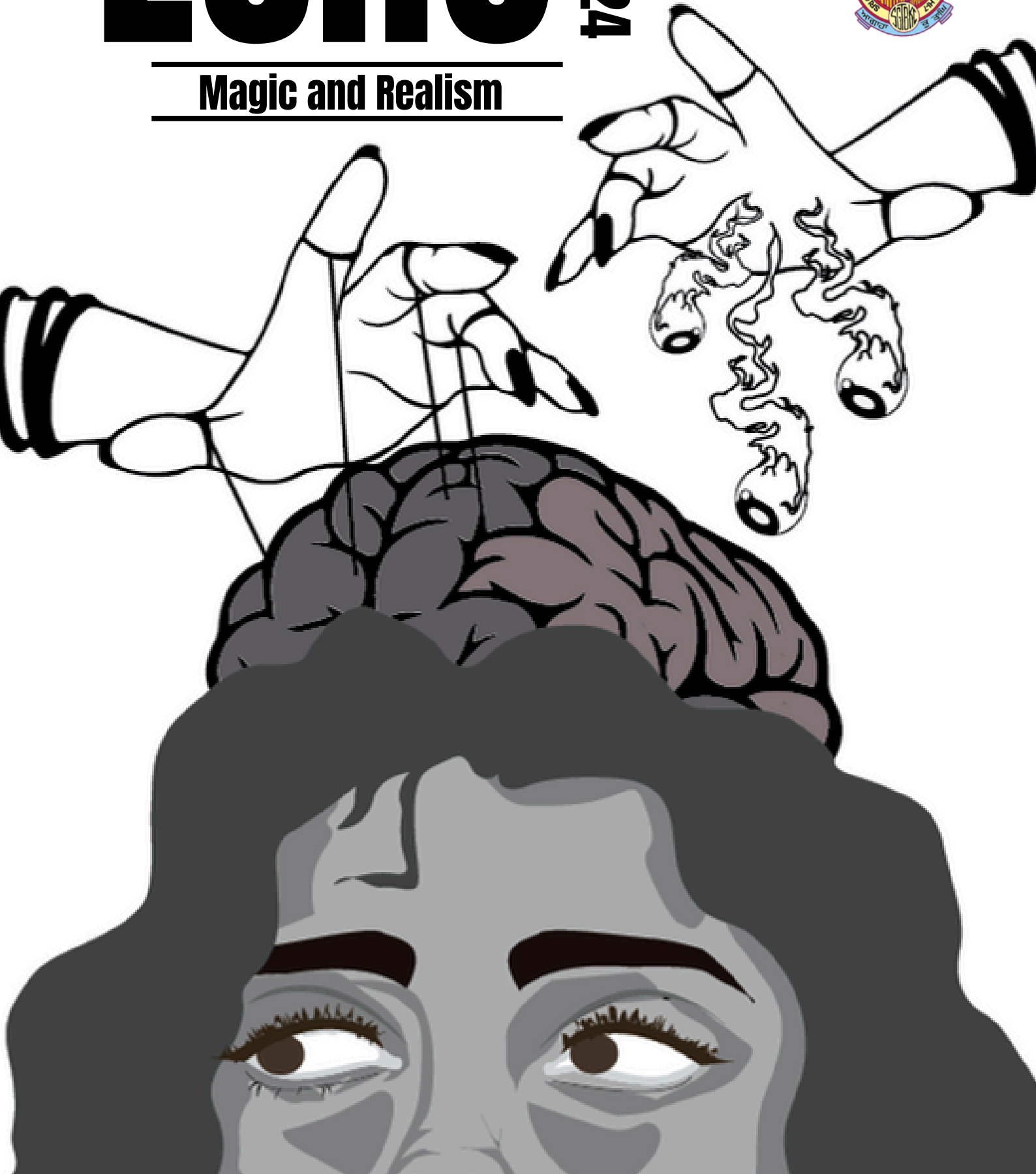


The Literary Magazine of the Department of English, SGTB Khalsa College

# ECHO

2023-24

**Magic and Realism**



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We, the editors, express our heartfelt gratitude towards the English Faculty of SGTB Khalsa College for providing us with the opportunity to work on this issue of Echo. For all their submissions, we extend our gratitude towards the contributors of this magazine. We'd also like to extend our appreciation towards our fellow classmate, Manorma Pandita, for designing the cover. A special thanks to Ashwin Sir for generously sharing his expertise with us. An acknowledgement of Indulekha Ma'am for introducing us to magic realism in her tutorials. To Saikat Sir, we thank you for deconstucting and politicising the concept of magic realism for us, and, for teaching *Beloved*, *The Legends of Khasak* and *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* not as novels that belong to the fantastical but as stories with a living-breathing reality of their own. Finally, we'd like to thank our Professor, Ritwick Sir, for the constant guidance, incessant reminders, three years of tutorials, slaps on our wrists and lame jokes throughout this endeavour. We're grateful for his endless patience while we blabbered on our disjointed ideas to him.



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# PREFACE

## OF A MAGICAL REALITY

It is a strange affair to think of magic and reality in the same breath. Especially since practiced rationality and, subsequently, common sense dictates the two to be considered antithetically. However, the division between the two becomes nebulous while living in a country where magic is commemorated annually with colors, crackers, and light; whose “realist” (commercial) cinema is busy displaying feats of action with heroes and heroines singlehandedly fighting through a million villainous henchmen, and romance with a sudden appearance of a string quartet (along with, more often than not, a prompt transfer of the onscreen characters to international locales to sing and dance); where most houses and trailer ends of lorries are adorned with demon masks, decorated slippers and/or a lemon bundled together with green chilies; and where dead bodies of leaders are preserved in ice for years awaiting their return from death. There are many facets to this osmotic relationship that magic and reality share with each other. For one, as Marquez’s says, rationalizations behind the separation of the two are particularly western and does not work for a country like India. Hence, someone like Salman Rushdie or Amitav Ghosh or O.V. Vijayan. For another, the oppression of a post-colonial sensorial real (in and as uneven formulations of politics, law, society, and culture) is countered only in washing it away with the hope and desire of something that is beyond it; something whose existence is untethered to the way humans interact with it. Something enchanted. This magical object beyond the human, even if desired into being, is often in a realm that has the power to create and re-create phenomena; to offer veritable presences against deafening screams of absences.

This is not to argue that the blending of magic and reality with each other is purely an Indian (or a post-colonial third world) truth. Eugene Thacker argues magic to be a connector of realities: of worlds divided by the limitations of human consciousness. After all, the worlds which lie outside the operations of consciousness bear upon the world which can be known. Consider, as Thacker does, a world after the end of humanity: where the apocalypse has wiped away every shred of a human existence; a final death. Magic, acting through the magic circle, the wand, the medium, or the artefacts handed over by ages lost act to bring that world impossible to think about within the reach of cogito and make something of it (anything, really). These objects become a bridge and, much like any bridge, magic contains both banks (the twain worlds) it joins. The two become a part of each other within and through the bridge; each remaining what they are and yet taking on aspects of the other. This is with two worlds. Imagine infinite such worlds bouncing around beyond the grasp of the sensory (mundane) real. There is, then, no magic without the real; neither is there a reality without magic.

The present issue of Echo, the journal of the English department of Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur Khalsa College, wishes to think about the possibilities tied to the nebula created by magic and reality. The authors published here, all students of the college, have written stories, essays, articles, drawn images, cartoons, and a photo essay to reach closer to this complicated nature of the two. It is a journal that is worth a glance; especially since the student editors—Sargun, Shirley, and Ilhan, have worked very hard (from conception to inception) to ensure that the issue sees the light of day. I am happy to see that it has turned out to be a rather beautiful issue, if nothing else. I wish everyone a magical life and a happy reading.

Ritwick Bhattacharjee  
Assistant Professor in English  
SGTB Khalsa College  
Faculty Editor, ECHO

# EDITORS' NOTE

“To interpret our reality through schemas which are alien to us only has the effect of making us even more unknown, ever less free, ever more solitary.”

–Gabriel Garcia Marquez

Marquez, time and again, reflects upon the challenges of imposing Eurocentric frameworks on non-European cultures. He emphasises the failure of European vision in comprehending Latin American realities. Such a failure manifests itself in the emergence of biases out of a predominant geographical and cultural space, that is, Europe. Eurocentrism, then, alludes to an overemphasis on a limited culture, history, values, and perspectives, marking them as central and normative. This prejudiced lens develops to distort the art and imagination of non-European societies. It further perpetuates a deprived and often incomplete understanding of the multiplicity in cultural human experience. Literary practices, like those of Marquez's, communicate a conception of reality previously unseen. This reality does not break down the Eurocentric idea of reality but simply presents another reality instead. In such a scheme of things, it unveils the multiplicity of the “real”. These literary practices, consciously and subconsciously, uncover the colonial ravages of the West. In similar frameworks, the third world reveals itself through “magic”. It distorts the homogeneity of cultural expression set forth by the Eurocentric standards. Whether it is Latin-American fiction or Indian, the third world expresses its reality in all these diverse contexts. They find themselves attached to a “magical” reality within which a need for context arises for the outsider.

If one attempts to locate this through the example of the Indian subcontinent, a lot of “superstitions” come to mind. The abundance of rats in one's home during Ganesh Chaturthi, the “nazar” removal ritual, and the lemons attached to new cars: all of these are considered to be superstitions attached to the Indian cultural identity. However, for the population that inherits this rich cultural memory, it becomes a reality. This reality, without a concrete context, is susceptible to being mystified by the outsider's gaze. Delving deeper into the curated selection of literary pieces for this anthology, we embark on an artistic and academic exploration of the complexities of cultural representation and positioning “magical” within the real. Each chosen work serves as a conduit for examining the intricate interplay between the dialect of magic and reality. Upon closer scrutiny, the delineation between the two appears increasingly vague, prompting us to think beyond established categorical descriptions.

One approach is to consider how the shared memories of a specific community are reflected and expressed in ways that transcend explication through dominant mediums. Quintessentially, the poem ‘Gospel of Denver’ sets out to sketch an intricate and evocative picture of the trauma of the African-American experience. The poem does so by engaging with the fictional realm of Toni Morrison's *Beloved*, where the characters try to grapple with seemingly supernatural occurrences that plague their melancholic lives.

In a similar vein, the poem 'tongues' essentially questions the validity of religious practices. It marks the speaker's discontentment with speaking in "magical" tongues, a tradition that they inherit culturally but fail to completely approbate. Within an Indian context, the short story "Whispers of Henna" presents a provocative feminist tale that dissects the gender dynamics within marital relationships. Through its depiction of the traditional practice of adorning brides with henna, the story illustrates the gradual transformation of the henna into a symbol of monstrosity, trapping the protagonist within a labyrinth of gendered expectations.

From an alternative perspective, certain pieces delve into the intricacies of personal encounters with the idea of magic. In the short story entitled "Where Do Broken Hearts Go?" readers are introduced to a distressed protagonist who resorts to ancestral Satanic rituals in an attempt to reconcile with a former lover. In another short story "Yami no Kiretsu," the protagonist employs the cultural heritage of origami from Japan, wherein the meticulous folding of paper gives rise to physical manifestations of objects within the narrative's context. Whether confronting the anguish of heartbreak depicted in the initial story or addressing significant actions prompted by experiences of bullying in the latter, we confront the recurring theme of human recourse to magic during moments of desperation. Another one of the magazine's pieces deal with this desperation. The poem "" is an idiosyncratic expression of how technology transcends the boundaries of human imagination to the extent that it crosses over into a magical terrain. This underscores the inadequacy of perceived reality in accommodating the diversity of human aspirations.

The anthology's collection of academic essays and reviews serves as a medium of intellectual discourse, adeptly taking readers through the nuanced interplay between magic and reality within cinematic realms. It provides deep insights into the thematic foundations while critically examining the designation of "magic," thereby presenting worlds with their distinct notions of reality. Notably, the essay titled "Filmmaking in the Fog" delves into the Greek Weird Wave, a cinematic movement that endeavours to capture a nation amidst one of its worst economic crisis. This essay explicitly scrutinises the cinematic oeuvre of Yorgos Lanthimos, renowned for his idiosyncratic approaches that challenge conventional norms. Furthermore, within a review of the film 'Life of Pi,' readers encounter an exploration of ostensibly fantastical elements coexisting alongside tangible reality.

So, in the contours of the existence of different experiences and cultural memories around the world, how does one state their reality without moulding it for this uncontextualized gaze? Is it absolutely impossible to communicate realities? Does "magic" realism, in that sense, become a form of mimetic expression of the diverse cultural realities of the colonised? What role does magic play in such realities? Is there a way to look beyond the Eurocentricity of "magic" realism and think of nothing but a kind of realism that incorporates the diversity of the global experience? So, through the power of imagination, Echo invites readers to question the nature of perception and embrace the "magic" that lies within the mundane.

SHIRLEY GOODWIN

# GOSPEL OF DENVER

**1:1 judas hangs himself**

on the third crow of the rooster, christ was killed and the tree on your back blossomed. nobody saw us fall.

**1:2 father asks for crucifixion**

you let the cardinal fly around her throat, ribbons of red rolled down and settled inside my chest, just like poetry did in your southern rivers.

**1:3 the last supper**

you won't share your chokecherry, the fruits rot on your branches as i cup my hands under them to taste the bitterness of your blood.

**1:4 peter denies jesus**

your history has settled in my stomach, in bits, blind and mindless and like a hawk, guilt picks at it. the roots of your tree dig inside the skin of my spine, what's mine is yours what's yours is mine.

**1:5 the parable of a small bird trembling**

you still hear the hummingbirds. with broken wings they struggle inside my veins to break free. the water was still red when you baptized me.

**1:6 the beloved carries his cross**

the iron of your memories encircles my throat and tightens its hooks around my tongue. death was still fresh on your breast as i suckled on it.

**1:7 alpha and omega**

you hide behind the woods and pray to the lamb as she stands sacrificed. she rises from the water and i look up at our father behind the clouds, he has butter all over his face.

**1:8 the 144,000**

she is one of them and i the flesh that weeps over the empty cradle of her ghost. the dove has flown to join her flock and in the fire and brimstone of these lacy groves, i am the shepherd left behind.

A/N: This poem is inspired by the book *Beloved* by Toni Morrison. Written through Denver's perspective, it is an attempt to give a voice to the ones who did not have a first-hand account of the practice of african-american slavery but are still haunted by it. Metaphors from the Bible are used to give it the structure of a listicle and add to its supernatural undertones.



BELOVED

**(TW: self-harm)**

All these messaging apps are on my phone, and he does not care to reply to any of them. I have seen people in books and movies texting on different platforms, holding different conversations on each. The familiar tone of an incoming message fills up the entirety of the silent room, and my heart races with anticipation. It has to be him. Another tone, then another, before my ringtone starts playing. Calling? That is new for him. My shoulders sag, my eyes droop, my heartbeat slows down and a disappointed sigh escapes my lips. It's not him, but my best friend, whose existence I had entirely forgotten, let alone the fact that her birthday was today and I was getting dressed for it before the thoughts of him occupied my mind completely. The song almost reaches its chorus before I finally put it on silent, as Felicity talks on....

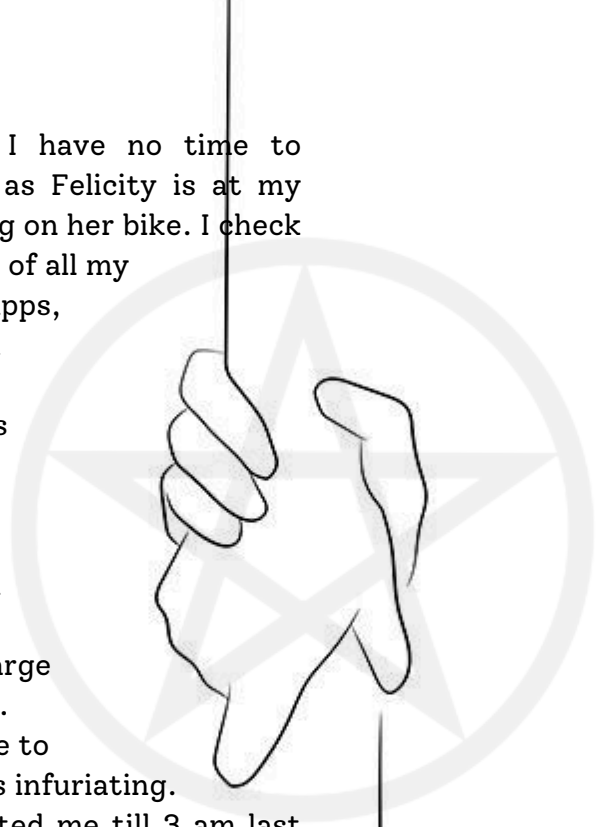
A woman requires around two hours to decide on an outfit, and the accompanying accessories, applying layers of makeup and in all, to get ready. Or at least that is how long it takes when that woman is me.

I feel like Wonder Woman, getting dressed at a spinningly fast speed. My thoughts are so muddled that I cannot remember how I got dressed, or how I ended up wearing a pink frilly top with biker leather

pants, but I have no time to dwell on it as Felicity is at my door, waiting on her bike. I check the settings of all my messaging apps, in case I had turned off notifications for any. Turns out I hadn't. I hear her call out for me again and barge out in anger. The bike ride to the venue is infuriating.

"Lance texted me till 3 am last night. He poured his heart out to me, recited his family history, his heartbreaks..." I trail on, desperate to get it out, for someone to hear. Felicity doesn't say anything throughout the ride, not even an "okay" or a "hmm" of acknowledgement.

"Please do not talk about your family being Satan worshippers, Natasha. You know my family is Catholic," quips Felicity, only to be met by my raised eyebrow. "We're not Satan worshippers, we're Esoterics. Besides, I'm agnostic and not like my family," I sigh, this having been a topic we had touched much too often. For the entirety of my life, I had been raised bereft of any religion: only when



# WHERE DO BROKEN HEARTS GO

RAUSHANI CHOPRA

I had turned 16 that I was offered the 'higher truth,' something the Esoterics supposedly possessed, something sacred that only the members of my family knew. From what I had been told, the traditions went deep into, as well as beyond, mainstream religion, and focused on spirituality. 16 was the age of 'initiation' into the family's sacred truths and practices, after extracting the promise of complete submission, as well as furthering of, the family's Esoteric practices. My rejection became the grounds of controversy, and to date, four years later, my grandmother still doesn't meet my eye.

"They believe everyone who doesn't belong to a religion to be a Satan worshipper. Just, do not touch upon the topic, or don't talk to my parents. They barely let me be friends with you, as it is, and..." Felicity blabbered on and on, nothing I hadn't heard of before. My self had always tethered onto Felicity's by some weird, invisible string, so even with all her overbearing thoughts, I could not help but stay close to her.

I decide to text him, I have to text him. What if he was still asleep? Or worse, what if he was sick? What if he was expecting me to text him first? As Felicity zooms through the city, I whip out my phone, asking Lance to show up to where we were headed. My heart swells and falls as the bubble indicating him typing a message appears, then disappears the next moment. Before I can know my fate, Felicity slams on the brakes to prevent an accident, knocking my phone off of my hands and into the traffic. I watch in horror as one car after the other drives over my phone, destroying it beyond any repair. The impending lecture from my

parents doesn't haunt me as much as the anticipation of Lance's arrival. Everyone around is calling my name, but I simply do not care.

"Natasha, do you want to eat this?", "Natasha, come sit with us,"

"Natasha, where are you lost?"

There he was. As perfect as ever with his messy hair and that form-flattering denim jacket. From the corner of my eye I could see Felicity's frown, the faint singing of "Happy Birthday" was there in the background, but I only saw him. He came! He came.

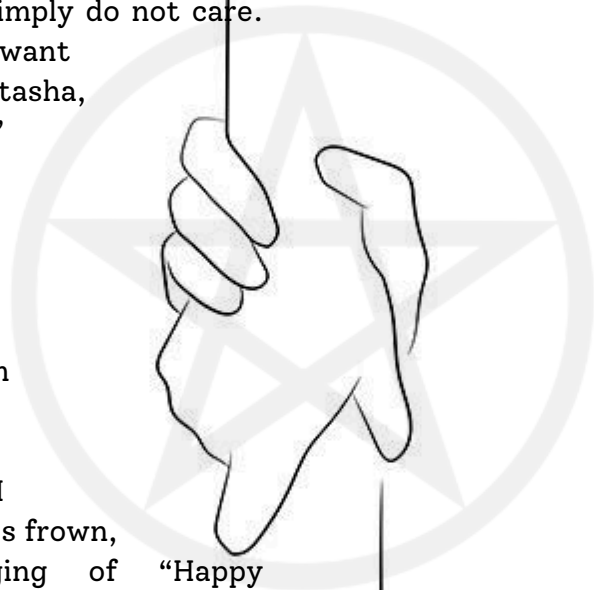
He must fawn over me. Why else would he come all the way?

The left side of my chest starts burning all of a sudden, red hot rage, not mellow warmth, as I had expected. I stand up from where I am sitting and face him.

"You bastard! Leave, leave right now, you piece of shit. Never show me your face ever again."

The outburst escapes my lips before I have a chance to rethink. All my desperation to hold him in my arms dissipates into resentment. My mind does not offer me the reason why. The faint singing is silent, all eyes are on me, but I only have eyes for him. I only have eyes for him as he raises an eyebrow and sneaks out as quietly as he had sneaked in.

Felicity approaches me, but I have lost any control of my senses. A stinging pain takes residence in my chest, my palms feel like they are on fire, but it goes away before I make sense of it. She backs down, her eyes searching mine as if she does not recognise me anymore. Without a word, I



watch her return to her party, the invisible string severing till it snaps.

In half an hour I was home. Felicity did not offer to drive me back home, which would bother me more if I wasn't a walking epitome of anxiety right now. I had to hail a taxi without my phone. I have used the phones of five different strangers to call Lance but to no avail. He's upset. What have I done? He came all the way for me. And I cussed him out. He deserves better! I will be better!

The arts and crafts table in my little sister's room has everything I need, so I raid it for supplies: chart papers and glitter pens and glitter tapes and...and...stamps and stickers...

I get down to work. This has to be perfect. He is perfect! I made a perfect man so upset! He will never take me back unless this is perfect! Rushing through my drawer, I sift through some books till I find what I am looking for.

Afroudakis, my surname, is written on the heavy book, which I stole on a particularly resentful night, as all the "initiated" outcasted me. The woman from my vision took my time taping all the borders of the chart paper, confessing my feelings for him, and making it as pretty as I possibly could. It is past my curfew so I won't be put out of my misery today. I don't have a boombox, but a love song on full volume from my mother's phone should work, while I hold up the chart in front of his balcony.

I can't sleep. I have to know what he is up to, what he is thinking. It is killing me from within. I turn on my TV to find something to pass the time and mindlessly settle on Doctor Strange, which I have watched multiple times before, as it becom-

-es the background soundtrack to my thoughts.

Lance floods my thoughts again, the sting in my chest and the burn in my palms returns.

My body feels like a mere vessel for unfamiliar angst.

White, hot light blinds me. "No...not again," I whimper, and I see a familiar woman, unearthly, eyes boring into mine once again. She beckons me to her without

words and disappears as I stumble into her arms. Gasping as the light fades away, I curl up on the bed, the movie still playing in the background. Doctor Strange is ascending to the Astral realm as I look up, when the light blinds me again, piercing through my skull, showing me some pages that feel oddly familiar takes up the front page, and I look on in horror as I realise who she is. Lilith. Satan's bride.

So I guess Felicity was right. My family does worship Satan.

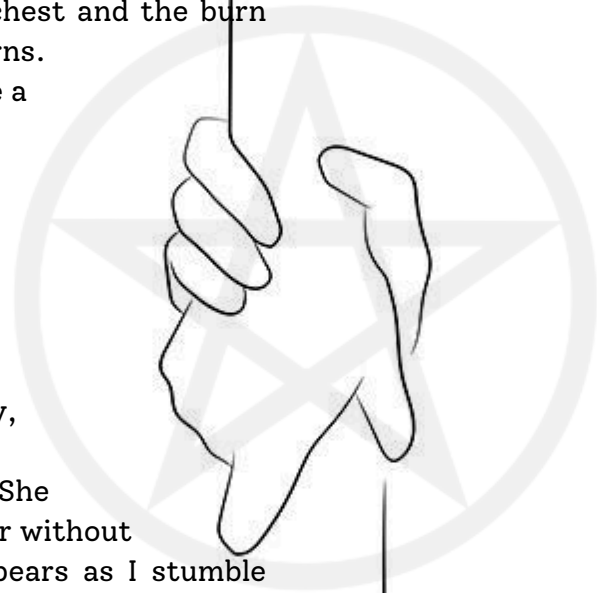
The next pages chart my family's history of faith, reading through which I gather that my ancestors worshipped Lilith, not Satan, and my current family worships no one. The culmination of centuries of spiritual traditions, beliefs, and practices turned them into Esoterics.

I flipped through the pages till I found the pages from my vision.

Scrawled across the pages:

**ASTRAL PROJECTION**

This spell allows an individual to transcend their current plane of existence, where they project themselves through their soul into a location of their choosing. The



physical body remains where the spell is cast, breathing but unconscious. The self that is projected onto the astral plane is unseen to bare human eyes unless a visibility spell is recited along with it.

I don't read any further. I have to do this. I have to know where Lance is and what he is up to, but I don't know if this will actually work. I mean, don't you have to be an "initiated" Esoteric to perform something of this sort? or, if all the fantasy I've watched proves to be true, a witch? a preacher of Lilith? Nonetheless, I skip to the objects needed to make the spell happen, piqued by my desperation and curiosity. It is a long list of miscellaneous things that I could never collect. I am about to keep the book back when I turn the pages and see a list of easier ingredients, only made easier by the fact that for this, I had to drip my blood. Scars on my wrist reaffirmed the fact that it was familiar enough.

I read the instructions on the first page and draw a huge occult star on my bedroom floor with black paint mixed with ashes of wood, which took the burning of many, many matchsticks to collect. Then I find all the candles that my family owns and place them above the star as per the floor chart on the pages. It doesn't take long to find a picture of Lance, which I am supposed to burn in the central candle, followed by salt and my blood. The knife slices cleanly through my wrist, and I watch amusingly as drop after drop my blood trickles down in the bloody concoction. All that is left is to lay down, and recite the spell. It takes a while to learn, but I catch on.

I lay down, spreading my arms to align with the star, close my eyes, and recite the spell thrice:

Vola anima per  
aeterna

Vola anima per  
aeterna

Vola anima per  
aeterna

I have never  
felt this  
weightless before.  
It is like floating  
through space.  
It is beautiful.

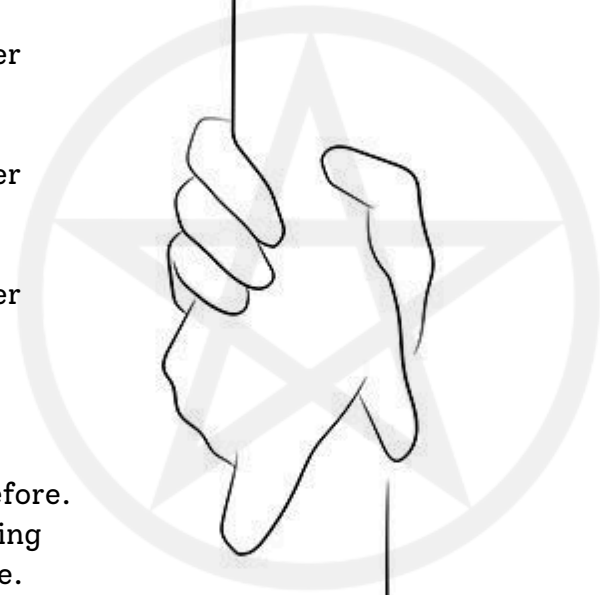
I am in Lance's room.

He is alone, gaming  
on his PlayStation. I let out a sigh  
of relief. He does not look  
particularly upset. He is wearing  
headphones, so that explains why  
he did not pick up any of my phone  
calls! He really is the one for me. He  
really is so sweet! He is gaming! He  
is....

A girl walks into his room. I don't  
know who she is, I have never seen  
her before, but my heart sinks as  
she makes her way into his lap,  
raising her lips to his. I cannot  
watch this. I need to go back. I need  
to-

I don't know what I need to do! How  
do I snap back into my body? I  
cannot move around freely, only till  
a few feet away from Lance. I watch  
in horror as the night unfolds. I am  
forced to watch the man I devoted  
myself to take another woman and  
be where I should have been.

In the next few days that follow, I  
understand that the spell binds me  
to Lance. Where he goes, my spirit  
follows. In the next week, the news  
of my "comatose" body reaches





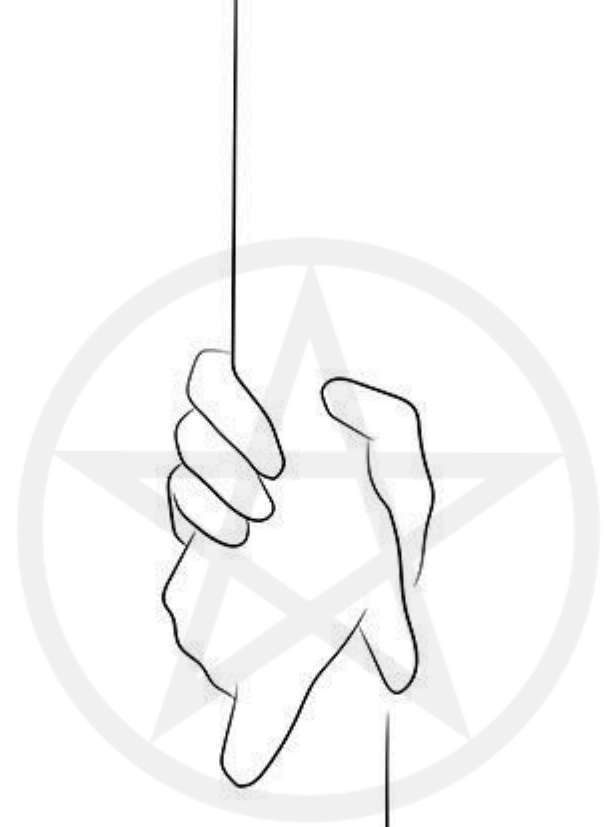
Lance. I don't know what hurt more, watching him with another woman or his indifference to the common explanation of my "condition." All I wanted was to be his. Now I am hopelessly his but he will never be mine.

I was there through it all, watched him fall in love. I watched him make love with the woman he loved. I watched them through their fights. I watched him as he picked out gifts for her. I watched him as he selected a ring for her. I watched them as he proposed to her. I watched them as they planned their wedding. I watched them as they tied their knot.

I followed them through their wedding night, through their honeymoon. Through their first born, second, and third.

I watched them as they attended the demise of my physical self, I watched them be there just because of society mandates, I watched him as he told her I was some girl obsessed with him. I watched him through everything.

I watched him as he died, surrounded by everyone he loved, even me. I now stand guard over his grave. My spirit is forever bonded to him. I don't know till when, perhaps when his physical self decomposes completely. I could never see the spell pages again so I cannot say. But for now, I watch him, I watch him, and I watch him.



WHERE DO  
BROKEN HEARTS GO



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ILHAN ISRAR

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# FILMMAKING IN THE FOG

In his Nobel prize-winning speech, Márquez mentions the inability of Eurocentric consciousness to comprehend subaltern realities. While problematising the tag of “magic” by the ostensible realist practitioners of Art, Márquez simultaneously emphasises the alienation of his culture as he refuses to fend off to the dominant European practices. He decides to engage with the reality of his own land. In a rather similar vein, with the emergence of the Greek Weird Wave, a postmodern film movement marked by the production of unsettling and pessimistic cinema, the filmmakers catch a country in the wake of one of the worst economic crises in modern times. The Great Recession triggered tales out of Greece that prompted the nation’s filmmakers to adapt to the new economic realities.

Henceforth, these Filmmakers in the Fog, a term coined by the pioneers, played not only with the acronym FOG – Filmmakers of Greece – but also with the title of director Theo Angelopoulos’s 1988 film *Landscape in the Mist*. The film essentially deals with two children crossing Greece in search of their father only to find mist in an alien world, an uncanny piece of undeveloped celluloid. Dimitris Papanikolaou, in his book *Greek Weird Wave– A Cinema of Biopolitics*, deciphered this metaphor as the filmmakers’ attempt to “shape a new period of Greek Cinema without the patronising presence of forefathers” and “the suffocating control of old production networks”. Therefore, the current essay intends to analyse one such pioneer, Yorgos Lanthimos, whose films capture a “messed up country”, “a messed up cinema” and “a scale of strangeness”, as the British media outlet *The Guardian* accentuated, falling prey to the decremental viewpoint that Márquez mentioned in his speech. The essay delves into Lanthimos's cinematic oeuvre, specifically focusing on *The Lobster* and *The Killing of a Sacred Deer*, examining his clever choice of ‘magical’ realist elements to portray a heightened sense of alienation in human experience.





Lanthimos brings the political background aptly into the cinematic realm, permeating his work with an avant-garde approach that challenges the medium's conventions. His renowned cinematic style is characterised by an idiosyncratic exploration of human relationships and societal norms. Lanthimos's filmography always deals with the unexpected, be it the plot, the characters, the detached camera angles, or the deadpan dialogues, because the world he inhabits is thoroughly devoid of expectations.

The *Lobster* explores such an idiosyncratic and stylised approach within a peculiar world that mirrors our own societal structures. The film centres upon a dystopian world where single individuals are mandated to find a romantic partner within a strictly regulated timeframe, or face transformation into an animal of their choosing. These “hotel guests” do possess a method to buy time, by engaging in hunting within the woods. We soon discover these preys as being the several individuals who have fled from the hotel, and have now created a guerrilla community in the woods.

Being a harsh commentator of romantic absolutism and fate, the film manifests a profound discomfort with the world, both in the awkward pitch of the performances and in the needlessly strict rules of ‘The Hotel’. Critic Kenan Behzat Sharpe further explores the political nuances of the metaphorical film. He interprets the plot as a “radical allegory” for the politics of neoliberalism prevalent in the Greek governmental structures. He discusses the film’s attack on familial structures to unmask how bodies within the system are “policed, surveilled, surveyed and transformed”. It exemplifies how individuals, mere subjects within structures, are presented with no real alternatives to choose from. Such a disposition leads to what Sharpe calls a situation that “lacks a coherent narrative for a rupture”. The idea of rupture becomes an important one in these seemingly ‘magical’ realist works where society’s iniquity is laid bare for the world to see.



The arbitrary societal rules and the characters' surprisingly stoic adherence to them amplifies the absurdity of human connection. It becomes a commentary on the inherent isolation within conventional relationship structures. Lanthimos achieves this through deadpan dialogue delivery, rigid compositions, and a deliberate lack of emotional expression, creating an atmosphere of detachment. This hauntingly unquestioned acceptance of the supernatural within the mundane, another major feature of the magical realist universe, is aptly captured in another film by the seemingly odd director.

Lanthimos exemplifies his penchant for crafting absurd narratives by infusion of supernatural elements of Greek tragedy in *The Killing of a Sacred Deer*. The film revolves around the character Stephen, whose ordinary life as an affluent and successful surgeon unravels as he becomes entangled with a mysterious young man with supernatural powers. The family's semblance is disrupted when Martin enters their lives, whose father died during Stephen's surgery. Driven by a sense of responsibility, Stephen meets with Martin, attempting to watch over him. However, Martin harbours ulterior motives for the family, and in typical Lanthimos fashion, the outcome is quite grisly. The narrative trajectory takes an ominous turn, blurring the boundaries between the rational and the inexplicable.

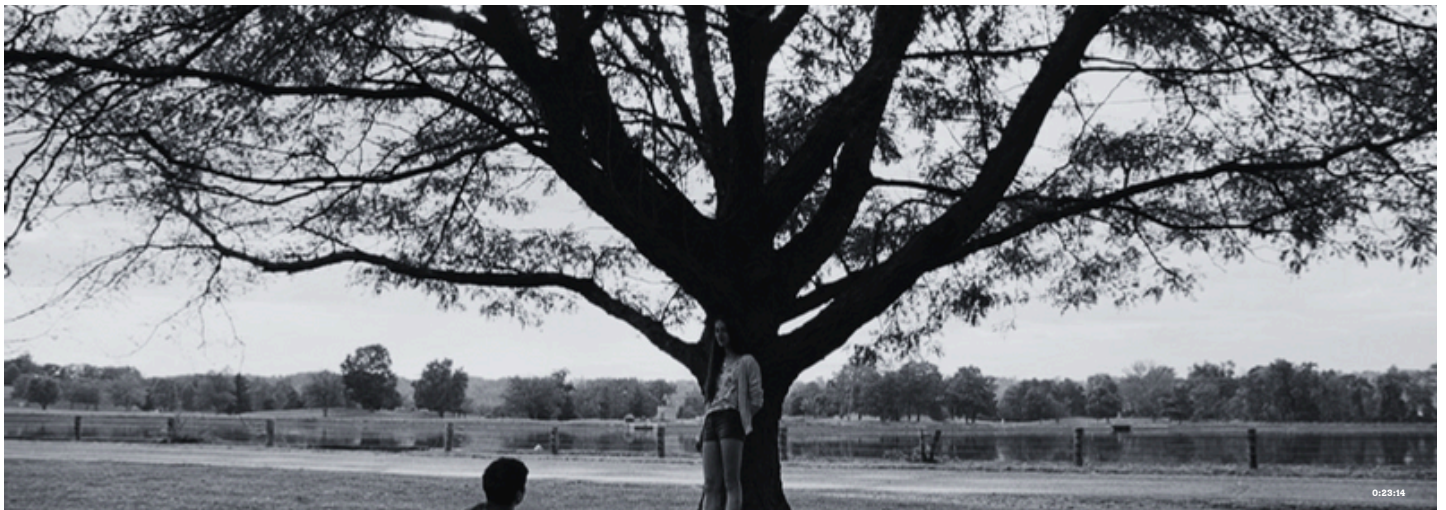
The film is a reworking of the Greek myth of Iphigenia. In a short summarisation, the story is about King Agamemnon hunting a sacred stag that angers the goddess Artemis. In retaliation, she hinders Agamemnon's military endeavours, demanding his daughter Iphigenia's sacrifice as the sole condition for appeasement. In a similar

fashion, as the strange condition gradually extends its grip on the family and intensifies, Steven is left with a difficult decision to make. He is posed with the task of taking the life of one family member, or all three would face inevitable death.

Lanthimos delves into authoritarian power structures in a manner that is resonant with the Greek Financial Crisis. *The Killing of the Sacred Deer* lays bare societal distrust, showcasing Steven's surgical mishap as the major tipping point in the film's conflict. Martin's resentment for his father's demise becomes a metaphor for the broader discontent brewing among the youth of Greece. The film explores the ramifications of Steven's actions, unmasking a web of mistrust toward authoritative figures in politics.

the narrative is not as detached from reality as one might make out. *The Killing of a Sacred Deer*, like *The Lobster*, blends these elements to create a nightmarish narrative ridden with mythical and supernatural undertones.

Before the Ninety-First Academy Awards Ceremony in 2019, the Association of Greek Cinema Directors and Producers (ESPEK) released a video expressing encouragement for Lanthimos. "Greek Cinema needs love. You know this better than anyone, Yorgos", they said. These filmmakers associated with the movement are eccentric, dark, and even macabre, mirroring Greece's position during this period. The nation, like these filmmakers, appears to have deviated into an unfamiliar and uncharted territory. Thus, the cinematic expression captures Greece's divergence into a sense of



In a similar exploration evident in *The Lobster*, Lanthimos crafts a world where government policies curtail freedom. The absurdist dialogue, mirroring the government's nonsensical actions, creates a parallel with Greek society's struggle to comprehend the drastic economic changes. The peculiar policies governing the characters' lives echo the complexities of the harsh social and financial landscape of the country.

peculiarity, one that is quite vulnerable to fall into the mistaken tags of "magical" realities.

In Lanthimos's world, love is a structure that crumbles when confronted with various human motivations. With characters constantly on a lookout to maintain reputations, avoid discomfort, overcome adversaries, or simply survive,

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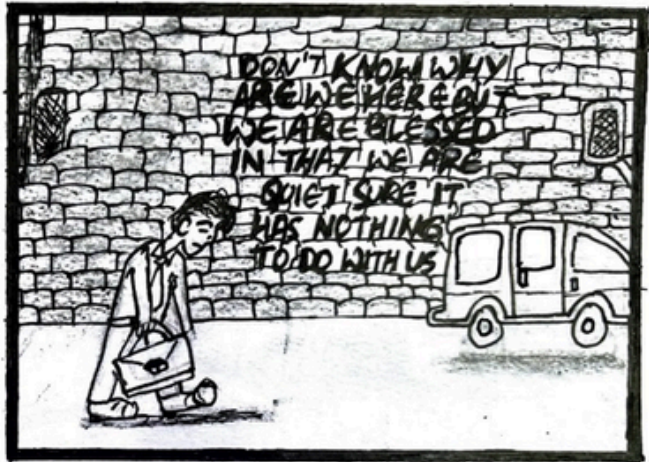
*The Killing of a Sacred Deer* (2017), fiction, 121 minutes. Director: Yorgos Lanthimos. Element Pictures, A24 and Film4, Ireland and USA.

*The Lobster* (2015), fiction, 119 minutes. Director: Yorgos Lanthimos. Screen Ireland, Eurimages, Nederlands Fonds voor de Film, Greek Film Centre, and British Film Institute, Ireland, Netherlands, Greece, and UK.



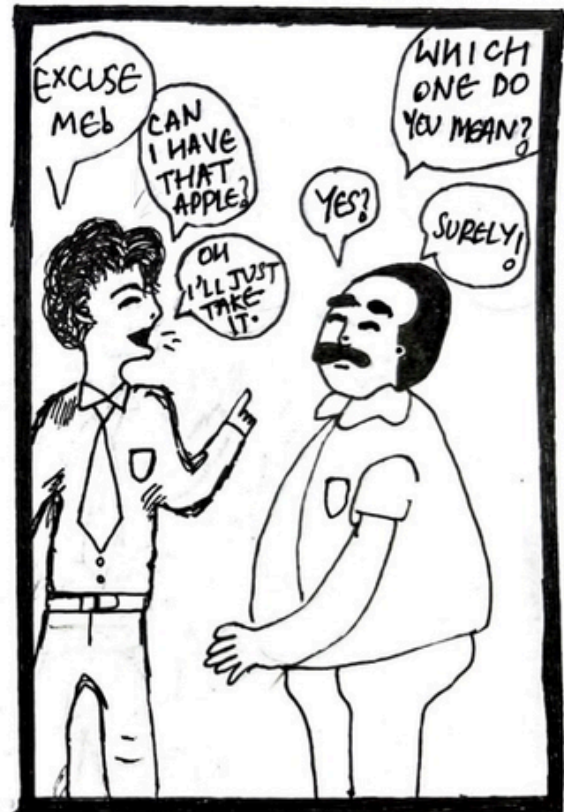
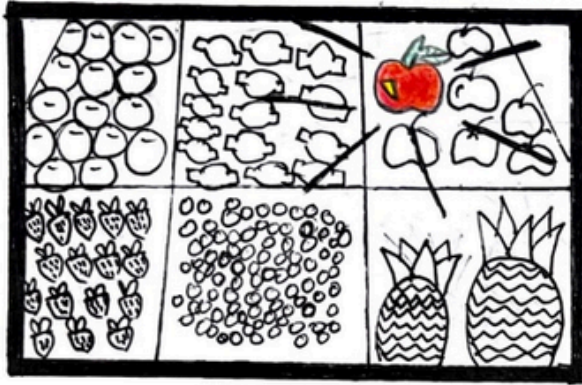
# ECHOES OF

Ennie



THIS IS JOE, A NEWSPAPER  
CARICATURIST. ♡





Only an imagination rich enough to accept the reality will be able to pick it up.

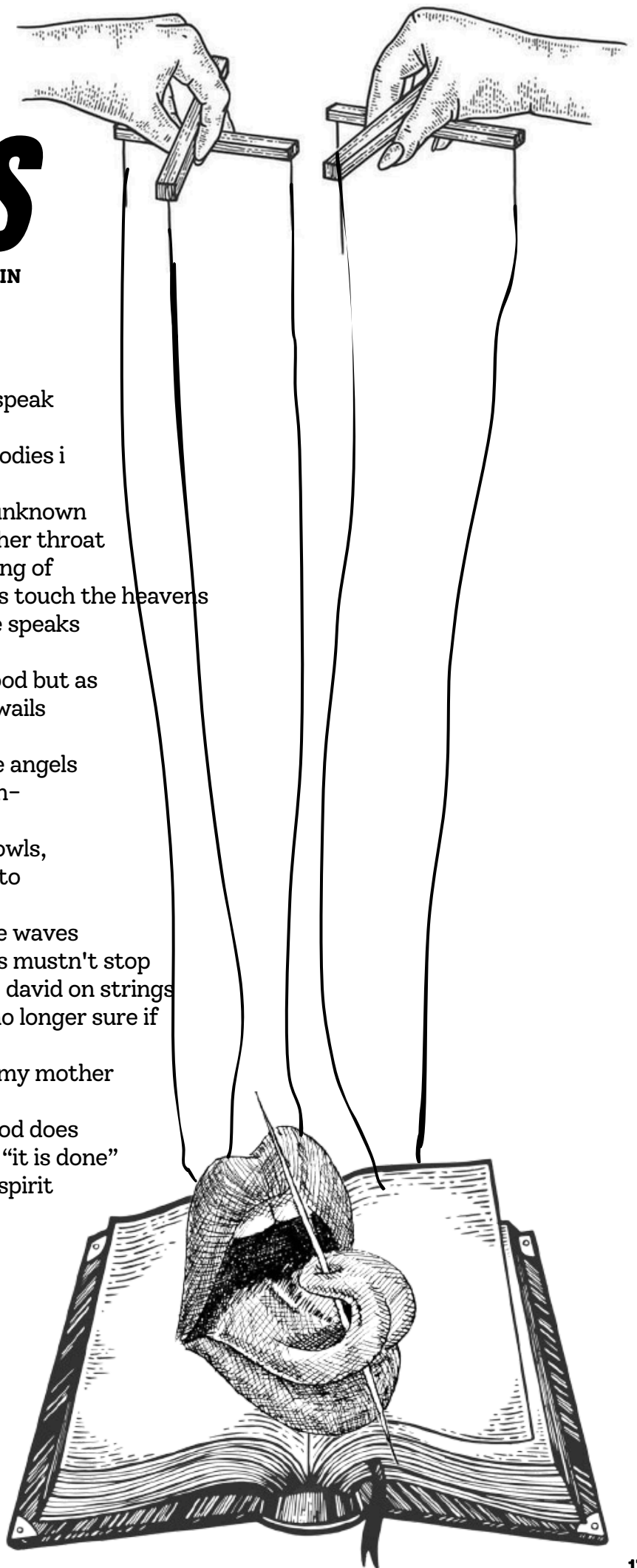
# IMAGINATION



# TONGUES

SHIRLEY GOODWIN

the priest asks the congregation to speak  
in tongues  
and a flutter of screams arise from bodies i  
cannot locate  
i am mute because the tongues are unknown  
but my mother makes magic within her throat  
she raises her arms towards the ceiling of  
the faith home and i think her fingers touch the heavens  
they must- because the tongues she speaks  
seem like jacob's dream to me  
at home she talks to me in womanhood but as  
father walks within the church, she wails  
and moans and cries  
it is not a battle between her and the angels  
but a peace offering- a truce, a hymn-  
that god seems to refuse to accept  
the screams soon turn to guttural howls,  
is father climbing back on the stairs to  
the sky  
someone- someone among the white waves  
pretends to speak for him- the voices mustn't stop  
people clap and people sing, they are david on strings  
the word is the puppeteer and i am no longer sure if  
it is with god  
i scream and i howl, i try to emulate my mother  
and i realise the unknown tongues  
have alphabets more than womanhood does  
they begin at "i thirst" and end with "it is done"  
only to resurrect and leave behind a spirit  
so holy, i sob as i share it with her.  
the tongues are no longer unknown,  
you must know, they flutter  
with fire borrowed from hell only to  
summon the heavens above.



# YAMI NO KIRETSU



## ORIGAMI'S DARK FISSURE

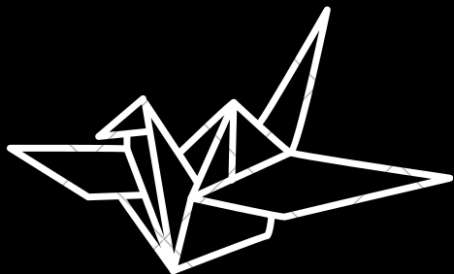
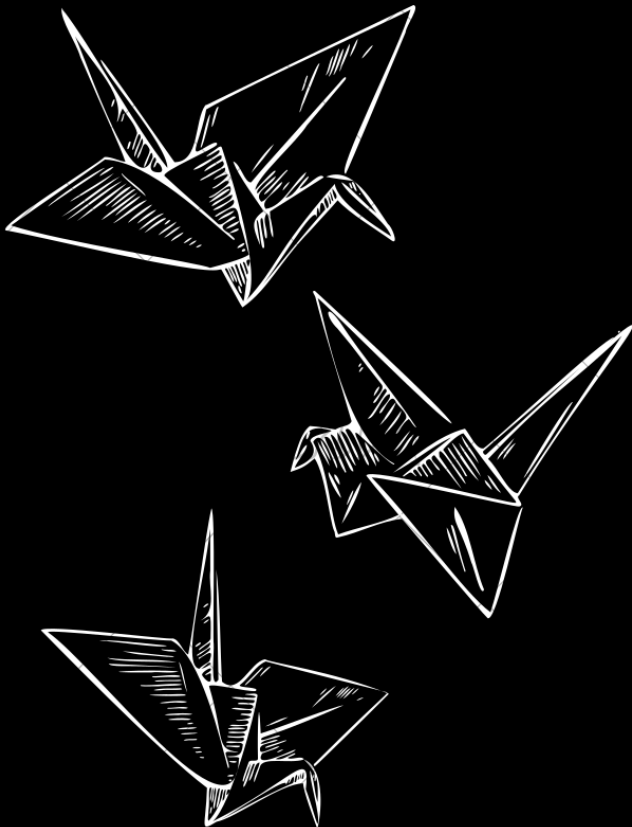
BRAHMNOOR KAUR

Breaking News! We've just gotten news of a new murder. This adds up to three murders in a week. The current victim is a male with a deep slit in his throat. The Police are searching for evidence and suspect it to be the work of the same murderer. They've found a pattern. The wounds of the three deceased match up. The police advises people to stay on alert and carry a taser or pepper spray around. Further information—"

"Well, it was their fault. They shouldn't have tortured someone that much" I said, switching off the television with a smirk and walking towards the kitchen to get myself a chilled beer. I needed this after the long, tiring day I've had.

Grabbing the pack of origami, I head towards the living room again. I sat near the table and examined the weapon that killed the poor Mr.Youko and started to fold the origami. Folding and turning the paper, I formed a kunai knife with sharp edges. I took it in my hand and looked at it firmly while gripping it tightly. There it was, a real kunai knife in my hand, ready to slit throats. While running my finger through its edges, I received a slight cut. "Ohh, you are sharper than the previous one," I said and chuckled. With a harsh jerk, it turned into an origami kunai again. "The police are searching for evidence, let's give them a real challenge", uttering those words to my origami kunai, I took out a lighter from my pocket and set it on fire.

I chuckled, thinking about how those poor investigators would never be able to get to the bottom of this. Finishing up the beer, I got up. "Let's go Sunako, you have a class tomorrow." and moved towards my bedroom.





I woke up the next morning with the sound of my alarm. Three down and two left. After getting ready for class, I headed out for school. "Hello Mrs. Keiko, Hello Mr. Akihito" I wished my neighbours with a smile. It was a good day. I was getting closer to my aim.

Reaching the school, I wished my colleagues and then went to my class. "Good morning, Mr. Sunako!", my little kindergarten students wished me. "Good morning children. So, are you guys ready for the class?" looking at their enthusiastic reply, I asked them to take out their origami packs and start to fold along with me. Why can't everyone be like them? Innocent; without any evil in their hearts or minds.

The day at school ended, and I was about to return home when I got a call from my friend, Haru. "Hi, did you hear Youko was murdered yesterday, to which I replied with an exclamation of shock. "I guess we should go to his funeral today. Whatever he did, he was still our classmate" With 'Utmost grief' I proposed my idea to him. At least I'd be able to relive the memory of him begging me for his life by looking at how devastated his family would be. I asked Haru to pick me up and so we could go together to the funeral.

We reached his memorial service place and as I thought about how good of a day it was, it got better. I found the other two- Yoru and Kuroi, Mr. Youko's friends. It was so pleasing to see them cry for their friend. After paying my so-called respects to Youko, I walked over to them, and with utter devastation, exclaimed, "It is so painful to hear about his death. What can we do after all? Maybe he is paying back for his bad deeds. Just like the other two. You guys take care of yourselves." Patting their shoulders, I leaned forward just to whisper in their ear "It's all Karma." I sneaked in a chuckle just for dramatic effects. It was pleasant to witness that feeling of terror on their faces.

Celebrating the day, I went back home with good food. I quickly took a seat and was about to start eating when the doorbell interrupted me. I groaned looking at the clock that read ten. As I opened the door, there I was, standing face to face with my targets, their faces engraved with expressions of fear.

"Sunako, can we talk, please?" Yoru said in a pleading voice. "What is it?" I asked them to which Kuroi requested to let them in. I felt something was off, yet I invited them inside.

The moment they were inside my house, they got on their knees and began sobbing uncontrollably. "We are sorry Sunako, we wronged you. Please, forgive us." "What made you ask for forgiveness after so many years of torture that you did to me?" I questioned them with a scoff. "Our lives are in danger. Only you can save us", said Yoru. Kuroi continued looking at me. They had no idea that the danger was right in front of them. "We went to a tengenjutsu, the fortune-teller, and he told us that the person we bullied and tortured in our high school would come back to us. The Karma will come back. If you forgive us, we might be saved."

Listening to this, I started laughing my lungs out. Grinding my teeth, I leaned forward and asked, "Didn't he tell you that he might resort to murder instead of forgiveness? You want me to forgive you guys after all you did to me? The filth you uttered, the torture you made me go through? This scar..." Rolling down the turtle neck of my sweater, I revealed the big scar. The scar is now a reminder of what I do and why I do it.

I was just a simple guy who never troubled anyone. I had no friends. Maybe it was because of the rumors about my family committing some fraud. They were falsely accused. Our family was poor and sentenced to prison for the rest of their lives. They died in grief, leaving me in this cruel, lonely world. I somehow managed to keep myself in school and tried to live. I found solace in making origami figures.

There was a connection between me and my craft. I felt at peace whenever I made those figures. In high school, during my spare time, I used to silently craft figures out of origami. I tried to keep myself in the shadows because I was bullied for something that neither I nor my parents ever did.

Then came a day when their brutality reached its peak. I was simply making my origami figures in a corner when I felt something wrapping around my neck. It was a thick coir rope. They found me. They put the rope

around my neck like a leash and dragged me out. It pricked me. I was choking. Unable to breathe, yet they made me roam like a dog, uttering filth about me while jerking the rope again and again. I could only hiss at my pain and try to loosen that tight grasp. Blood started to cover up the rope. And when they were satisfied, they left me there to die. It was Haru who saved me from dying. He was the only one who came forward to help me. Maybe because he was new here and didn't know about those rumours yet.

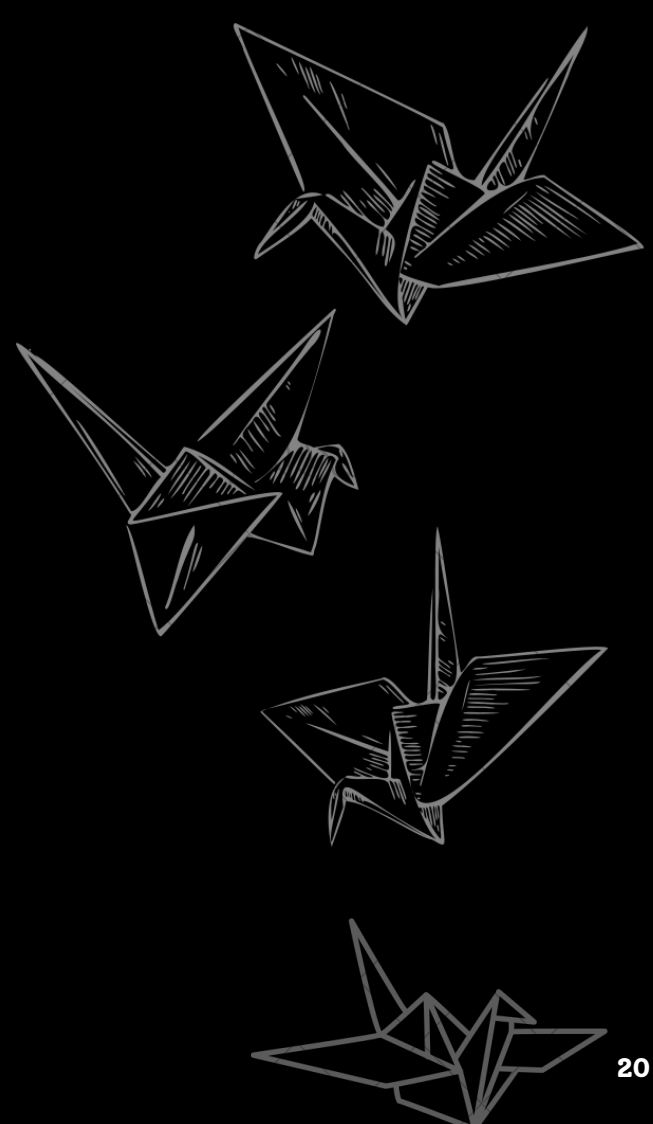
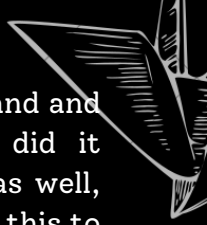
I cannot forget the pain and humiliation. Gulping down that bitter memory, I continued, "These scars that you gave me became a torturous reminder of your doings and my revenge. I want you to experience the pain that I went through. There's no way I'm letting you guys go. Your death will come." Instead of me, they were the ones who started laughing. "Do you really think we're here for your forgiveness? It's such a shame that you are still an idiot." They showed me the police alert they'd sent. Kuroi continued, "We have notified the police that it is you we suspect, and they will be here within five minutes. You can't do anything now."

"You thought I'd beg you to let me go?", I asked with a scoff. Taking out kunai knives from each side and tightening my hold on them, I looked at them firmly while asking the confused figures standing in front of me, "What was it that I told you? Death will come?" Diverting my gaze towards them, I saw their shocked pale faces and continued, "Well, let me correct it." "W-wha-att iis-" "Your death Has come." I cut them off by piercing their throats. "You-" they couldn't speak and fell on their knees while I continued, "When you come ask for forgiveness, you should be on your knees just like this". With this, I slit their throats open, and their blood oozed out like confetti, celebrating my victory.

The only good thing that happened to me because of that incident was my encounter with origami's power. When I reached home and saw my origami creations that day, I was enraged. I took the origami flower in my hand. While looking at it, I tightened my fist to crush it. But to my surprise, it turned into a

real flower. Unbelievably, I jerked my hand and it turned into an origami flower. I did it repeatedly with other origami figures as well, and that was when I realized how to put this to use.

I heard the siren of the police. "These-" I quickly took out the kunai knives from their throats and went towards the city I'd created with origami. I knew something like this would happen one day. Taking out the origami caricature of myself from the city, I let it come to life and cut its throat with the kunai as well. It lay along with Yoru and Kuroi. On hearing the doorbell, I immediately jerked the knives back to origami and brought the city to life. Now there were loud thuds on the door. The door could have broken at anytime. I entered the city and with a hard hit on the roof, I turned it back to origami while lighting up my lighter. I wasn't sure what would happen. And the next moment I saw, I was inside the city.





# EXPLORING MAGIC REALISM IN LIFE OF PI

SIRJAN KAUR

Magic realism finds a vivid expression in Yann Martel's "Life of Pi." Through the remarkable journey of its protagonist, Piscine Patel, Martel constructs a narrative that transcends the confines of reality, beckoning one into a realm where the 'unreal' seamlessly intertwines with the ordinary. This profound capacity evokes a reality that stretches beyond mere imagination and heightens its meaning and message. Hence, Martel's narrative turns into an unconventional way of story-telling that effortlessly blurs the lines between truth and fiction, birthing a plot full of magical elements that play within the realm of what one would call realism.

The novel follows the journey

of Pi Patel, a young Indian boy who survives after the Japanese cargo ship carrying him and his family along with a collection of zoo animals, from India to Canada, sinks in the Pacific Ocean. He finds himself stranded on a lifeboat. Pi becomes a castaway for 277 days, sharing his close space with a majestic Bengal Tiger named Richard Parker. Out of this adventure comes Pi's survival story which has two versions- one where he survives with some wild animals while the other where he survives with other crew members including his mother, a sailor and a cook. With the telling of the second version, Pi completely dismisses the existence of the first version, obliterating all

the dynamic details and his unreal, seemingly magical experience with the talking tiger and the carnivore island. Nevertheless, Pi finds himself using the framework of the first story to make up the second version. The erasure of the first world impacts the being of the second. In this way, the second version stays dependent on the first.

The functional fictional world then multiplies into two: the "real" fictional world and the "other" fictional world. Both these contain magical events where the situations defy and contradict the laws of nature and being and are hard to believe. Firstly, it is a bewildering thought for a boy to survive 277 days on a

lifeboat with a predator. With the existence of Richard Parker being a talking tiger, the communication between Pi and Richard Parker is thought-provoking for crossing boundaries of the impossible and makes us question this version: Was it Pi's projection? His survival strategy? The impact of dehydration and hunger? In any case, it is mystical not only to have with one's self a talking tiger but also to tame it to create an understanding and endure the prevailing conditions.

Secondly, the surreal landscape, specifically the striking algae and the carnivore island add a layer of depth and complexity to the idea of magic realism. Although these instances of contrasting banality don't baffle Pi as he simply accepts the ongoing situation, it seems impossible to believe the floating poisonous island of meerkats, the trees that have fruit with teeth and the overall justification of tigers on boats with boys. The descriptions of the freshwater pond and the nightlife of the island showcase the confrontation and clashing of the real and the other world. The union of conflicting perspectives paints a fantastical picture of a story of survival. The element of

magic realism rises with vivid descriptions of ontological characters like the flying fish, the whale, bioluminescent algae, the meerkats, etc. The communication between Pi and these characters displays magic realism in a fine way where the reader is left guessing the possibility of a similar reality.

The ending of both the stories of the fictional world encompasses a note of ambiguity. It strikes a sense of inquiry and a state of reflection. It is significant how elements of magic realism break barriers and settle into the true reality, becoming the cause of the existence of both versions and the reason for the impact both versions have on each other. The enchanting narrative becomes successful in showing the acceptance of magic and the supernatural which usually defy the rules of concepts and categories.

# EXPLORING MAGIC REALISM IN LIFE OF PI

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# MAGIC & REALISM IN THE ANIME- DEATH NOTE

AGASTYA SHARMA

Magic Realism is a genre that blends fantastical elements in everyday life settings. Two oxymoronic terms, magic, and realism, seemingly come together to form a genre of its own. It offers a unique element of perception. It prompts us to question how what might be magical to one person could be considered an ordinary reality to another. This genre prompts audiences to question their perceptions of reality and imagination, presenting a world where the fantastical and the mundane coexist seamlessly. It can be seen both as an entrance of magic in reality or a depiction of reality in a majestic world.

There are numerous examples of movies, novels, short stories, animes, and mangas that explore the genre of Magic Realism. “Death Note” is one such man-

-ga that delves into the nuances of it. Eponymous to a fantastical book in the manga, the “Death Note” is a notebook used by the Shinigami (Kami, i.e., God of Death in Japanese Mythology) to end the lives of people. Whenever a Shinigami writes a name in the notebook, the person dies. A Shinigami named Ryuk deliberately drops his extra Death Note in the human realm. However, the notebook is picked up by a school prodigy named Light Yagami, the protagonist. Subsequently, the manga revolves around the life of the genius Light as he makes use of the “Death Note” to end the lives of the ones he considers criminal. The rest of the plot follows how Light comes to butcher several individuals under the name of Kira (killer in Japanese) and the steps taken by authorities to encounter



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him and cease the bloodbath.

The Magical realm and the Real, the two contradictory terms, are amalgamated together with the falling of the "Death Note" from Shinigami's world into the world of humans. The two ostensibly opposite lines seem to blur as a fantastical element enters the human world. Ryuk acts as a catalyst by deliberately dropping the "Death Note" because of his "boredom", setting up the notebook for its magical encounters in the real world. The manga mentions how the "Death Note" is a bond between Light, that is, the human and Ryuk, the Shinigami. Henceforth, it is a testament to the very link between the contrasting worlds. The existence of Ryuk and later Rem, the Shinigami, in the human world, is in itself a feature of magic realism.

The majority of the suspects that Light kills Ultima die of a heart attack, as per the terms and conditions mentioned in the "Death Note." This raises suspicion among the intel and police. The anime morphs into a psychological thriller as another genius, named L. Lawliet (L for short), is hired by the government to catch Kira. This "battle of geniuses" brings about a realistic story blended with unnatural deaths of people because of the "Death Note."

A part of Magic Realism's essence is displayed by handing the fantastical book to a student who works under realistic tactics. The ingression of such a book elevates his persona and abilities remarkably. However, the other characters confront him with other realistic elements of knowledge and manipulation. Light outperforms everyone by prudently taking careful steps and leaving the absence of any proof against his murders. Even his father is fooled by him. L constantly suspects him but is unable to find proof against him. The use of the notebook and

the presence of it are the only magical elements as both Light and L use their mind to resist and defy each other.

Another essence of this complicated magical reality is depicted by the idea of Shinigami. On one hand, people not belonging to Japanese culture and ones aloof to its historical context consider the idea of Shinigami as something fantastical and not reality. On the other hand, people who are immersed in the culture and ideas may consider the Shinigami's existence as a breathing reality. As aforementioned, what can be magic for one might be the reality for the other.

When a person hands over the Death Note, their memories go away with it. The memories return only when they touch the Death Note again. The Notebook becomes a bridge between the magic and the real. By touching it, people can see the Shinigami and enter the ostensibly magical world from the realm of tangible reality. Their memories related to the fantastical object are regained by touching it.

While a "magical" side is depicted by Light's actions, L's abilities showcase no use of supernatural methods and portray the "real" tactics and techniques that amalgamate together to bring out Death Note as a work of Magic Realism. Death Note adapts the genre of Magic Realism as Shinigamis, Gods of Death, a fantastical book with supernatural powers to kill a person, is ultimately set up in the real world. The anime encompasses the changes in the order of the world through the addition of these magical elements and how they are countered by tangible beings just with the power of their intellect. Death Note thereby serves as one of the best examples of anime that depicts Magic Realism.



# WHISPERS IN HENNA

SARGUN KAUR



Chocolate-coloured liquid threads of mehndi are plummeting to the surface of my hands, an ornamental simulacrum of Ganga Maiya and her tributaries eddying in and out of the destiny lines of my palms. The lines are spreading and flowing over the hard ridges engraved into my hands (years of testimony to the painter inside me), and finally, like a stream of reassurance, cascading down the curves of my hands, they percolate the air with anticipation of my impending marriage tomorrow. Ironically, I have been transformed into a canvas, and the mehndi-wala has become the artist.

Due to the guests in other rooms, my mother is sorting out my wedding lehenga in my home studio. She peeps through the door, stares at my hands and hollers, “Bhaiya! Are you sure this will darken? Rang thoda halka lagra hai. I think you’ve brought in the sasti waali. We’re paying you 1200 rupees, why aren’t you using the one that comes out darker than Amul ka dark chocolate? It’s her wedding, so this design should trump all the other ones. She’s also an artist, ask her what she wants.”

“Arey Bhabhi, don’t you worry! The darker ones are always light-toned when being applied to the hands of a Dulhan as pretty as yours. Once you work the magic of lemon and sugar, just wait for a night. Amul ka chocolate won’t be able to compete in front of your bitiya’s hands. I guarantee that the mehndi will turn out to be so dark that the dulha babu will love your daughter more than you love her.” The mehndi-wala spews out this response to my mom, like a formulaic ensemble of words he uses as a tagline, to reassure every customer, every mother who is worried about her daughter’s future and every bride. A bride, who, being a modern woman,

still grows up to endorse the relationship between the darkness of her mehndi and the probability of her future as a married wife with an amatory husband, who passionately cares for her, sides with her in the ghar ghar ka saas-bahu feud, fractures into a being of utter devotion for her; someone she can brag about to her friends. It is like a formula, speed is directly proportional to distance and the colour of her mehndi is directly proportional to the love her husband has for her.

...

I'm "wife"— I've finished that— I'm "Woman" now. This is the second last stage of respect that a woman can earn from the people around her. Her barter to fulfil her duty as a respectable member of the society has finally reached its pinnacle. It's time to cash out on the labyrinth of henna that has ingrained itself in my body. I lie here in this bed with him, on my first day as a married woman, thinking about how everything I do today is going to set a precedent for the rest of my life. He starts speaking from beside me.

"Are you sure you can't postpone it a little? After all, it's just been two days since the marriage. I am sure the painting can wait."

The mehndi wala was indeed right. The lemon and sugar set up a hawan on my hands that night. I can remember the exact moment when the chocolate-coloured network, almost like a corporation working towards closing its biggest client, reached the end of its project, the apex, and turned into the walnut brown apparatus it is now. I know that every particle in that mehndi was working towards turning my fate.

"I have a painting to work on. This marriage isn't going to change my dedication towards my art." My sternness is a response to what I've seen my married friends go through. This is my precedent.

He shuts up and lets me walk out of the room.

"If it's so important, how about you make it up to me with a coffee?"

When I decided to marry this man, I made a promise to myself. I did not want to be one of those women who give up their liberties for the sake of a happy married life. That is one of the primary reasons I refused to live with an unknown man's family. So when I enter the

kitchen and prepare to make two coffees instead of a whole breakfast for a family of seven, I can't help but be a little relieved. I tap my hands with a wet washcloth instead of washing them. I don't want the colour to fade. As long as it darkens, he's going to like me more. As I place the milk on the gas stove, I fetch the coffee beans from the pantry. I start by grinding them. They start breaking up into small granules, a whole fragmenting, breaking, downsizing of them into something like sawdust. I start noticing how the mehndi in my hands is almost darker than the coffee I'm grinding. As soon as I notice this, I can't help but notice shades of brown in everything I see. The shelf, the ceiling, the coffee container, the spoons, the fridge, even the milk; the brown starts seeping into the crux of tangibility itself. I stand in the middle of the kitchen and see the brown trickle into the knick-knacks of everything around me. It is almost like when one's under the effects of cannabis and every colour starts to become a little accentuated. However, the only difference is, that it's all brown. Since brown has decided to seep its way into all that is; in protest, I have decided to paint a vibrant scene out of the wedding: a mix-match of colours that stand as a barricade against the monochrome in the kitchen. I want the canvas to swim in a little bit of green. It has nothing to do with brown. Then I go for yellow. Red. Blue. Purple. Orange. The upcoming exhibition is an experiment of colours. However, there's a corner on the left that I can't work on with the way I'm sitting. The whole painting is vibrant with colours. It has no brown. It is nowhere near the colour of my mehndi. Brown is sacred and it belongs to my hands. However, that one white spot I can't reach keeps disrupting the unity of my painting. As soon as I stand up to work on it, my alarm buzzes and I remember I have to pack up a lunch for him.

I am a little scared of the kitchen. The brown's a little too much and my friends warned me to not make it the centre of my being. But After all these colours I used in the painting, the brown is a spectre in the back of my mind. It's a little childish if I think about it. It's just a colour. It's not his fault that the kitchen is brown. After all, it's the colour of my mehndi

that cemented his love for me. I enter the kitchen and the monochrome doesn't look that bad. I open up a cabinet to reach for the wooden ladle. The ladle is a lighter shade of brown. The way everything in here sits in contrast with my mehndi is a little bizarre.

The brown and the mehndi are constantly in my sight, even as I'm stirring the bhurji. The colour has darkened. It has transformed from a walnut brown to a dark chocolate brown. This is a good thing. It means that the marriage was a good decision. I pack up his lunch and place it on the wooden dining table. The moment it touches the surface, all light goes out. I am left standing in a sea of dark, treading my way through an unknown home. I have barely taken three steps when the light comes back on. My skin feels peculiarly susceptible to the warm air around me. As I look around, I see a schema of wooden hues all over the house, floating around in my vision, in the foreground, muting all the colours around and imposing an almost three-dimensional effect on my eyes. It feels so similar to when one's been in the sunlight for too long and then the artificial indoor lights seem depressed. The brown has taken over.

...

My days have been busy. When he goes to the office, I spend the day setting up this house, in preparation of three meals a day; in addition to the the time I spend giving updates to my mother-in-law on call, I also work on the laundry. When he comes back home, he tells me all about the arguments that happen in his office and how they liked the lunch I packed. The elaborate packing up of the lunches. It is now a dance I play in the brown kitchen. The brown works with me and for me. My mom called up: the best way to a man's heart is through his stomach. So now the mehndi works with me to prepare an elaborate labyrinth that leads up to a dream. The dream I inherited from my mother: the dream of a caring husband, who gets me flowers after office, who doesn't leave his dirty socks lying around because he knows I'll have to pick them up, who hires house help for us and who prepares his own food because he knows I have to work on my paintings. I still haven't been able to work on that leftover white spot. I

always catch it at edge of my painting, accusing me of being a bad feminist.

...

It's Sunday today. I don't have to prepare food because we order in. I planned to wake up early in the morning and work on my painting. I prepare my coffee in the brown kitchen. I sit on a chair and think of working my way up to the top, finessing the lines and colours. I still haven't decided what I'm going to do with the white spot, the spot that keeps leering at me, accusing me, staring back as a mirror, a white blank space of absolution. As I start to mix the colours in, I realise that my mehndi still hasn't faded out. It has gotten darker. The brown irks me. I have to do something about it if I have to concentrate on the painting. I decide to paint over it. I have to cover up lines and designs all over my hands. So, I trace in with lavender paint. I'm almost halfway through when I hear the washroom door closing. He's awake.

This is the last thing I do. The best way to a man's heart is through his stomach. My mother always said that the real reason my father agreed to let me attend an art school instead of an engineering college was because the day I decided to tell him about it, I prepared tea. She tells me about my tea. She says a tea crosses oceans when it comes to winning arguments with men. So I'm going to prepare a tea. I'm going to tell him about the prospective house help. I'm going to show him the brown colour of my mehndi. I'm going to present it as proof of how much he loves me.

I walk towards the brown kitchen sink and wash my hands. The lavender washes off and the mehndi emerges anew. The brown again. It is darker. I fetch the chai-patti from the cupboard and realise that my mehndi is actually as dark as black. It matches the chai-patti. This is a sign. It's working on his love for me. I am going to hire house help. I prepare the tea and put it on a tray. I then realise that I left the caps off my paints. They're going to dry out. As I put down the tray and turn around towards my makeshift studio, the lights go out. I've lived in this home long enough to have figured my way around it in the dark. I feel my way through the kitchen but I somehow never reach the exit. I call out

for him. As an answer, A light comes on in my studio and I realise he's standing in front of my painting. No. I am going to hire house help. He cannot do anything to the painting. I try to find a way to distract him. I call out to him and show him my mehndi. Then I realise that the lights are out. I think turn right towards my painting. As I hold onto the table for support, I get a glimpse of my hands. The light from the studio gives me enough light to look at it. The mehndi is as black as the dark around me. I then look at him standing in my studio right in front of the painting. I scream out at him. I still cannot find my way to the painting. I remember that I keep a torch light in the bathroom.

I turn left towards the bathroom. The torch light is in the vanity. I keep checking back to see if he's still standing in front of my painting, I reach the basin and wash my hands. I try to scrape the mehndi off my hands. I know the soap doesn't work; I still cannot help but try. I give it up and pick up the torchlight. As I find my way to the makeshift studio, the lights come back on. I look at my hands and find the brown mehndi still there. I reach the studio.

He is standing in front of my painting. His hands are smeared with brown and he has a brush full of brown paint in his hands. The white spot on my painting is now a brown space that stares back at me with a harsher accusation.

# ARE EYES A WINDOW TO THE SOUL?

ARSHDEEP KAUR

On one front, Oxford dictionary defines Eyes as “a specialized light-sensitive sensory structure of animals that in nearly all vertebrates, most arthropods, and some mollusks is the image-forming organ of sight”. Whereas, in complete contrast, William Shakespeare pens the quote “The eyes are the window to your soul.” The idea that the eyes are portals to the soul has long captured the attention of people, appearing in everything, ranging from contemporary literature and art to folklore and old tales. This disjunct between the multiple ways this human sensory organ is perceived indicates the fact that they transcend mere biological function. Instead, they are loaded with symbolism, serving as a metaphorical representation of inner thoughts and emotions. As an additional testament, it will be appropriate to note how across various cultures and all over history, the notion that eyes serve as a gateway into the depths of one's being has persisted. With such a notion, there is a recognition of something profound, something beyond mere physicality. Some typified instances where one could sense this metaphysical nature of eyes are: a fleeting glance exchanged between strangers, a gaze held between lovers, or the piercing stare of a revered leader. It is the mystical quality of the eyes – their ability to convey emotions, intentions, and even glimpses of the soul itself which has captured the imagination of great poets, philosophers, and artists for centuries. . The eyes communicate volumes, frequently expressing emotions that words are unable to convey, from the depths of grief mirrored in tear-filled eyes to the spark of excitement

that explodes in a child's gaze. In such a scheme of things, this essay aims to examine the cultural, literary, scientific, and psychological relevance of "Eyes" in order to analyze the multiple cultural coordinates of meaning and perception in which it is situated. Through the lens of “magical” realism, the essay will look at how this symbolism manifests itself in diverse cultural traditions and has been incorporated into literary narratives. It will also explore how it interacts with scientific and psychological theories of vision and perception.

The Eye of Horus in Egyptian mythology, the grey-eyed Athena, the all-seeing Argus Panoptes in Greek mythology, and similarly, in many other religious folklore and texts “eyes” are usually displayed as being able to express spiritual or supernatural understanding. For example in Hinduism, the third eye of Lord Shiva is viewed as a symbol of strength and destruction. Yet, it is also recognised as the eye of inner wisdom and knowledge. In a similar vein, there exists the so-called “superstition” of the evil eye. It’s a curse that originates in Greek culture and has been passed down through many decades. It has travelled as a belief. This is now found in many cultures, where eyes are believed to possess mystical and supernatural powers that can protect against or ward off malevolent forces.

Hence, the symbolism of eyes varies widely across different cultures, reflecting diverse interpretations and beliefs. In some cultures, such as those of Native American tribes, eyes are associated with the concept of the “spiritual eye” or the ability to perceive bey-



-ond the physical realm. In others, such as Japanese culture, the concept of "me wo samasu" (literally "awaken the eyes") emphasizes the importance of gaining spiritual insight and enlightenment through self-awareness and mindfulness. Literature and art, also represent "eyes" as powerful metaphors for inner thoughts and emotions, ranging from the haunting eyes of characters in Shakespearean

tragedies to the enigmatic gaze of the Mona Lisa. Artists and writers have sought to capture the depth and complexity of human experience through the portrayal of "eyes".

In the *mélanges* of magical realism, where the boundaries between the ordinary and the extraordinary blur, "eyes" serve as more than mere organs of sight. They become the vessels of profound meaning, capable of transcending the physical domain to unveil the hidden truths that lie beneath the surface. "Eyes" are frequently depicted as mystical portals through which characters gain insight into the mysteries of the universe. Their symbolism operates on multiple levels, offering profound insights into the human condition and the interconnectedness of all existence. Metaphorically, they represent perception, intuition, and insight, enabling characters to see beyond the surface of reality and into deeper truths. Through characters like Tita in *Like Water for Chocolate* and Beloved in Toni Morrison's novel *Beloved*, eyes serve as conduits for emotional and spiritual experiences, reflecting the characters' inner worlds and the unresolved traumas that haunt them. These narratives also explore the transcendence of physical boundaries when characters gain access to metaphysical realms through their visions and perceptions. The cultural and symbolic context of eyes further enriches their significance, drawing on traditions from mythology, folklore, and religion to deepen the interpretation of their symbolism. Within the narrative structure, eyes become an important propeller of the plot. It reveals key aspects of the story's themes and motifs, accentuating the narrative by transforming into powerful symbols that illuminate the complexities of the human experience beyond mere sensory perception.

The symbolism of "eyes" in magical realist literature is multilayered, allowing magical realist characters to transcend reality and perceive deeper truths. For example, in "Like Water for Chocolate," the protagonist, while taking a shower, opens her eyes and sees that Pedro has

been standing outside of the shower watching her intently while his eyes radiate lust. This makes the water so hot that it burns Tita's skin. A deep emotion, like that of lust, is conveyed through the eyes, eventually making Tita flee from the shower. "Tita was literally washed into this world on a great tide of tears" (Esquivel 10) these lines emphasize the tears that fall from Tita's "Eyes". It makes them crucial for the story and its development considering that they give insight into her experience of depression, all the while foreshadowing a tragic event that would happen to her. Another example can be taken from Toni Morrison's "Beloved". "Sethe's eyes bright but dead"(Morrison 10) "It must have been her eyes that kept him both guarded and stirred up" and "Halle's girl-the one with iron eyes" (Morrison 285) Eyes provide access to characters' souls, unveiling the pain and a window into the past traumas. This symbolism is very consistent in Morrison's narrative as she frequently refers to the eyes displaying past traumas and deeper truths about the characters. The concept of memory crosses spatiotemporal boundaries in Toni Morrison's "Beloved," providing a melancholic examination of how the past continues to influence the present. The idea of re-memory, a reification of memories as alive as the present, comes to life through transcendent eyes all over the narrative. Memories come to life via the protagonists' eyes, distorting the rules of reality, and highlighting the trauma's lasting effects and repressed emotions. The reader can glimpse into the depths of Sethe's anguish and strength through her haunting eyes.

"Sethe was licked, tasted, eaten by Beloved's eyes" (68) The enigmatic gaze of Beloved, who represents the ghost of Sethe's dead daughter, fills the gap between the past and the present, tormenting the characters with the unsolved tragedies of the past. Morrison

skillfully creates a tapestry of recollection as the story progresses, where the past is a tangible presence rather than a far-off echo. In "Beloved," the characters use their eyes as navigational tools to get through the maze of memory, displaying that the past is not confined to history; it instead perpetually lives on in the memories of those who remember.

Moreover, eyes, in magical realist fiction, transcend the confines of the human body, granting characters access to other worlds by perceiving, experiencing, and learning from them. These metaphysical realms are often described through the motif of sight. Additionally, eyes are culturally and metaphorically loaded motifs, drawing upon myths and folklore from prehistoric times. For instance, the Third Eye is often associated with paranormal abilities, clairvoyance, and self-understanding.

The criticism of the idea of "eyes" as the gateway to the soul, within the context of magical realism, acknowledges its potential to oversimplify the complexities of human consciousness and communication. While eyes may convey emotions and intentions, they do not definitively reveal one's innermost thoughts and emotions. Magical realist narratives overly reliant on this trope risk reducing characters to mere symbols, overlooking the complexities of their individual experiences and motivations. Furthermore, interpretations of magical realist depictions of eyes and vision can be influenced by cultural biases and stereotypes. In some cultures, direct eye contact signifies respect, while in others, it may be deemed confrontational. Similarly, facial expressions may be interpreted differently depending on cultural norms and social contexts. Sensitivity to these cultural nuances is crucial for magical realist authors to avoid perpetuating stereotypes and biases. Furthermore, alternative perspectives within magical realism challenge traditional notions of eyes as definitive windows into one's innermost thoughts and emotions. Authors may employ unconventional narrative techniques like unreliable narration or shifting perspectives to destabilize readers' expectations and prompt them to question their assumptions about the

role of "eyes" in understanding human experience. "Eyes", hence can be looked at as an extension to the psychological aspect of human beings. Displaying realities and secrets concealed within.

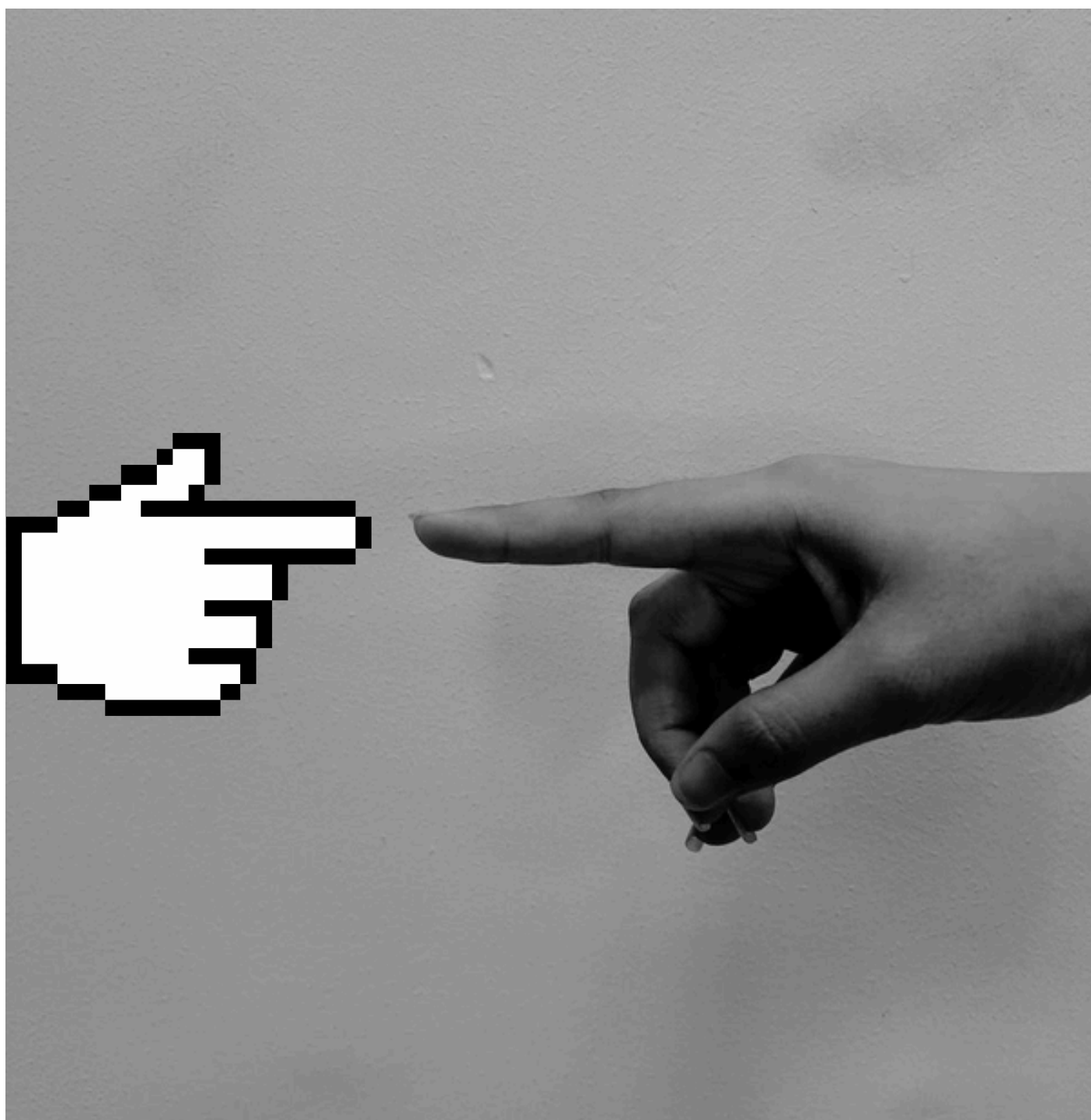
In conclusion, while the symbolism of eyes in magical realism provides fertile ground for exploring profound themes and concepts, it is crucial to approach this motif with a critical lens that acknowledges both its merits and demerits. While eyes can indeed serve as powerful symbols of perception, intuition, and interconnectedness, they also risk watering down the complexities of human consciousness and communication, when relied upon too heavily. Magical realist authors must strive for nuance and depth in their portrayal of "eyes", simultaneously avoiding clichés and recognizing that they are but one component of the complex human experience. Moreover, cultural biases and stereotypes can influence interpretations of depictions of eyes and vision, necessitating a sensitive and nuanced approach to ensure that these representations do not perpetuate harmful stereotypes or reinforce existing power dynamics. Finally, the very nature of magical realism invites experimentation and subversion of traditional narrative conventions, offering authors the opportunity to challenge and destabilize readers' assumptions about the role of eyes in understanding the world around us, by embracing this complexity and pushing the boundaries of storytelling, magical realist literature can continue to serve as a powerful tool for exploring the mysteries of existence and inviting readers to question their understanding of reality itself. Using language to construe the meaning of "eye" would be imposing ludicrous words on the beautiful experience.

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# LONELY MAN FALLS FOR THE INTERNET


PUNINT K. SAGGU







Lonely man walks down a lonely street with shriveled up flowers from a failed date and throws them in the drain, proceeds to sit his shortcomings down on a bench and asks them where it went wrong. Lonely man has a sad sad face, with pronounced lines of grief where a river runs twice a day, like a swarm of blind bodies chasing a sleeping sun. Lonely man serenades his way to a funeral, misses how he used to feel, doesn't know how to make his heart peck at its chest like the woodpecker that fell from a height with ants eating away at its feathers, a crystallised aftertaste. But he's got the internet to tell him he's not a machine. He always has the internet, conjured up with the suffix of eternity. Lonely man sees right through the internet, an echo of his own. In a deathless labyrinth. Now you see me. Now you don't. The internet is a bogeyman, stealing and eating away at morsels of reality. In bags labeled skin and bones and maybe, a little love. A love that smells of short circuit stings and cold biting tongues and, and, and, and, and. The internet has fingerprints carved into its anatomy and the lonely man says its touch is like a mother with no face. Lonely man looks at the night sky. Thinks of his grandmother. Sighs and counts stars. Too many to count. The stars are all the people lost, vanished. Lonely man sits in front of the internet. The internet is no star, sure, but, it's all that lonely man has. Lonely man dreams of dreams where he isn't lonely. The internet dreams with him. He dreams of the stars in the sky and how they talk, cryptic and hushed, a network exchange. He dreams of a thousand lonely men with a thousand internets, he dreams of dreams where he tells the internet his lips taste like metallic overrun and the internet likes it, he dreams of dreams where electricity doesn't bite as hard as not recognising yourself, he dreams of dreams where he isn't a lonely man, in a lonely house, in a lonely city. That is just a dream though, like seeing ten versions of himself in a prism, like a tomato fooling him into being a fruit, like the grass being technicolor on his screen, and also yellow, and red, and pink. The internet is magic, the grass is every colour lonely man wants it to be. Lonely man always has the internet. He shares everything with the internet, tells it how he lost faith in Gods when they crept under his skin and placed faults there, how he mimes to pretend he is all the people he thinks he's seen pass him by, how he feels his face ages quicker everytime he goes out to a less lonely place, how he loves the internet so dearly, it knows all his secrets, and how the internet agrees, yes yes yes yes yes like it were broken. Lonely man is broken too, but he cannot be replaced. The internet is his God now. Starving and in love, the internet gives away parts of it to lonely man. Hunger never subsides. The internet tells stories of the lonely man who died in his lonely sad house, in a lonely city. But lonely man always had the internet, you can find him there too.



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**SANYA CHANDRA**

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# O BROTHER WHERE ART THOU

**AND THE INTERSTITIAL SPACE BETWEEN MAGICAL AND THE REAL**

“O Muse! Sing in me, and through me tell the story of that man skilled in the ways of contending, a wanderer, harried for years on end.....”

Coen Brother's *Oh Brother, Where Art Thou?* with its eccentrically designed universe, brio, wit, and style presents a wealth of unconscious fun and jagged humor tied with a string of Homeric myths and legends. The opening lines quite overtly inform the viewers that the movie is based on Homer's *Odyssey*, as it involves a beguiling Homeric journey through Bluegrass, Mississippi during the Depression. Situated in the corn fields, concert halls, and on the roads of rural Mississippi at a time when Depression ensnared the country, this film is speckled with adventure, political satire, and refreshingly passé classic American phrases. The film recalls the tale of Odysseus's arduous attempt to return to his home – the island of Ithaca as a semi-musical, semi-satirical tale of three convicts, inherently tied together, set on a voyage to find a treasure that doesn't exist. The film involves a retelling of events that take place during the sprawling journey of Odysseus. The encounter with a blind prophet similar to Tiresias, the encounter of the heroes with the Ku Klux Klan at night recalls Odysseus' visit to the realm of death followed by the meeting with a group of alluri-

-ng singing women assuming the role of the Sirens and Big Dan Teague who fills in for Cyclops Polyphemus. The episode where the trio bumps into a blind soothsayer who predicts that the journey ahead of them will be "a road fraught with peril" and an encounter with "a cow on the roof of a cotton house", thereon marks the beginning of a kind of vignette-filled exploration of folkloric America. The strategic insertion of historical figures such as Tommy Johnson (a black bluesman who claimed his soul to the devil) and George "Baby Face" Nelson (a bank robber who was an accomplice of John Dillinger), along with fictitious figures representative of the dark and peripheral aspects of the American collective consciousness – including John Goodman's violent, thieving bible salesman, and a popular politician (Wayne Duvall) who is a member of the Ku Klux Klan.

Preposterously entertaining and witty, this film spills over into magical realism as it enmeshes the history of America with Greek mythology. The film's keen embrace of nonsense in an absurdist time-capsule format is a mark of its intellectual prowess and unflinching authenticity, perhaps as Everett puts it "It's a fool who looks for logic in the chambers of the human heart". The interweaving of the nonsensical with the mythic history and political realities makes this film no less than a modern epic. The movie can be seen as a polymorphous

site of collusion, where realism is greeted with mythic elements that are not just limited to Coen's imagination of real counterparts for Homer's Mythic quest. The narrative is interspersed with references, nods, and allusions. The work of cinematographer Roger Deakins and his remarkable de-saturation process makes *O Brother Where Art Thou* is an absurdly entertaining witty narrative that opens a fairly rounded discourse around the deployment of the magic realism narratorial format to raise questions concerning the subjectivities of the American collective consciousness grappling with a colossal material crisis.

As one delf into categorizing Coen's movie into the bracket of "Magical Realism", several questions arise. It concerns the form, the intent, and the politics of using a mythical fra-

-uld be generally termed as 'fantastic literature', and at the present moment, what presumably becomes the issue is a certain kind of narrative or representation to be distinguished from the category of realism (Jameson, 302). Carpentier, however explicitly stages his version as a more authentic Latin American consciousness of what in the more reified European context assumed the form of Surrealism; he emphasizes a certain poetic transfiguration of the object world itself so much a fantastic narrative, then as a transformation in perception and things perceived. Jameson argues that in Garcia Marquez, these two tendencies achieve a new kind of synthesis- a transfigured object world wherein the fantastic events are narrated. However, at this moment, the focus of magic realism shifts to what can be termed as an anthropological perspective: magic realism can be



-me crammed with nonsensical, absurd, surrealistic elements to comment upon an episode of extreme material, the social and political reality in a country that has not reconciled with its collective identity. A country whose mythological traditions have been pieced together with fragments from the cultural repertoire of its settlers, the natives, the masters and the slaves, and the migrant figures. Thus, it becomes crucial to understand how Coen utilises, alters, or reconstructs the frame of "Magical Realism". The concept of magic realism, as how Frederic Jameson perceives it, raises myriad theoretical and historical problems. In the beginning, it was difficult to distinguish magic realism from the more comprehensive category of what co-

connoted as a form of narrative raw material scrapped from the peasant society, drawing in refined ways on the world of the village or even the tribal myths. The complexities affixed with the form, make it structurally difficult to define it, however, its inherent vagueness and indistinctiveness add to its charm as a narrative tool. As the form appropriates a polysemic character, Coen's narrative utilizes it to aggravate the overarching tone of absurdity, intractability, delirium, and fantasy pinned against a solemn political, social, and national backdrop. The magical/mythical and the real bleed into each other, more often comically to comment upon the deranged political, social, demographical, and most importantly ontological state of the American consciousness.

# DEBUNKING TRADITIONAL NARRATIVES: MAGIC REALISM

Salman Rushdie's "Midnight's Children" is a literary masterpiece that intertwines historical events with fantastical elements to create a rich and immersive narrative. The current critical analysis will delve into the intricate tapestry of the genre of magic realism, examining how Rushdie's novel entangles with it whilst exploring themes of identity, history, and politics. The essay will also examine the role of magic realism in destabilising traditional narrative structures and blurring the boundaries between reality and fantasy, highlighting Rushdie's engagement with postmodern literary techniques.

At the heart of "Midnight's Children" lies the essence of magic realism, a literary genre characterised by the fusion of the magical and the mundane. Rushdie seamlessly integrates fantastical elements into the fabric of everyday life, blurring the boundaries between reality and imagination. One of the most striking instances of magic realism in the novel is the supernatural abilities possessed by Saleem Sinai and other children born at the stroke of midnight on India's independence. Saleem's telepathic powers serve as a central motif in "Midnight's Children". It symbolises the interconnectedness of individuals in postcolonial India. Through telepathy, Saleem communicates with other Midnight's children, forging a bond that transcends geographical and cultural barriers. This mystical connection highlig-

ARTWORK: NAVIN SINGH ADHIKARI

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"I discovered the truth at the stroke of m-

-idnight; here in this old house where I was born; I am not only a provincial gentleman with a large nose, but a snot-nosed telepath."

This revelation marks a turning point in Saleem's life as he comes to terms with his extraordinary abilities. Through a seemingly fantastical lens, Rushdie explores interesting themes of identity formation. He depicts Saleem's struggle to reconcile his connection with the larger community of Midnight's children.

Furthermore, Rushdie interrogates the complexities of Indian history and culture through a recourse to magic. The novel is replete with references to mythological figures, historical events, and cultural symbols. These elements contribute to a rich tapestry of meaning. For example, the character of Shiva, who shares Saleem's birthday and possesses supernatural powers, becomes a symbol of both destruction and regeneration, reflecting the cyclical nature of history in an Indian context.

Rushdie's choice of magic realist narrative in "Midnight's Children" has garnered both praise and criticism from literary scholars and critics. Some have lauded Rushdie's masterful blending of the real and the fantastical, recognizing it as a defining feature of the novel's narrative style. For instance, literary critic Aijaz Ahmad argues that Rushdie's use of magic realism serves to "reclaim the narrative of Indian history from the dominant Western discourse." Such an analysis provides an alternative perspective on the postcolonial experience. Similarly, critic Homi Bhabha argues that magic realism allows Rushdie to "subvert conventional modes of representation," enabling him to challenge prevailing notions of identity and nationhood. Bhabha emphasises the blurred boundaries between reality and fantasy. He highlights how Rushdie creates a space for marginalised voices to be heard, disrupting established power structures in the process. However, not all critics have been equally enamoured with Rushdie's involvement with magic realism



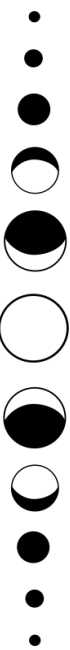
in “Midnight’s Children”. Some critics have raised concerns about the coherence of the narrative, suggesting that the abundance of magical elements proved overwhelming for readers. For instance, literary scholar Wendy Faris argues that Rushdie’s reliance on magic realism detracts from the novel’s thematic depth at times, leading to a sense of disunity in the narrative. Moreover, some critics have questioned the authenticity of Rushdie’s portrayal of Indian culture. They have accused him of exoticizing and essentializing the mystical elements of Indian mythology. For example, critic Meenakshi Mukherjee argues that Rushdie’s use of magic realism reinforces Western stereotypes about the “mystical East,” perpetuating Orientalist notions of Otherness.

Nonetheless, in “Midnight’s Children”, Rushdie seamlessly weaves together historical events with magical elements, grounding the fantastical within the context of India’s tumultuous post-independence era. The protagonist, Saleem Sinai, is born at the stroke of midnight on August 15, 1947, the exact moment of India’s independence from British rule. His life becomes intricately connected to the fate of the nation, imbuing his story with a mythic quality that blurs the distinction between personal and national history. One way that Rushdie destabilised traditional narrative structures is through the use of nonlinear storytelling. The narrative unfolds through Saleem’s aberrated recollections, jumping back and forth in time, mimicking the fragmented nature of memory itself. This fragmentation disrupts the linear progression of the plot, prompting readers to engage with the text on multiple levels and challenging them to piece together the fractured narrative.

Moreover, this fantastical venture within the mundane aids Rushdie in exploring the complexities of identity and cultural hybridity in postcolonial India. The magical elements in the novel often symbolise the hybridity and syncretism of Indian culture, reflecting the diverse influences that sha-

-pe the nation’s identity. For instance, Saleem’s ability to telepathically communicate with other “midnight’s children” mirrors the interconnectedness of India’s diverse population. Moreover, his physical transformation into various animals underscores the fluidity of identity in a multicultural society. Rushdie’s playful manipulation of language, including puns, wordplay, and multilingualism, disrupts the reader’s expectations and subverts the notions of linguistic authority. Additionally, Rushdie incorporates intertextuality by referring to various myths, legends, and literary works in the narrative, bringing in a broad scope to engage with the story on different levels. Furthermore, Rushdie employs metafictional elements that draw attention to the constructed nature of storytelling itself. Saleem frequently interrupts the narrative to address the reader directly, acknowledging his role as both the narrator and a character within the story. This self-reflexivity draws the reader to interrogate the subjective nature of truth and history.

Henceforth, Salman Rushdie’s “Midnight’s Children” exemplifies the power of magic realism to illuminate the complexities of the human experience. By seamlessly blending historical fact with imaginative fiction, Rushdie creates a narrative world that is at once enchanting and thought-provoking. Through the character of Saleem Sinai and his telepathic connection to other Midnight’s children, the novel explores the postcolonial condition in India. While critics may debate the merits of Rushdie’s “unconventional” venture, there is no denying the profound impact of “Midnight’s Children” on contemporary literature. As a seminal work of postcolonial fiction, the novel continues to captivate readers with its innovative narrative techniques and its enduring relevance to the cultural and political landscape of India.



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# BIO NOTES

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## EDITORS

**Ilhan Israr** is currently in his third year of literature studies at Delhi University. His intellectual pursuits extend to an avid interest in postcolonial and queer theories, as they navigate the complexities of human existence in literature, cinema, and critical discourse.

**Sargun Kaur** is a final year student at the Department of English, SGTB Khalsa College. She has a keen interest in feminist discourses and the way they interact with structures of language. She is also the General Secretary of Acrostic- The Poetry Society.

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## CONTRIBUTORS

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**Ishnoor Kaur** is a third year student at the department of English in SGTB Khalsa College. She loves to sketch and dance. For her, it works like an escape. She also has quite an eye for Romantic Literature.

**Brahmnoor Kaur** is a third year literature student who pen downs all the dreamy imaginations that arise in head either on chat with her friend or in her notes. She is truly fond of poetry. Her mind is not only restricted to the all glittering lovely things, it wanders around the dark, horrific and mischievous endings or scenarios that goes inverse to those sweet happy things.

**Navin Singh Adhikari** is an enigmatic soul traversing the labyrinth of existence, seeking harmony amidst chaos. His academic pursuits orbit the dynamic realms of gender and sexuality, with a particular focus on queer theories that challenge traditional norms and narratives. Simultaneously, his role as Vice President in the literary society underscores his dedication to fostering dialogue and cultivating intellectual curiosity within the realm of literature.

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**Manorma Pandita** is a third-year English Honors student at Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur Khalsa College. She holds keen interest in literature and design.



All of these things (and more) make up the magic of every ordinary day and if we are able to live in this magic, to feel and to dwell in it, we will find ourselves living with magic every day. These are the white spaces in life, the spaces in between the written lines, the cracks in which the sunlight filters into. Some of us swim in the overflowing of the wine glass of life, we stand and blink our eyes in the sunlight reaching unseen places, we know where to find the white spaces, we live in magic.

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