



Symbolism Of Tragic Romance Through Magical Realism In Laura Esquivel's Like Water For Chocolate

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Introduction

Laura Esquivel's first novel, *Like Water for Chocolate* was published in 1989. It was first appeared in Spanish language, entitled as *Como Agua Para Chocolate* 1989. Later it was translated into English in 1992. This novel was also adapted as a film in the year 1993. The title of the novel is, 'Like Water for Chocolate: A Novel in Monthly Instalments with Recipes, Romances and Home Remedies'. It is written in a cookbook style. It is divided into twelve chapters and each of them begins with a monthly recipe. All the recipes appear to be from the author's own experiences in her own family and those are interwoven in her novel, *Like Water for Chocolate*.

Background of the study

The background of the study is considered as a part of an any research. It is a compilation of adequate information. M. Jeevarathna & Dr. A. Selvalakshmi discuss in their article "Transformation of Emotions and Actions in Esquivel's *Like Water for Chocolate*" to discuss about the narration of the novel via the author's point of view. They aver that in *Like Water for Chocolate*, Laura Esquivel investigates the suppression and expression of the communication by using techniques such as magical realism, the Mexican Revolution, symbolism, character relationships and food to examine the necessity of communication for both individuals and communities (194). In this article they discuss about the main character Tita, who is denied the fundamental right of communication and her relationship with everyone in the household is quite complex. Tita's mother, Mama Elena aims to forbid Tita's verbal expression. So, she must find the way to communicate her desires, opinions and thoughts. Then Tita chooses food and cooking as her only way to exhibit her inner thoughts to others. Her rebellion against them is revealed through magical realism (198). They say, there is an oppression on one's ability to communicate, so it will come out in any form it can, and food takes this place in Tita's life.

Ms. Poushali Chakraborty says in her article "The Echoing Kitchen: Articulating Female Empowerment and Ethnic Identity Formation through Cooking in Laura Esquivel's *Like Water for Chocolate*", about the portrayal, significance and description of the kitchen which is presented in Esquivel's novel. In this novel *Like Water for Chocolate*,

the kitchen is portrayed as a fictional and theorised as aboriginal (417). The recipes in the novel help to forge and re-write the nation by identifying and pronouncing the characters' ethnicity. The kitchen serves as a transit point for Tita in this novel. She writes that the kitchen is a refuge and reclusion for Tita, and she also seeks revenge against her mother's matriarchal despotism through her culinary enterprise from the kitchen (426). Poushali says, the kitchen is serving as the symbolic and physical centre in this novel, *Like Water for Chocolate*.

Biography

Laura Esquivel was born on September 30, 1950, in Mexico. Laura was lifted in a middle-class family. She completed her degree in teaching, from the Escuela Normal De Maestros. Esquivel spent eight years in teaching, before she initiated her career as a writer and a screenwriter. She and her husband, Alfonso Arau, who is the film director, producer, and actor combined with a film project, 'Chido One'. Esquivel was the screenwriter of this film. For this project she won a nomination from the Mexican Academy of Motion Pictures. This film is also nominated for the prestigious Ariel Award. She was the daughter of a telegraph operator. Her father's profession plays a role in one of her novels, 'Swift and Desire'. She got her narrative technique from the stories, which was told by her father, in her childhood. In the 'Southwest Review' she shared things about her father, "I loved to get sick because he'd come and stay with me and invent stories with great characters". She was raised as a roman catholic and later she attached to a mixture of indigenous and New Age beliefs.

Her writing career began when she was working in kindergarten as a teacher. In the 1970s and 1980s, she wrote for children's plays and television programs. *Like Water for Chocolate* is her first novel. This novel was later adapted as a film which is an award-winning film. Esquivel the Mexican writer, novelist, screenwriter and politician, and Mexicans in her nature, she exhibits the relationship between men and women in her works. Her first novel is becoming popular and bestseller in Mexico and the United States. In 1989 her first novel was published. This novel in the form of film was released in the year 1994. Her second novel is *The Law of Love*. Her non-fiction compilation is *Between Two Fires*. Her third novel is *Swift as Desire*. Her next novel is *Malinche*. Her first is considered as a combination of a novel and cook book with imagination. (en.m.wikipedia.org, Peoplepill.com-Laura Esquivel: Mexican writer-Biography and Life)

She received an Ariel award nomination, the award for Best Screenplay and Mexican Academy of Motion Pictures for 'Chido One' in 1985. (Encyclopedia.com)

Thematic Analysis

Laura Esquivel chooses magical realism as one of the major themes of her first novel *Like Water for Chocolate*. The term 'Magical Realism' was first used by Franz Roh. The term Magical Realism is the procedure of realizing from the inside out to unravel the mystery that hides and throbs in the world. It is a form of writing, which includes a variety of

artistic techniques and this form collaborated with the supernatural, magical, fantastic and exaggerated effects into the ordinary elements and it provides the reader a magic realistic representation. Noriega considers the intersection of magic and reality that is described by Roh and given the term magical realism as “magic realism is not a mixture of reality and fantasy, but a way to uncover the mystery hidden in everyday reality” (3). Roh tries to define the reality from mystery. Magical realism also includes myths and legends, customs and superstitions, faith and technique of exaggeration.

In Esquivel’s *Like Water for Chocolate*, Tita’s magical birth is an instance for magical realism. “Tita was literally washed into this world on a great tide of tears that spilled over the edge of the table and flooded across the kitchen floor” (Esquivel, 10). Tita the protagonist who was born as prematured at the kitchen table with the flood of tears. Not only this, but many of the chapters of this novel deals with the theme of magical realism.

Esquivel’s *Like Water for Chocolate* is the mixture of multiple themes. Each of them is depended on each other. Symbolism is also one of the major themes of this novel. Symbolism is the use of symbols to represent ideas and qualities in literature. In *Like Water for Chocolate* food serves as the major symbol in this novel. The food used as a symbol to bring the expressions of love and rebellion in this novel. “Tita was so sensitive to onions, any time they were being chopped, they say she would just cry and cry;” (Esquivel, 9). Onion is a symbol that represents the sensitive nature of Tita. Tita born as prematurely because of the smell of the onion. Esquivel along with this symbol, brings the viciousness of Tita’s mother, Mama Elena. In this novel, Esquivel conveys a variety of emotions through food.

Contemporary Relevance of the Study

The era of the Mexican Revolution is a reflection of contemporary social roles. Mexican revolution is also known as the portrayal of the revolutionary ideals. In the novel *Like Water for Chocolate*, Mexican revolution values and romanticizes the contributions of women. The family which is presented in this novel, constructs an evaluation of the Revolution as it pertains to female identity in terms of power, economics and race. Cheyne discusses the words of Zamudio Taylor as “In this sense, “magic realism” prefaces the melodramatic moments through gastronomic interior spaces that enable ‘different women’s voices heard, and revitalizing identity – both personal and collective – as a social and national construction” (Cheyne). In this novel, the power of the society is presented through the female characters.

Though this novel discusses lack of modernization, it processes some modern conveniences such as radio and refrigerator. N. Finnegan says in his article *Like Water for Chocolate and the Boundaries of Mexican Identity*, “the revolution and the ranch with all the elements of magical realism are conveys the culture” (312). He says culture is induced in *Like Water for Chocolate* and the contemporary political climate is also considered and produced in this novel.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A literature review in a research is a survey of scholarly sources on a specific topic. It bestows an overview of knowledge and helps to identify relevant theories, methods and gaps in the current research. It involves in collecting, evaluating and analysing publications such as books, journals and articles which relates to the current research. A good literature review is not only summarizing the sources, but it too analyses, synthesizes and critically evaluates the knowledge on the subject to provide a clear picture of the topic. It is also including the substantive findings as well as theoretical and methodological contributions to a particular topic. Literature reviews are a basis for any research in the academic field.

The current study targets to analyse the elements of magical realism and symbolism which spreads in Laura Esquivel's novel *Like Water for Chocolate*. The elements, magical realism and symbolism are beautifully portrayed and narrated in this novel through the principal character, Tita and happenings around her enrich the elements and the novel too.

Importance of Literature Review

Literature review helps to understand the research work in a proper manner. It reviews the journals, articles, books, papers presented in the conferences and so on. It helps to find a considerable relevant information and it provides one for an opportunity to correct the flaws themselves while research. A good review justifies the reason for the research. It compares, contrasts and connect various books, multiple articles and other sources which is related to the study or research.

This is to analyse and examine the novel *Like Water for Chocolate* through various scholarly academic research papers. Jeanine Lino Perez says in her article "Mother-Daughter Relationship in Laura Esquivel's "Como Agua Para Chocolate" says about the issues of motherhood and daughterhood. Tita is forbidden to marry the man she loves because of her family tradition which is not permitted the youngest daughter of the family to marry but to look after her mother until she passed away (191). Esquivel analyse the outer reality, which is, Tita in reality, not allowed to marry and inner desire which contains Tita's desire to marry Pedro. Mama Elena presented not as an idealized mother, but a tyrant one to Tita. In earlier Mama Elena not allowed to marry the person she loves because of the family tradition.

The happenings in both Tita and Mama Elena's life cannot be avoided because of such rules as they have to obey. It is impossible for Elena to divorce her husband and for Tita, it is impossible to disobey her mother and marry Pedro. So, such facts brought sadness to both women. On the other hand, Nacha, the cook her affection and caring towards Tita seems as, she herself is a Tita's mother. While Elena is too harsh to Tita and concern towards her first daughter, Rosaura. On the contrary to this Nacha loves Tita and dislikes Rosaura. Tita's relationship with Elena is always conflicting and the matter of hatred (193). When Roberto died, Elena not allow anyone to lament for the death and she

controls other people's feelings like she herself forced to control her feelings for lover's death. Thus, the author says women in this novel are victims of the dominant structure. Elena was forbidden to marry her lover so she did not allow any of the pleases made by Tita. All these brought complications to Tita's life.

Ellen Puccinelli says in her article "Like Sustenance for the Masses: Genre Resistance, Cultural Identity, and the Achievement of Like Water for Chocolate" says Esquivel's novel is also provides the cross-genre discussions. This novel is a mixture of a cookbook and romance, and the culinary and the erotic. She says that Esquivel's work is a "hybrid novel" because it contains both best sellers and objects of academic study (210). This novel's barrier crossing nature does not extend to its cultural boundaries. It can also be called as a multi-generic and a product of Esquivel's Mexican culture. The myth is an evident in this novel to know it is a part of a Latin American culture, usually myths are the continent's own dominant self-interpretation. Ellen says it is a genre-bending novel. This novel, written in a first-person narrative and there is no separation between the narrator and the narration of the subjects. Also, there is no separation between a cookbook and novels, both are simultaneously interwoven (212). This novel is called as a culture-linked novel because the narrator of the novel is Tita's great-niece, from at least two generations after Tita's life. Esquivel's uses of light and fire as a metaphor to represent sexuality and in this novel. In this entire novel kitchen played a significant role. To study the Esquivel's work Ellen says it is a binding of specific structure, characterization, its language, themes and magical realism emerges with a voice of distinctive cultures.

Eric Skipper in his book "A Recipe for Discourse: Perspectives on Like Water for Chocolate", presents the collection of eleven essays and examine the variety of perspectives that compose the dozens of scholarly articles on Laura Esquivel's work. His work contains five sections. Each section has two or three essays in that. In the first section he addresses the human nature from a scientific perspective by Tina Escaja and Jorge J. Barrueto's essays. Skipper's second section provides the academic viewpoint and the role of magical realism in Like Water for Chocolate. The third section deals with the positive and revolutionary version of the myth of Cinderella and the Mexican society in Like Water for Chocolate is provided by Cherie Meacham and Victoria Martinez, through their essays (360). The fourth part contains the recipes and food of Mexican in Laura Esquivel's novel. The final section mentions the role of the Mexican revolution in Like Water for Chocolate, by Maria Teresa Martinez Ortiz's article. Skipper says thus the novel produce various discourses and dialogues from across disciplines.

Ms. Poushali Chakraborty says in her article "The Echoing Kitchen: Articulating Female Empowerment and Ethnic Identity Formation through Cooking in Laura Esquivel's Like Water for Chocolate" says Like Water for Chocolate is a hybridized narration which also consists food politics. Kitchen in this novel provides both confinement and transcendence to the main character Tita. This novel has twelve chapters, each of them begins with a recipe, this narrative format for the sake of narrative

urgency. This novel is under the prototypical domestic literary form and the text is in a magic-realist mode (417). Food served as a weapon for Tita to her silent rebellion against the crushing power of oppressive patriarchy through culinary violence and gastronomic outbursts. The recipes in the novel aid to identify and pronouncing the characters' ethnicity. This novel is also called as a manuscript cookbook, a fictional biography, a magical realist text, a romance and a serial fiction. Esquivel's kitchen-centred plot provides the cult of domesticity and not as a signifier of passive femininity but of subversive female power. Nacha, the cook co-exists with generations of indigenous culture and summoning a return to the Mexican culture (424). The kitchen is also signaling a geographical and an ideological separation between Tita and the other women in the family manifested in her dress, behavior and the food which she consumes.

Tita's cooking is a kind mediation through the magical forces. Tita possesses an explosive power of cooking. In Esquivel's fiction food is infused with an emotion of the cook. Tita's sister Gertrudis' hypersexualisation is a symbol of female empowerment rather than the content of male fantasies in this novel. The kitchen is as a transit point to Tita where she could organize her emotional upheavals (426). Food serves as a cultural entity and it functions as a foundational force in the nation-building process. Tita in this novel *Like Water for Chocolate*, comprehends the world only through the kitchen. Thus, the kitchen functions both as the centre of the household and the locus of community life. The basis for the Mexican cooking is so ritualistic in its nature. Food, also discloses the terminal effects of an unnatural mother-daughter relationship. Tita's emotions are also reflected in her cooking. Thus, Poushali says kitchen is symbolic centre and it take place in Tita's life.

Victoria Martinez says in her article "Como Agua Para Chocolate: A Recipe for Neoliberalism" about the transformational powers of Tita's cooking to her struggles with her sisters and her mother. She says that Esquivel's work focusses the liberation of women. The message of this novel could connect with neo-liberal policies. One critic named John Sinnigen says that this novel has relationship to late century neo-liberal policies. Victoria agrees with John and says Tita's rebellion ends with a reconciliation with bourgeois as the US style patriarchy (28). She analyses the narrative process of the fiction of its characters, food, Mexican Revolution, gender oppression and the liberation. Tita's mother, Mama Elena took the place of Mexican male power to oppress her daughters. Mama Elena not only control her daughters, but also control her ranch and son-in-law.

Tita's struggle against her mother is during the time frame of the Mexican Revolution. Tita has a strong bond with the servants, first with Nacha, the cook and then with Chenchu, the maid these creates an analogy between the need for reform in the household and the peasant rights (29). This novel is a struggle and its results liberation. The detail descriptions of the food and its preparation leads the women expect for liberation. In the kitchen most of the food preparation falls to the servants and Tita but Elena rarely enters. Elena liberated herself from the kitchen, the woman's space and she

forced other women to replace her place such as Nacha, Tita and Chench. Esquivel juxtaposes the sexual signifiers of male power to examine the conflicts in the household. Under her mother, Tita never gains the freedom. Mexican men in the novel are revolutionaries as soldiers and the text presents the larger scale of national chaos in Mexican. The Revolution also includes the terms of class.

This work provides a chance to re-evaluate the relationship between the work and its indigenous characters. Once the revolutionaries raid the ranch and they raped Chench and injuries to Elena (39). The text only details the sufferings of Elena by the attack on her and not Chench. It seems the ironic nature of the text. Finally, she came to say, the revolution came and left without any change in the conditions for the working-class people and the lower classes were subservient to the upper-class people. Moreover, education is never a consideration for the servants. At the end of the novel, it is a story of liberation.

MAGICAL REALISM

Magical realism is the procedure of realizing from the inside out to, resolve the mystery that hides and pulsating in the world. Magical realism provides a realistic view of the modern world with magical elements. In 1925, Franz Roh was first to use this term for the title of his book to explain and examine the new post-expressionist painting style which reflects an alternate reality. In Laura Esquivel's fiction 'Like water for Chocolate' magical realism plays a key role. Magical realism spreads, in this entire novel and done a most important function of the story. Magical realism is the transformation of the common things, the reality of everyday and everyday events in the state of unreality. In magical realism, the magical elements are blended into a realistic atmosphere for better understanding of reality which results in deeper meaning.

Magical elements are explained as like an ordinary occurrence that are presented in a straightforward manner which permits the real and the unreal to be accepted in the same stream of thoughts. Throughout the novel, magical realism helps to exhibit the character's feelings and a unique view of the character's world and the exaggeration of ideas and the plot. The novel, Like Water for Chocolate deals the problems happening in the family. Laura Esquivel's fiction can also call as the framework of magical realism. Through magical realism, Esquivel express certain truths and also evokes powerful emotions in the novel. The author uses magical realism to show the outside manifestation of dynamics happening within the family. Magical realism, prefaces the melodramatic moments through gastronomic interior spaces that enable different women's voices heard, and revitalizing identity both personal and collective as a social and national cultural construction (Zamudio-Taylor 45). Through the magical realism the characters express their need for communication in the novel 'Like Water for Chocolate'.

In the first chapter Esquivel uses magical elements to make an ordinary thing into fantastical. The cook Nacha, narrated the birth of Tita. "Tita was literally washed into this world on a great tide of tears that spilled over the edge of the table and flooded across the

kitchen floor” (Esquivel 10). The protagonist Tita was born at the kitchen table with the great stream of tears. The tears may foretell the sadness and longings of her for years. Then the flood of tears dried up by the sun and the tears left a ten pounds of salt which is used for cooking. The tears are an ordinary thing but the author mentions that as a ‘great tide of tears’ to make them as fantastical. Tita’s entry into the world marks a presence of magical realism in the novel, *Like Water for Chocolate* and provides a fantastical image.

In the next chapter Mama Elena decided to do Rosaura’s marriage with Pedro, that time Tita never able to shows her true feelings and emotions towards Pedro in front of everyone. “When she looked at Rosaura, who was writing out some invitations, she saw only a snowy ghost. But she showed nothing, and no-one noticed her condition” (Esquivel 34). Tita was unable to express her real feelings and emotions because her own sister marrying her lover Pedro. She could not do anything neither demand for her love nor to stop the marriage between them which is going to happen because of the family tradition that is the youngest daughter of the family should not get married and possess children and instead of that she must take care of her mother until her death. Tita was under the control of her mother Elena’s domination so she cannot speak up and unable to overrule her mother’s decision. Because Tita too bonded with the family culture and tradition. She kept all her feelings locked up with herself alone. All the thoughts lead her to messy inside her and that reflected as an image of a ghost in the form of Rosaura while she looked at her.

In the third chapter Laura Esquivel includes the magical element through Gertrudis, when she intake the quail in rose petal sauce. Gertrudis after ate the food, went to take shower and at shower she feels “the drops that fell from the shower never made it to her body: they evaporated before they reached her. Her body was giving off so much heat that the wooden walls began to split and burst into flame” (Esquivel, 51). Tita unable to convey her feelings by words so she finds the way to communicate her feelings through cooking. Her preparation includes her feelings and emotions within that. So, anyone who have her food they would express the emotion which Tita actually has, as like Gertrudis. After she had the food, there is a smell of rose sweat which came out of her body. This dramatic imagery represents the magical realism in the novel. Gertrudis’s feeling was actually a feeling of Tita for Pedro but it was exhibited through Gertrudis’s behavior.

The presence of magical realism was also in the fourth chapter in which the author, Laura Esquivel explains the magical element through the birth of Rosaura and Pedro’s son Roberto. The baby needs mother feed but the cause of illness Rosaura was unable to provide a milk for her child. So, Tita took all the motherly roles for the baby, Roberto. “Tita removed the boy from her breast: a thin stream of milk sprayed out” (Esquivel, 70). Esquivel brings magical element occupy in this scene because in reality a virgin girl does not provide any mother feed and no chances for that but in the novel Tita, the virgin girl to pacify the hungry stomach of the baby Roberto.

In the next chapter also, the magical elements were continued. In this chapter after the baptism to Roberto, Mama Elena made travel arrangements for Pedro, Rosaura and

Roberto to the nearby village. "The milk in her breasts had dried up overnight with the pain of her separation from her nephew" (Esquivel, 84). When the three of them left the ranch to another village, the separation and being away from her sister's son made her to be in pain and suffering. Her pain causes the disappearance of her milk production from her body within overnight of her nephew's separation. The baby soon died of having intake something. The death news brought a huge blow to Tita. From her grieving for the child makes one to know how much she been loved him so deeply. The author provides an unnatural thing in this chapter to bring the magical element, that is the milk would not get stopped in overnight. It shows the author's creative use of the theme, magical realism.

In chapter six, Tita was behaving like an insane personality. So, Mama Elena decides to took her to an insane asylum. The doctor Mr. Brown arrived took her with him, to his home instead of to an insane asylum. Tita remains silent even after she freed from the cruel clutches of her mother, Mama Elena. The author provides a different perception to this, that Tita's silence is not the result of her sorrow but the result of her new sense of control. From the earlier she wanted to be free from the domination of her mother. Finally, she was freed from her mother.

In chapter VII, the magical element comes through the character Mama Elena. In the previous chapter Tita wished to never come back to her mother. But after the raid in the ranch both Elena and Chenchu was attacked by the revolutionaries and by the compassion towards Elena Tita returns. Elena was sick in her bed and when Tita brings soup for her. Elena regret to have the soup because it tastes bitter. Actually, the soup is not at all bitter but Elena says like that because she hates Tita and had a fear on her because she may poison her to death so, she regrets not only the food but also all the deeds of Tita to her. Elena just tasted the soup after that she spit those on the bed-spread because she suspected Tita. "Inside she felt the effects of snuffing the flame: smoke was rising into her throat, tightening into a thick knot, clouding her eyes and making her cry" (Esquivel, 120). This shows that how Tita was felt by her mother's behavior. From this happening Tita begins to feel some magical events takes place inside her body. The fire burning inside and the smoke which is knot in her throat, both leads her to cry. Through these magical elements which takes place inside Tita's body, Esquivel portrays the condition of women in the Mexican society. Usually the hurt leads to cry or sometimes to anger over a person. In Tita's case she was hurt by her mother's behavior and she has an anger over Elena but unable to she expresses her emotions so she exhibits that through her tears. Likewise, many of them in the society are inexpressive and remains silent.

Chapter IX contains the appearance of the ghost of Mama Elena. Supernatural elements are one of the characteristics of magical realism. The cause of taken over dosage of syrup leads her to die. Even, after her physical disappearance from Tita, Elena comes in the form of ghost to show her domination over Tita. "As Tita was putting the napkin over the container where she had set the dough to rest, a strong gust of wind banged the kitchen door wide open, causing an icy blast to invade the room" (Esquivel, 157). In this chapter Esquivel use the ghost as a magical element to her novel. In reality there is no

dead people come as a ghost in others' life. Esquivel used such words 'strong gust of wind' and 'icy blast' is considered to be the magical events that happen in the reality situation in Tita's house. The superficiality of this cult of domesticity is typified by Elena and Rosaura, who although by all appearances conform to the marriage plot, become caricatures due regulations on female behavior (Kristine Ibsen, 115). The supernatural appearance of the novel derives from the ghosts of two women. One is the ghost of cook Nacha, it appears in the moments of Tita's crisis. And the second one is Mama Elena's ghost. It appears only on when Tita is under the feeling of guilt.

In chapter X, Esquivel narrates the effect of magical element occurs in the real situation within the novel. Tita convey Pedro about her pregnancy. By hearing that Pedro was happy and thought to run away with her then later he thinks about his family and left the idea of run away with Tita. That night Mama Elena's ghost appeared to annoy and threatens Tita to leave the house. Tita shouts back against the ghost of her mother, then the ghost was disappeared. "The inflammation in her belly and the pain in her breasts began to subside. The muscles at the centre of the body relaxed, loosening violent menstrual flow" (Esquivel, 180). Finally, she found out that she was not at all pregnant. The magical events illustrate the relationship between Tita's emotions and her pregnancy. Tita's pregnancy is may be a real situation or imaginary which is from her relationship with Pedro. The end of this event is fantastical which is an abortion transformed into the magical real. Spirits of the dead people plays a significant role in this novel Like Water for Chocolate.

In the final chapter of Laura Esquivel's fiction Like Water for Chocolate she brings more magical elements to make the story strong. In this chapter, the magical elements to the realistic situation is by the death of Rosaura. She died of illness as well as depression too. Then finally, Pedro's death which was happened while he was make love to Tita. "It covered the whole ranch, all three hectares" (Esquivel, 220). These lines show the magical events by describing Tita's bedspread which was huge enough to cover the entire ranch. This is also a symbolic of all the sufferings and troubles Tita has experienced in her life. Whenever Tita felt depressed or discomfort either with Mama Elena or Pedro, she went to making the bedspread and it was also conveying that how Tita was suffered in the ranch. The bedspread was covered the entire ranch, it illustrates the sufferings and troubles of Tita, which has occupied on those three hectares. In the theme of magical realism genre, Esquivel says that the place where Tita and Pedro could be together is beyond the Earth. Their bodies remain there but their souls are united and flee together.

The use of magical realism is also the use of traditional narrative in Laura Esquivel's 'Like Water for Chocolate'. This novel narrates the tradition of the Mexican society with the blend of the magical realism. In Esquivel's work, tradition keeps her not to marrying the person whom she loves, and at the same time tradition provide pleasures in the life of Tita through cooking. Tita make her real world through cooking to represent her inner feelings and conflicts which she cannot reveal in reality. Laura Esquivel used

magical realism to make the story realistic as well as the world of fantastical through her narration. Esquivel provides magical realism within the home setting.

By the technique of magical realism, Esquivel created a bitter-sweet love tale and the loss of women's identity and their fulfilment.

SYMBOLISM

A number of symbols enhance the meaning, idea, themes in the novel. Symbols are mostly an ordinary object, person or an event which have an extraordinary meaning and significance could be attached with. The author uses symbolism in their story to add deeper meaning to them. Symbolism is used to support the literary theme in a subtle manner. Symbolism is a use of concrete thing to represent the abstract idea. Symbolism in literature helps to create a new meaning and emotions to the object in the story. It is one of the figures of speeches which also include the metaphors, images and allegories.

Symbolism is used to signify the ideas and qualities to provide symbolic meanings which are different from their literal sense, is by the use of symbols. Symbols can change their meanings, depending upon the context of the narration or a story in which they are used in. Metaphors are used as a major symbolic vehicle to convey and shape the concepts of sexuality and gender identity. In Laura Esquivel's fiction *Like Water for Chocolate*, the representation of cooking in the novel express both enslavement and empowerment. Food symbolism in the novel '*Like Water for Chocolate*' brings a particular importance for women and illustrate the state of women with cooking in the society of culturally determined association. Commonly the interpretation of cooking as empowerment is against the mainstream of feminist critique of kitchen as a sexist space. In this novel, the main character Tita express her feelings and emotions through cooking so her preparation of the recipes brings a powerful emotional effect on a people those who tried her preparations. In Esquivel's novel Tita's tears in the wedding cake of Rosaura and Pedro's wedding, results a deep sadness to all the guests those who attends the party.

Food in *Like Water for Chocolate* is one of the major symbols of this novel. Food is also an integral part of a culture and identity of one's. This novel is centred on a relationship among the food, family tradition Mexican culture and gender through the protagonist of the novel, Tita De La Garza. "Food functions as a narrative device in the novel: like a cinematic montage, bridging both temporal and spatial displacements, it transports both the character and reader into a sensual dimension of reality" (Ibsen, 114). The recipes in the novel are not only a formula to narrates the story but they are memories and traditions which being passed down from generation to generation.

Tita is the main focus of this novel, because she the only person who is mostly connected with the preparation of food. "By framing the political participation in terms of family, and be imagining the nation as a community of cooks, women tacitly acknowledged the patriarchal structure of the society" (Pilcher, 150). From the day of Tita's birth, her domain is the kitchen and her joy covered in the delights of the food. Each chapter contains different recipes which Tita prepare for their family occasions. It brings

the memories of different events that are happened in Tita's life. Food in the novel also used as the medium of communication to Tita. Cooking in the novel, *Like Water for Chocolate* used as a medium and a way of expressing her emotions to others in the family.

Food in the novel of Esquivel, becomes a metaphor for sex, for love, for longing, for hope and for happiness. Food is also representing the disappointments and frustrations of Tita's life. While the preparation of the cake for Rosaura and Pedro's wedding, Tita is in a state of mind full of sorrow because her own sister marrying the man, whom she is loving and its results sadness to all the wedding guests. "The moment they took their first bite of the cake, everyone was flooded with a great wave of longing.....an acute attack of pain and frustration- that seized the guests and scattered them across the patio and the grounds and into the bathrooms, all of them wailing over lost love" (Esquivel, 39). Tita communicates her sadness with the guests through food. She used food as her only communication medium in inside the ranch. The recipes, a method of preparation in each chapter establishes an overall mood for that chapter.

It is also serving as the symbol of memory, emotions, relationships, power and consumption. Esquivel using food as a symbol for unexpressed emotions of a young girl, Tita. Food stands as a catalyst to bring fantasy Food is an essential component, determine the bond between the characters. Through the recipe of quail in rose petal sauce, Tita convey her emotion. The emotion which Tita expected from Pedro but it got an effect on Gertrudis. The preparation of rose petal sauce, was filled with Tita's feelings of longing and the sexual tension for Pedro.

While preparation of the sauce at the kitchen, Tita and Pedro got a quick glimpse at each other. Both are struggling that they are unable to together in an intimate relationship because of two reasons. One is Mama Elena not allow them to be united and tries to keep them apart from each other. The second one is Pedro was already got married with her own sister, Rosaura. When Gertrudis intakes the sauce, she began to express the feelings of longing which Tita possess for Pedro. "She ran out of the little enclosure just as she was, completely naked. By then the scent of roses given off by her body had travelled a long, long way" (Esquivel, 51).

She ran out of the ranch to quench her inner fire through involving in prostitution. It shows Tita's dominance through food.

Kitchen in the novel provides an 'unrestricted freedom' to Tita. In *Like Water for Chocolate*, the kitchen according to Jaffe, is symbolic of "confinement and escape" (224). Mama Elena has all the control over her activities but not in cooking. Elena does not order any in the matters of cooking like how to cook or what to cook to Tita. Tita found her control only over the kitchen. But the kitchen is also her place of confinement. Tita's creative preparation of meals serve as a vehicle for her love for Pedro and it is also an expression of her rebellion against her mother's efforts to separate Pedro from her. The kitchen is the place where children are born, raised and the family recipes and stories are

passed down to the future generations. Food symbolism in the novel is also and reality together within the novel 'Like Water for Chocolate'.

In Laura Esquivel's *Like Water for chocolate*, food helps to reveal the Mexican culture, tradition and history. In this novel, food equals memory and memory equals immortality. The recipes in the novel provides information that food is about history which handed down from generation to generation. Tita's magical powers are related to food and her cooking controls the living pattern of the members of her household because her preparations become an extension of herself. Food serves as a major part of the story and also the title itself is about food. The title of the novel provides a Mexican expression which refers the making of hot chocolate, that the hot chocolate is made by water instead of milk. The magical quality of the text transforms the food and grants powerful properties to provide the spiritual nourishment which is beyond physical satisfaction.

Tita express her creativity through cooking. Cooking empowers the protagonist and it draw power and strength from food. The kitchen remains as the place of her personal and spiritual transformation. Kitchen and food significant that they signal a strange events and long-forgotten rituals. The author, Laura Esquivel says the recipes are also consist 'hidden ingredients. The term 'hidden ingredients' refers and it contains love, patience, sorrow and a respect for tradition. These ingredients are come out only after the preparation of the food and eaten. These hidden ingredients are not only in recipe but it is also in Tita's subconscious mind.

Tita spent her most of the time in the kitchen for many years that makes her to build an unconscious relationship with the food she prepares. Tita understand the food much and her ability to express herself both literally and metaphorically, through her cooking. In Laura Esquivel's novel *Like Water for Chocolate*, food acts as a metaphor and an object to expressing the range of human emotions. Thus, the symbol of food reveals the culture, the language and brings the emotions of the characters. Tears or teardrops is also serving as one of the symbols in the novel 'Like Water for Chocolate'. Crying is one of the expressions of living beings which is an outcome of any sorrow or sadness or physical injury. In the novel, this symbol is associated with the power and richness of the female emotions.

Tita's tears consist supernatural power, it is even before her entry to the physical world. While the time of her birth her mother chops onions at the kitchen table which leads her to delivers the baby prematurely to the physical world. "Tita had no need for the usual slap on the bottom, because she was already crying as she emerged....The way Nacha tells it, Tita was literally washed into this world on a great tide of tears that spilled over the edge of the table and flooded across the kitchen floor" (Esquivel, 9,10).The great amounts of tears of Tita, which flooded the kitchen floor and it dries up by the sun and from the tears Nacha collected and saved a ten pound of salt for cooking, which lasted for a long time. Another time Tita was cried at Dr. John Brown's house, when Chenchu made visit to see her. The stream of tears running down the stairs.

Tita's bedspread is also serves as a symbol in the novel *Like Water for Chocolate*. It represents the sense of hope and survival to Tita. Tita begins to making the bedspread after Pedro convey his plans to Tita, that he would visit the ranch to meet Mama Elena, for asking Tita's hand, a marriage proposal. From the time, when Pedro became engaged with her sister Rosaura, Tita stays awake all night and involving in bedspread making. Even after the marriage of Pedro and Rosaura, Tita does not stops her work and she continuous to sewing the blanket each night with adding different colors. The different colors in the bedspread represents the changes occur in Tita's life. She chooses the color of blanket according to her mental state of the mind at that particular time of sewing. When Tita heard the death news of Roberto, her nephew she left the ranch with nothing but with her bedspread. The bedspread is also the symbol of her unhappiness. She continued the crochet work in all night but mostly whenever she is under the grief and worries. "... the enormous bedspread she had crocheted during her endless nights of insomnia. It was so large and heavy it didn't fit inside the carriage. Tita grabbed it so tightly that there was no choice but let it drag behind the carriage like the huge train of a wedding gown that stretched for a full kilometre." (Esquivel, 91). From these lines one could understand that the length of the bedspread is for a full kilometre. And it represents and symbolizes the measurement of Tita's sadness and worries.

Heat and fire are also one of the symbols in Laura Esquivel's work. This symbol reflects the emotional state of the characters, experiencing anything from love to desire. The top of the intensity level is called as heat and it represent an intensive anger. Fire in the novel represents the effects of love and the passion of the people. The heat is expressed in the novel through the character of Gertrudis, while she intake the rose petal sauce and her body becomes hot with her arousal that she catches the shower on fire. The heat is also representing the literal expression of passion as in the case of Gertrudis. "... each of us is born with matches inside us but we can't strike them all by ourselves; just as in the experiment, we need oxygen and a candle to help. In this case, the oxygen would come from the breath of the person you love; the candle could be any kind of food, music, caress, word or sound that engenders the explosion that lights one of the matches." (Esquivel, 104). These lines are said by Dr. Brown's grandmother in this novel which occurs to Tita and Pedro when they make love at the end of the novel, their inner flames are so intense and their bodies catch fire like in the form of volcano. Heat also refers the anger in the novel that Tita begins to boiling like water boiling for chocolate, when she heard the plans of Rosaura for her daughter, Esperanza.

Coldness also presented as one of the symbols in the novel '*Like Water for Chocolate*'. Cold is also one of the sensations like heat. This symbol is mostly occupied with Tita. The coldness begins to Tita, when Pedro agrees to marry her sister Rosaura. Coldness does not end with these but it continued in the greater levels in her life. This symbol represents her unhappiness, isolation and helplessness. Nothing could stop her from feeling the coldness inside her, even the kilometre of bedspread could not. Tita felt the chillness again when Pedro stops complimenting her cooking by the force of Mama Elena. Coldness, is also contrast with fire and reflects the condition of the spirit without

love. Whenever Tita feels cold she becomes isolate and hopeless. When Pedro dies, she felt the chillness in her again and finally she too died.

The color white reflects one of the symbols in the novel. It is the color of purity and virginity which takes place on special significance. White is also the color of wedding ceremony to a bride. It meant another meaning for Tita that when she sees the white embroidered wedding sheet which was prepared for Pedro and Rosaura. It is also the sign that she herself would never possess the wedded happiness. Because as the youngest daughter of the family not permitted to marry and instead of that she should take care of her mother until she dies. Literally the color white blinds her and the world around her seems a devoid of color to Tita. At the end of the novel, Pedro promises Tita, a white wedding without knowing its unfair end. Thus, this novel provides a lot of symbols for readers to comprehend the great work of art in better way. Symbolism in Esquivel's *Like Water for Chocolate* make the novel unique in its way.

The subversion of domination is presented through the traditional gender roles. In some point of view Esquivel's text seems as the postmodern perspective not in the story plot, but in the description of the characters. In Esquivel's work she brings the power of matriarchy which is actually predominant in the Mexican society. The role of matriarchy in the novel, presented through the character Mama Elena, the protagonist Tita's mother. A critic named Stephen Murray says, this is a novel of a family's life which is in the absence of god and the presence of ancestors that fills the void of the novel. Not only the author, Laura Esquivel wrote this novel with the feminist point of view but it is one of the parts of the narration.

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