

**TC. KOCAELİ ÜNİVERSİTESİ  
SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ  
BATI DİLLERİ VE EDEBİYATI ANABİLİM DALI  
İNGİLİZ DİLİ VE EDEBİYATI BİLİM DALI**

**A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF MAGICAL REALISM IN  
WINTERSON'S *SEXING THE CHERRY* AND  
SHAFAK'S *THE GAZE***

**YÜKSEK LİSANS TEZİ**

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## ÖZET

### YÜKSEK LİSANS TEZİ

#### BÜYÜLÜ GERÇEKÇİLİĞİN WINTERSON'UN *VIŞNENİN CİNSİYETİ* VE ŞAFAK'IN *MAHREM* ADLI ROMANLARDA KARŞILAŞTIRMALI İNCELENMESİ

Büyülü gerçekçilik realizm, fantastik, sıradan, sıra dışı ve doğal olamayan gibi tüm özellikleri bir bütün olarak sunar. Büyülü gerçekçilik 1960'dan beri tüm dünyada tanınan bir edebi akım olmuştur çünkü yazarlara çoğunluğa karşı olma fırsatı tanır. Bir başka deyişle büyülü gerçekçilik ötekinin sesi olmuştur. Öteki her zaman toplumda baskın olan figürden ayrılandır. Bu tez büyülü gerçekçiliği öteki olan kadın karakterlerin sesi olmuş çağdaş Türk ve İngiliz kadın yazarların romanlarında inceler. Eserlerden biri Elif Şafak'ın *Mahrem* diğeri ise Jeannette Winterson'ın *Vişnenin Cinsiyeti* adlı romanlarıdır. İlk bölümde büyülü gerçekçiliğin kuramsal arka planı verilmiştir. İkinci bölümde ise Wendy B. Faris tarafından önerilen birincil ve ikincil özellikler ele alınmıştır. Bu tezin amacı, her iki romanda büyülü gerçekçilik aracılığıyla kadının statüsü, geleneksel kadın anlayışı ve toplumsal cinsiyet rolleri incelemektir.

**Anahtar sözcükler:** Büyülü gerçekçilik, Toplumsal Cinsiyet rolleri, Öteki, *Mahrem*, *Vişnenin Cinsiyeti*

## ABSTRACT

### MASTER'S THESIS

#### A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF MAGICAL REALISM IN WINTERSON'S *SEXING THE CHERRY* AND SHAFAK'S *THE GAZE*

Magical realism skilfully combines opposing characteristics such as the realistic and fantastic, ordinary and extraordinary, natural and supernatural, normal and abnormal, and shows them as a whole. Magical realism has been a global literary genre since the 1960s because it offers writers a space to write against totalitarian regimes. In other words, it has become the voice of “the other”. “The other” is always the one who is different from the majority in the society. This dissertation analyses the characteristics of magical realism in the novels of two contemporary female writers who have become the voice of “the other”: *Sexing the Cherry* by Jeannette Winterson; and *The Gaze* by Elif Shafak. In the first chapter the theoretical background of magical realism is given. The second part analyses the two novels with regards to primary and secondary characteristics of magical realist fiction proposed by Wendy B. Faris. The aim of this dissertation is to examine the common aspects such as the status of women, stereotype female figure, and the gender roles through magical realism.

**Keywords:** Magical realism, Gender roles, The other, *The Gaze*, *Sexing the Cherry*.

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## INTRODUCTION

The aim of the study is to analyse two novels, by Jeannette Winterson's *Sexing the Cherry* and Elif Shafak's *The Gaze*, in terms of magical realism. Today magical realism is a literary term used by various writers around the world and these writers are the representatives of the mode from different parts of the world. Magical realism combines realism and magic. The readers can easily recognize the existence of irreducible elements together with a realistic event, characters, or description. The aim of the magical realist writers is to perplex the minds and make readers think about some issues like gender, race or economic problems.

The aim of this study is also to revise the use of magical realism in British and Turkish literature in order to identify the similarities and differences in which two modern women writers from different parts of the world approach gender issues through magical realism. Jeannette Winterson and Elif Shafak have been chosen in this thesis since, they are famous for their feminist sensibility as they question received notions of patriarchal world.

In the first chapter of this study the historical background of magical realism, how magical realism is perceived in English and Turkish literature and two representatives of magical realism will be analysed. Then the narrative elements of Wendy B. Faris's frame work taken from his article "Scheherazade's Children: Magical Realism and Postmodern Fiction" will be discussed. In the second chapter of the study Jeannette Winterson's *Sexing the Cherry* and Elif Shafak's *The Gaze* will be analysed as magical realist novels. The last chapter will wrap up the discussion alongside with concluding remarks.



## CHAPTER ONE

### THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

#### 1.1. THE BIRTH OF MAGICAL REALISM

The term Magical Realism is a contemporary global mode that has been used in literature. However, the history of the term dates back to a 1920s painting in Germany. As Bowers states, it has spanned eight decades with three turning points and many characteristics. The term was first coined by German art critic Franz Roh. The second period was set in Central America in the 1940s and the third period started in the 1950s in Latin America and continues internationally to this day (Zamora and Farris 7). In each period, the term was named differently. In the first period, the term originated from the *Magischer Realismus*, which was translated into English as Magic Realism and the Spanish *Realismo Mágico*. In the second period, the term *lo real maravilloso* translated into English as Marvellous Realism. In the third period, *Realismo Mágico* was translated into English as Magical Realism (Bowers 2). Today, “magical realism” is the term that is mostly used. It is a “mode suited to exploring – and transgressing-boundaries, whether the boundaries are ontological, political, geographical or generic” (Zamora and Farris 5).

How did this term emerge and become well-known in world literature? Irene Guenther answers this question by overviewing the explanatory history of magical realism in her essay. Everything started with painting in 1920, when art critics and artists declared that Expressionism had nothing to say. For them, Expressionism was over. The new painting style was on the stage. Although this painting did not have specific characteristics, it was a new way of seeing and depicting the familiar (Guenther 33). The first people who named the new style were art historian Franz Roh and German museum director Gustav Hartlaub. Franz Roh named it “magic realism” and Hartlaub named it as “new objectivity”.

Roh identified more than fifteen painters active in Germany at his time to exemplify the form. Roh used 'magic realism' to define the form of painting that differed greatly from its predecessor. This new type of painting was different with accurate detail, a smooth photograph-like clarity of picture and the representation of the mystical non-material aspects of reality. Roh especially emphasised the importance of objectivity in the new form of painting; for impressionism the colours and for expressionism the shapes and form gained the importance. Moreover, both limited themselves with streometry and colour. According to the new style, the object was the important thing, not the colour and the shapes because when a combination of same colours and shapes were applied to each object, it might be seen differently. Roh also added that the new art aimed to give the feeling of reality but not a copy of nature. It must be like another creation (Roh 23). "For the new art, it is a question of representing before our eyes, in an intuitive way the fact, the interior figure, of the exterior world" (Roh 24). Roh also exemplifies the new art with painter Schrimpf, who paints the landscapes in his studio, not in nature, in other words, without a model. In the new art, the artist must reflect the flow of interior image to the canvas, but still he can give the impression of real. Otherwise, the painting will not be different from a photograph. The painter tries to be real with ordinary and familiar objects and be magic by seeing it with his inner eyes (Roh 24). Roh's magical realism and Hartlaub's new objectivity are the same since this new art comes after expressionism, and it was born during the Weimar Republic and in the aftermath of the First World War. The art historian Irene Guenther points out: "The juxtaposition of 'magic' and 'realism' reflected far more the monstrous and marvellous Unheimlichkeit (uncanniness) within human beings and inherent in their modern technological surroundings" (36). He constructed a list of twenty-two characteristics that differentiated magic realism from expressionism in his book in 1925.

Previous paintings had an expressionist warmth of colours and rough, thick textures of the paint surface, it emphasised the painting process. On the other hand, new objectivism was identified as smooth, cold, static, with a thin paint surface and objects were clarified and drawn as a miniature (Guenther 36).

Before Roh's book the new term Magischer Realismus appeared and Hartlaub's exhibition called Neue Sachlichkeit took place in 1925, Roh saw the new artistic movement in Munich galleries. The paintings reflected the new trend. Furthermore, in 1922, an art historian named Paul Westheim sent out a questionnaire to authors about the new trend. In this questionnaire he asked if this trend was the end of expressionism or it was only a slogan. He also wanted to know if the new movement had a name. In 1925, the new trend had two names: Roh's "Magic Realism" and Hartlaub's "New Objectivity". They both tried to find a common ground to present the new art as a unit. It was the art of the struggling Weimar Republic, a post-war and economic depression. It was a new way to express feelings about the terrible situation in Germany. After the collapse of the Weimar Republic, Hitler's regime was on the stage. It was the period of cultural cleaning; books were burned, paintings were destroyed. However, some artists were politically active to improve society. At the beginning of 1933, Hitler's regime called this art 'Degenerate' and the artists 'Bolshevists'. Hartlaub was fired, and Roh was sent to a concentration camp. Nevertheless, Hitler could not restrain magic realism being successful in painting and also in literary concept in the world, for Roh's book was translated into Spanish in José Ortega y Gasset's *Revista de Occidente* in Madrid in 1927 under the name of *realismo mágico*. Roh's magic realism inferred painting. He did not mention much magic realism in literature. Ernst Junger, an essayist and a novelist was influenced by this term and used it in an article called *Nationalism and Modern Life*. Also in 1927, Massimo Bontempelli, an organizer of *Journal 900* (Novacentre), introduced the term *realismo mágico* in an artistic and literary context. The journal was bilingual, so it was published in French and Italian which helped this term to become widely known in Europe. This term travelled to the Netherlands and Belgium with the writer Johan Daisne's novel *De trap van steen en wolven* in 1942. After Bontempelli's article in Belgian *Le Nouveau Journal*, Daisne adopted and used the term *Magical Realism* (Guenther 60).

From the beginning of the Great Depression and following the Nazi regime, further development of magic realism stopped since it was named 'Degenerate Art'. When the Nazi regime destroyed most of the works of the artists, they migrated to Central and South America (Guenther 61). The exiles of the artists from Europe to

America during the Third Reich and the translation of Roh's book into Spanish made this term widely known in Latin America. Roh's original title was changed to "Magical Realism" when Roh's 1927 version of text was translated into Spanish for the magazine *Revista de Occidente*. Although the first-time magical realism was used to describe a European novel, with the change of the name, it became Latin American. Uslar Pietri's book *Letras y hombres de Venuzuela* in 1949 had a great impact in migration of the term magical realism from Europe to Latin America (Reeds 52).

If it is impossible not to mention the name of Franz Roh in magic(al) realism, it is impossible not to refer to Alejo Carpentier, Arturo Uslar Pietri, Angel Flores, Louis Leal in Latin American magical realism. Two diplomats and writers, Alejo Carpentier and Arturo Uslar Pietri were influenced by European artists while they were living in Paris in the 1930s. Carpentier and Uslar Pietri published their ideas that were very close in the same year (Reed 54). Arturo Uslar Pietri was the first Latin American writer who used magical realist short stories during the 1930s and 1940s. He was associated with Franz Roh. Although Pietri is the first one who applied magic realism, Carpentier is known better.

After returning from Europe to Cuba, Alejo Carpentier also travelled to Haiti and after that he created the Latin American form of magical realism called marvellous realism. Alejo Carpentier notes in the prologue of his most famous magic realist novel *El reino de este mundo* (*The Kingdom of this World*) that he created a distinction between European 'magic realist' writing and Latin American 'magical realist' writing. He defined and named lo real maravilloso Americano that translated as 'American marvellous realism'. He states that European magic realists create a sense of mystery by using narrative techniques, but Latin America has its original cultural beliefs. He posits that "I found the marvellous real at every turn. Furthermore, I thought, the presence and vitality of this marvellous real was not the unique privilege of Haiti but the heritage of all of America" (Carpentier 87). Carpentier also states that the land they are living is so eligible to be named as marvellous with its virginity and its fecund racial mixing (mestizaje) (88). He also gives the definition of marvellous. It comes from an extraordinary reality. He added that marvellous presupposed faith. He points that according to dictionaries,

marvellous is something that causes admiration because it is extraordinary, excellent and formidable. Moreover, he highlights that this word gives the notion of beautiful or lovely but he does not accept this. It can either be beautiful or ugly, yet the important thing is that it must be just strange (101). In his essay, he also criticises Roh's magical realism to point out the difference between the American and European concepts of magical realism. For him, Roh's definition is only for painting and it does not conform to daily reality. He states that Franz Roh's magical realism and the painters he exemplifies are either expressionist or impressionist. He also emphasizes that Roh's magical realism is also mixed with surrealism in which the mystery is manufactured (104). Carpentier in his essay "Baroque and the Marvellous Real" defines the term and insists that the origin of the term comes from Latin America where 'strange' is very common: "... our own marvellous reality? realism? is encountered in its raw state, latent and omnipresent, in all that is Latin American. Here the strange is commonplace and always was commonplace" (104).

While both magic realism and marvellous realism refer to different versions of magic(al) realism, a new term 'magical realism' emerged from the critic Angel Flores in his criticism with the essay "Magical Realism in Spanish American Fiction" in 1955 (Bowers 17). Flores accepted both European modernist and specifically Spanish influences for this version of magic(al) realism (Bowers 15). He did not acknowledge either Pietri or Carpentier who believe Franz Roh as a father of magical realism; instead, he stated that certain writers and painters of the First World War such as Kafka, Proust and, in painting, Chirico, had rediscovered magical realism. "Theirs was to a large extent a rediscovery because some of the stylistic and expressive utterances were writ large in numerous nineteenth-century figures" (Carpentier 102). According to him, they were influenced by previous writers such as Dostoevsky, German Romantic Hoffman, Arnim, Kleist, the Grimm brothers and to some extent, Poe and Melville. For Flores, Magical realism is the combination of realism and fantasy that are seen in Latin America. He also adds that realism comes from the Colonial Period and the magical comes from the earliest in the letters of Columbus, in the chroniclers, and in the sagas of Cabeza de Vaca (112).

Luis Leal in his article “Magical Realism in Spanish American Literature” writes a response to Angel Flores and criticizes him. Leal sees Roh as the originator of the term. He disagrees that Borges started the movement. Luis also disagrees that Kafka is a magical realist. He accepts Uslar Pietri as the first one who uses the term, then comes Alejo Carpentier with his book *The Kingdom of the World*. Leal gives the definition of what, for him, magical realism is not. Magical realism cannot be identified as either fantastic or psychological literature or surrealist or hermeneutic literature. It does not use dream motifs or create imaginary worlds like fantastic or scientific literature. The magical realists do not copy the real world as a realist or hide it like a surrealist did. It is not magic literature either. “Its aim is unlike that of magic, is to express emotions, not to evoke them” (Leal 121). Moreover, he does not accept magical realism as an escapist literature. He also states that “he does not create imaginary worlds in which we can hide from everyday reality. In magical realism, the writer confronts reality and tries to untangle it, to discover what is mysterious in things, in life, in human acts” (121). In magical realism, key events do not have any explanation. It does not have to be logical (123). He concludes his essay by comparing magical realism to fantastic literature in which the writer justifies the mystery. Also, according to him, in fantastic literature the supernatural is apparent but in magical realism mystery is always in disguise (123).

As Guenther points out, there are many kinds of interpretations of the term such as Magic Realism by Franz Roh, New Objectivity by Hartlaub, the Magic realism by Daisne, the magical realism by Flores, the American Marvellous by Alejo Carpentier, and Bontempelli’s Magic Realism. Despite many similarities, these interpretations also carry differences because of the linguistic and cultural diversities of the writers (62).

## **1.2. MAGICAL REALISM IN ENGLAND**

Magical realism has become global mode so it has never belonged to one era or one continent. As Hegerfeldt claims, first it traveled around Europe, then from Europe to Latin America, and from Latin America to the rest of the world (*Lies that Tell the Truth* 2). Maggie Ann claims that the Latin American best known literary movement, “The Boom” of the 1950s and 1960s made magic realism an

internationally fashionable literary tradition since there was an interest in a new kind of novel (32). Also, the important prize or award winner writers such as Miguel Angel Asturias, Gabriel Garcia Marquez or Tony Morrison played a great role in the popularization of magical realism. After magical realism started to be written by authors from numerous countries of origin, it supported the idea that it is not the sole property of Latin Americans, as Alejo Carpentier might have believed, or as Angel Flores claimed in his article “Magical Realism in Spanish American Fiction”. The mode was for a long time treated as an exclusively Latin American phenomenon. However, this Americanist interpretation of magical realism is amply criticized as a territorialisation of imagination (Channady 130). As a result, many magical realist examples have been written in a great range of countries.

Salman Rushdie states, “[l]iterature is not in the business of copyrighting certain themes for certain groups” (qtd.in Hegerfeldt 3). As Wen- Chin Ouyang points out, there is no stopping; it is everywhere: “Magical realism is in Arabic, Chinese, English, German, Italian, Japanese, Persian, Portuguese, Spanish, Tibetan and Turkish to name but a few languages” (15). Both affirm the idea that magical realism belongs to the world.

Magical realism in literature in the English language appeared first in the early 1970s. Since magical realism in England is seen later than in other countries such as Europe and Latin America, it carries the influences from writers across the globe (Bowers 45). The common characteristic of these writers is that their narrative position is against the dominant power.

According to Hegerfeldt, British magical realist writers are Salman Rushdie, Angela Carter, Emma Tennant, Robert Nye, and Jeannette Winterson (65). To start with, Emma Tennant grew up in London in 1950s and 1960s. Her work has been characterized by postmodernism, fantasy, and magic realism. Her works have many similarities with Angela Carter’s works. Some of her works are *Hotel de Dreams* (1976) and *Wild Nights* (1979). Her novels combine feminism, fantasy, and satirical observation which look like realist fiction elements. However, she also combines realities with illusions. (Neumeier 34). “*Wild Nights* consists of different stories mingled into each other. “Thus, the text presents a picture of the world that is not yet structured by the meaning and teleology that an adult would assign to it”

(Neumier 31). In this way, she creates a bizarre story. Neumier also states, "In Emma Tennant the 'gaudy,' lively and often outright funny elements of fantasy are juxtaposed with realist elements that function to ground the text firmly in a twentieth-century environment, which, however, is questioned through the very juxtaposition of these two modes" (31). In *Wild Nights*, there are alive and dead relatives constantly visiting the family in the rhythm of seasons. Also in "*Hotel de Dream* (1976) fantasy and reality intermingle as inhabitants of a boarding house enter each other's dreams spending much of their time escaping reality by sleeping" (Wilson, Schlueter 479).

As Hegerfeldt lists, another British novelist who has introduced an example of magical realism is Salman Rushdie. He blends myth and fantasy with life. *Midnight's Children* (1981) and *Shame* (1983) are both examples of magical realism. His book *Midnight's Children* won the Bookers Prize. *Midnight's Children* is a loose allegory for events in India, especially after the independence of India on 15 August at midnight in 1947. In *Shame* he focuses on women and describes them from a Westernized perspective in Pakistan, portraying them as unbelievable.

An additional eminent English magical realist writer is Angela Carter. As Hegerfeldt indicates, she is a "practitioner of magical realism par excellence" (4). For Ann Bowers, she is a feminist writer of the 1980s and 1990s who wrote magical realist texts. *Nights at the Circus* (1984) and *Wise Children* (1991) are set in the mid-twentieth century in Britain. She aims to attract the authority of male British ruling classes and their dominant culture with magical realist narrative techniques. (65) She is woman-centred, so her protagonists are mainly women. Zamora and Faris state that "[m]agical realist texts are subversive; their in-betweenness, their all at oneness encourages resistance to monological, political and cultures structures, a feature that has made the mode particularly useful to writers in postcolonial cultures and, increasingly to women" (Zamora and Faris 6). Therefore, magical realism is suitable for Angela Carter, who wants to break gender stereotypes. In her novels, her heroines do not have female characteristics like being kind, delicate or gentle as expected by society, but have mannish and even beastly behaviour. For example, Fevvers in *Nights at the Circus* is a hulking woman. She is not only physically different from an accepted woman figure, but her attitudes like burping show resistance to imposed gender attitudes. The story is about a working-class girl who



develops real wings and becomes a trapeze artist in a circus. As Bowers points out, the patriarchal authority defines itself in opposition to its 'other' according to Helene Cixous' feminist theory (66). In this case, the female is always the 'other'. *Wise Children* is an excellent illustration of the concept of the 'other'. It is a story of bizarre twin sisters' theatrical family. It opens on Shakespeare's birthday in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and the story is full of opposites. Nora and Dora are dancing girls, on the other hand, their real father whom they have not met is an aristocratic man. They live in the dreary south, but the father lives in the elegant North. There are also other magical realist characteristics in both of her novels like creating wonder over the readers. Are Fevvers' wings real or fake? In *Wise Children*, Dora doubts upon the reliability of her narrative (*Lies That Tell the Truth* 101). What she narrates creates hesitation over the reader who learns the past from the narration.

Another distinguished writer is Jeanette Winterson. Her novels and stories carry the elements of magical realism. Her novels such as *The Passion* (1987) and *Sexing the Cherry* (1981), as well as her book *The World and Other Places* (1999), in which she gathered several stories, are examples of magical realism's technique of installing and subverting realism (Hegerfeldt 76). She can puzzle her readers like all magical realist writers. Like Angela Carter and other writers of magical realism, Winterson never hesitates to intermingle fantasy, metafiction, fabulous and fairy tales in her fiction. In *The Passion*, there is a protagonist with webbed feet who can walk on the water. Patrick, another character in the story, has a telescopic eye and can see for miles and predict the future, and in another short story called "The World and Other Places", the protagonist lands his airplane in his parents' village and parks in the driveway. Also, she hitches her story to an extratextual world like Latin American magical realist writers to give a realist veneer. The references to early historical periods equally work to establish realism (*Lies that Tell the Truth* 79). *The Passion* is a good illustration for this since she uses Napoleon's military as a megastory.

Hegerfeldt refutes the idea that there are no magical realist writers in England. If magic realism has not been found in fiction in Britain, it is not because it is not there, but because critics have not looked. As Hegerfeldt claims, the names of British magical writers and their fiction can increase (4).

### 1.3. MAGICAL REALISM IN TURKEY

The Turkish novel was generally written to model reader's viewpoints and to steer society. Especially in the 1960s and 1970s, depending on the thought of socialism, the Turkish novel was written in a realistic form. The only concern of the writers was the message, not the form or the style of the novel. Thus, the themes of the novel during this period were the peasantry and workers in factories and their relationship with their boss. Realism was the only method of writing. Oğuz Atay's novel *The Disconnected* (1972) made an important step in breaking the mold. Another writer who digressed from realism was Yaşar Kemal. In his *The Wind from the Plain trilogy* (1960), he created a different world with intertwined mythological, folkloric and fantastical elements. His novel was criticized by the realist critics in the article called "Is it a fairy tale or a novel?" in 1971. After this article, Bilge Karasu expressed her ideas about realist writing, admitting that she felt bored and trapped in realist writing and found freedom in writing fairy tales (İnci 189).

In the 1980s, Turkish writers abandoned realist writing and started to use the new writing style that emerged in Latin America in the 1960s and spread around the world. When Turkish writers were looking for new ways to express themselves, postmodern writing opened a new door for them. Of course, the translations from Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Jorge Lois Borges, Italo Calvino influenced them. In the new type of narration, chronological plot, or omnipresent narrator or cause and effect relations were not needed, so a new generation of writers felt free in their fiction (Moran 54-56). According to Moran, postmodern Turkish writers were Nazlı Eray, Latife Tekin, Mehmet Eroğlu, Bilge Karasu and Orhan Pamuk (74). Although they all agree that the realist fiction was old fashioned and preferred a different way to express themselves, each had nuances in their writing. They wrote fantastic or magical realist or metafiction novels that are all subtitles of the postmodern novel (57).

Among the early magical realist writers can be named Onat Kutlar. Kutlar's novel *Ishak* (1959) is regarded as an early example of magical realism. It was almost written before magical realism became popular in Latin America. The first story in the novel is about three generations of a family. Like in Latin American

magical realist fiction, there is a big family, and there are local characteristics like embroidering women or poultry attached to houses. And most importantly there is a grandmother figure who is half awake and half sleepy. Besides, there is an uncertainty about whether the character, the grandmother is a rooster or was born in a group of roosters or she rides a rooster in her dream. Although it seems meaningless, her aim is to wake the roosters. This attitude is a kind of rebellion against her children. The omniscient but at the same time reticent narrator tells the story from the viewpoint of the grandmother character.

Latife Tekin's novel *Dear Shameless Death* was compared to Marquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude* (1967). It was criticized and praised at the same time for being different from a classical novel (Moran 75). The novel narrates the traumatic migration of a Turkish family from a village to a city. The life of the family is an amalgamation of reality and imagination. Tekin uses motifs like in *Dede Korkut* stories, and *Legend of Battal Ghazi and Saltukname* for magical happenings (Moran 86). Her second novel is *Berji Kristi: Tales from the Garbage Hill* (1984). She again tells a story of families who migrated from rural to urban neighbourhoods and had to live in the suburbs. She uses traditional elements and the supernatural in her story, which renders her work a good example of magical realism in Turkey.

Another prominent contemporary writer is Hasan Ali Toptaş. *Kayıp Hayaller* (1996), is a major example regarding magical realism. The novel carries magical realist elements like multiple narrator technique, dead characters, indefiniteness, and defamiliarization. Like a typical magical realist fiction, the people in the novel doubt their realities. What is real and what is not real become blurred (Yivli 1549). The novel is about stories told by the ex-lover of Hasan's grandfather and his friend Hamdi. The closely entwined stories are told with episodes that affect each other.

Nazlı Eray has written many novels. She categorizes herself as a magical writer in one of her interviews in *Yeniasır* newspaper (Fincan, Tatlıbal, Yüksel, Azar para. 2). Her first novel is *Pasifik Günleri* (1981), and her last novel is *Beyoğlunda Gezersin* (2005). She uses dreams, fantasy and reality at the same time. She creates surreal worlds with extraordinary elements, characters and incidents. Most of the time she prefers to combine real characters and real events with

fictional ones. Dreams and reality are entwined. The reader always hesitates about whether what he or she reads is real (Toyman 92).

Elif Shafak is arguably the most read and criticized contemporary female writer. She has written many books in Turkish as well as in English. For example, her first novel, *Pinhan* (2009), is written in Turkish and *The Bastard of Istanbul* (2006) is written in English. Most of her books are translated into English. Her most recent novel is *The Architect's Apprentice* (2013). Her novel *The Gaze* (2000) is an example of magical realism, for this reason, it will be analysed in detail in this thesis. The novel was awarded Independent Foreign Fiction Prize in 2007. The story starts with a dream of an overweight woman. The overweight woman and her lover, a dwarf, are disturbed by the gazes because their physical appearance is different from ordinary people.

#### **1.4. NARRATIVE ELEMENTS IN MAGICAL REALISM**

It is an undisputable fact that Franz Roh is the starting point of magical realism in painting. However, the key figures in the development of the term in literature are the Italian writer Massimo Bontempelli from the 1920s and 1930s, the mid-twentieth-century Latin American literary critic Angel Flores, the mid-twentieth-century Cuban writer Alejo Carpentier, and the late twentieth-century Latin American novelist Gabriel García Márquez (Bowers 7).

Amidst different definitions and different names, magical realism is an important presence in contemporary world literature. Critics have considered to interpret magical realist fiction as a narrative mode through various critical and theoretical perspectives because this genre does not belong to any era or region (Bowers 63). During the stardom period, magical realism consistently faced severe points of critique and “It has been condemned as escapist literature, as exoticist and commercialized kitsch. Initially it was considered a purely Latin American phenomenon. It has been pigeon-holed as a typically Latin American phenomenon” (Hegerfeldt, *Lies That Tell the Truth* 1). However, “magical realism has come to be regarded as a mode available to postcolonial writers in general, providing them with a means to challenge the dominant Western world-view” (Hegerfeldt, *Lies That Tell the Truth* 1). Gabriel Garcia Marquez’s novel *One Hundred Years of Solitude* (1967)

and Salman Rushdie with *Midnight's Children* (1981) created wide recognition of this mode in the world. Both are postcolonial texts, for this reason, they create an impression that magical realism is postcolonial. Nevertheless, there is the third example, which is Grass's *The Tin Drum* (1959) from Germany, which refutes the idea that magical realism is only postcolonial (Faris, *Ordinary Enchantments* 29). "It is a matter of debate whether the literature became internationally acclaimed because of the widespread use of such experimentation or whether such techniques were employed to gain international recognition following the first successes of the 'boom'" (Faris, *Ordinary Enchantments* 33).

Maggie Ann Bowers indicates that the popularity of magical realism comes from its transgressive and subversive Scheherazade quality. This feature helps many feminist, postcolonial and cross-cultural writers to express their ideas (63). Zamora and Faris also point out that "[m]agical realist texts are subversive: their in-betweenness, their all-at-onceness encourages resistance to monologic political and cultural structures, a feature that has made the mode particularly useful to writers in postcolonial cultures and, increasingly, to women" (6). Faris also emphasizes that "magical realism is a mode suited to exploring and transgressing boundaries, whether the boundaries are ontological, political, geographical or generic" (5).

Slemon points out that there is a connection between magical realism and post-colonialism since it is a "weapon of silenced and marginalized voices" and critics such as Brenda Cooper, Maggie Ann Bowers, Anne Hegerfeldt and Stephen Hart affirm Slemon's idea that magical realism exists where there is need to write against dominant power: "The critics of magical realism often express their understanding of the concept regarding the cultural conflict between dominant ruling classes and those who had been denied the powers" (Bowers 65). The 'other' then refers to the denied powers. These denied powers never change but dominant powers change according to each country. For example, it is the male Anglo European who governs the USA or male ruling upper class in England. Brenda Cooper underlines the same characteristics of magical realism. According to her, there must be at least two beings that are always at war: "If societies about which magical realists write are various and mixed in their economies and cultures, then their populations are also hybrid and heterogeneous constantly undergoing

transformation” (17).

Brenda Cooper also gives her definition to magical realist fiction and she notes: “[m]agical realism at its best opposes fundamentalism and purity; it is at odds with racism, ethnicity and the quest for tap roots, origins, and homogeneity” (22). This is the key to its recent popularity as a mode of fiction, particularly in Latin America and the postcolonial English-speaking world. “It has also been used as a common narrative mode for fictions written from perspective of the politically or culturally disempowered like indigenous people like Native Americans or women writing from feminist perspective or those whose lives incorporate different cultural beliefs and practices from those dominant their country of residence...” (Bowers 32). For instance, Salman Rushdie, although he lives in England, locates his narrators and subject matter outside of England. The second example, Angela Carter, is influenced by the comedies of William Shakespeare and literary theories of Russian Mikhail Bakhtin. She used the literary theories of Bakhtin as a weapon against the accepted gender and social roles. “Her stories are set in mid-twentieth century Britain at the end of the British Empire when imperialist ideas of the assumed superiority of British patriarchy still exerted a strong influence over society” (Bowers 32). As Chanady explains, this narrative point of view relies upon an “absence of obvious judgments about the veracity of the events and the authenticity of the world view expressed by characters in the text” (30).

Magical realism is sometimes confused with other genres like surrealism in literature. Although surrealism and magical realism started nearly at the same time in the twentieth century and were revolutionary against realist literature, they are different. Surrealism is not political but just a revolt against conventional thinking and logic. On the other hand, magical realism can be accepted as political since it appears when there is discontent in society. In surrealism, with the influence of Freud, they believe that in order to reach the absolute truth, they should look into the unconscious mind through dreams because dreams carry complete reality in the secrets parts of the human mind. As Bowers claims, surrealism asserts that subconscious, unconscious and dreams are essential to go beyond the knowledge of the given. Nevertheless, magical realism never uses dreams as tools to depict the supernatural elements because that would harm the reality of the scene. Besides,

in magical realism magic or the extraordinary is always unquestioned and accepted and never presented in the form of a dream or psychological experience (Bowers 22).

Magical realism is also associated with fantastic literature because they both use the extraordinary and supernatural. However, when both genres are analysed, they are disparate. First of all, while magical realist fiction creates a real world, the fantastic fiction creates an unreal world with unreal characters. Thus, it is common to find elves, fairies, wizards like in J.K.Rowling's novel *Harry Potter* (1997) or J.R.R.Tolkien's novel *The Lord of Rings* (1937) which are categorized in fantastic literature. Also, magical realism fiction is subversive and revolutionary against the socially dominant ideologies, but fantastic literature does not have this kind of aim. According to the critic Todorov, "the fantastic relies upon the reader's hesitation between natural and unnatural and supernatural explanation for the fictional events in the text" (qtd.in Bowers 24). However, magical realist fiction depicts the real world but from the real world's people whose reality is different from ours. The supernatural element in magical realist fiction is accepted by the readers without questioning. If there is a ghost in magical realist fiction, the ghost is not questioned, but it is a manifestation of the reality of people who believe in and have real experience of ghosts. For instance, in Isabelle Allende's novel *The House of Spirits* (1982), magical settings in which ghosts and extraordinary happenings occur are common place. In the novel Clara reappears in the family house as a ghost to influence the next generation. The spiritual atmosphere symbolizes the happy times, in other words, it represents the ideal worlds in which we should live. The writer wrote the novel when she experienced the effects of a military coup in 1973 in Chile. On the other hand, in Henry James's *The Turn of the Screw* (1898), when the governess comes across the ghost, which the children see and mention before, she is scared of it. The story is told from the governess' viewpoint to give the impression that there is a ghost and at the same time maybe the governess is hallucinating. "This element of doubt and the governess' own fear of unknown, of the supernatural, stops the text from being magical realist" and makes it fantastic fiction (Bowers 24).

The consensus is that magical realism is global, and it is different from other genres. Magical realist fiction provides a means to attack dominant culture. If this is so, what are the common characteristics that make the fiction magical realist? Brenda Cooper states that ‘hybridity’ is the main aspect of magical realist writing. Opposites such as death and life, historical reality and magic, science and religion are used in the plots, themes and narrative structures of magical realist novels. “In other words, urban and rural, western and indigenous, black, white and Mestizo—this cultural, economic and political cacophony is the amphitheatre in which magical realist fictions are performed” (Cooper 32). The plots of these fictions are about the issues of borders, change, mixing and syncretizing. The aim of the writers is “to expose what they see as a deeper and true reality than conventional realist techniques would bring to view” (Cooper 32). Like the plot, time is ‘hybrid’. Brenda Cooper states : “[m]agical realist time tries to be neither the linear time of history nor the circular time of myth” (34). The writer is also a balance figure in magical realist writing. His viewpoint can be characterized as ironic. The writer must have ironic distance from the magical worldview or else the realism will be compromised. However, the writer must at the same time have a deep respect for the magic, or else it evaporates into mere folk belief or total fantasy, separated from the real instead of syncretized with it (Cooper 34).

According to Anne Hegerfeldt magical realist text employs real events that everybody is familiar with and create the realistic part of the fiction: “Magic realist fiction characteristically hitches itself to a mega story to give itself a realistic veneer. In Latin America magic realist fiction this strategy is very noticeable both in Alejo Carpentier’s *The Kingdom of This World* (1949), which retells the history of Haiti’s slave revolution and in Isabella Allende’s *House of Spirits* (1982), a family chronicle that unfolds against the economic and political upheaval of twentieth-century Chile” (Hegerfeldt 74). English language magic realist texts are not different from Latin examples; they attach their narratives to the extra-textual world. In Angela Carter’s *Wise Children* (1981), the references to NY, Paris and London give some knowledge about the socio-economic structure of these cities’ real world. The settings are given to create a realistic atmosphere. Although contemporary settings are easily recognized, some settings are taken from earlier history like Napoleon’s military campaign. Robert Nye’s *The Late Mr Shakespeare* (1996) goes



to Elizabethan and Jacobean England. The fictional world is modelled on the reader's extra-textual world (Hegerfeldt 75). Another critic Roland Walter identifies the magical realist fiction with three characteristics. The first one is the existence of two levels of reality, the magical and the real. Second is the harmonious integration of the two levels of reality and the third characteristic is the reticence of the author.

Wendy B. Faris in his article "Scheherazade's Children: Magical Realism and Postmodern Fiction" lists five primary characteristics of magical realist fiction. In the next chapter of the dissertation, the novels of two contemporary writers are analysed according to these characteristics. The irreducible element is the first characteristic of magical realist fiction. The irreducible elements are used for something we cannot explain according to the laws of the universe. "Therefore, the reader has difficulty marshalling evidence to settle questions about the status of events and characters in such fictions" (Faris, *Ordinary Enchantments* 9). For instance, Fevvers in Angela Carter's *Nights at the Circus* (1984) has wings. The wings of Fevvers cannot be accepted according to Western logic. The writer assimilates the extraordinary event into the realistic atmosphere to prevent the shock of the readers. However, at the same time the writer does not let the irreducible element melt. The journalist Wasser in *Nights at the Circus* tries to understand if the wings are real or not. As an authorial reticence the author gives no reaction to unusual events on the other hand the other characters hesitate. "In short, the magic in these texts refuses to be entirely assimilated into their realism; it does not brutally shock, but neither does it melt away, so that it is like a grain of sand in the oyster of that realism" (Faris, *Ordinary Enchantments* 9).

As Faris points out "magical images or events, glowing alluringly from within the realistic matrix, often highlight central issues in a text" (*Ordinary Enchantments* 9). The protagonist Sethe in the novel *Beloved* (1987) written by Toni Morrison starts to sing a song which comes from female linear descent. In *One Hundred Years of Solitude* (1967), the blood that travels in the town from son to mother show strong family ties. In addition, there is no ordinary logic of cause and effect in irreducible magic. Faris exemplifies Lisa's pains in M. Thomas's *White Hotel* (1981) and they appear before she experiences the atrocities at Babi Yar that cause them and kill her. Melquíades's manuscript turns out to be a prediction as

well as a recording of events in *One Hundred Years of Solitude*. It also asks implicitly whether him or we are the masters or the victims of our fates. Another example is taken from the novel *Perfume* (1985) written by Patrick Suskind. The reader wonders whether Grenouille's perfuming skills are a cause or a result of his perfumeless persona. Faris's another example about the unusual logic of cause and effect element is taken from Ben Okri's *Famished Road* (1991). The text presents Azaro's visions in such a way that we question whether Azaro's visionary skills conjure the images he presents or whether they result from the effects of people or of the phenomena he encounters on him.

The second element is phenomenal world. The realism in magical realism distinguishes the fiction from fantasy and allegory (Faris, *Ordinary Enchantments* 14). Faris also claims that realistic descriptions create a fictional world that resembles the one in which we live. Moreover, the detailed description makes the story real. On the other hand, the writer does not hesitate to add magical details to depart the story realism to imaginary (*Ordinary Enchantments* 14).

For Faris, reference is as important as the descriptions since it hides historical realities. Once the reader starts to pay attention to references, he will find a writer's hidden box of history. Isabel Allende's *The House of Spirits* is about the years of turmoil in her country. Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* is about his mother country India and the children born on the day of independence. He also exemplifies this from Marquez's book *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, in which Marquez rewrites the history of Latin America. He mentions the massacre that was hidden from the public record (16). Angela Carter's novel *The Wise Children* and *The Night at the Circus* display life in England and the women who start to be in the society as working women. Günter Grass's *The Tin Drum* (1959) defines 20<sup>th</sup> atmosphere and World War II and the Nazi Regime. All these examples show that history is not objective and it helps readers to see different perspectives.

The third element is unsettling doubts. The reader must hesitate in magical realist fiction before categorizing the irreducible element as irreducible. The reader may hesitate between the two understandings of an event either as character's hallucination or as a miracle (Faris, *Ordinary Enchantments* 17). Faris exemplifies it with Toni Morrison's novel *Beloved*. In front of the house, women ask

themselves, “Did the dead daughter come back? Alternatively, a pretend she was? Was it whipping Sethe?” (258). Then she disappears. Nobody is sure. Disappeared, some way exploded right before their eyes. Ella is not sure. ‘Maybe she says maybe not. Could be hiding in the trees waiting for another chance?’ (268). At the end of the book, nobody remembers her. It is like a dream. Hesitation can be created with the scenes that may seem dreamlike, but indeed they are not dreams, and “the text may both tempt us to co-opt them by categorizing them as and forbid” (Faris, *Ordinary Enchantments* 18). For instance, in magical realist texts household objects fly, people die and return to life, blood travels all Macondo. The hesitation may differ from the reader’s cultural background. However, there are some events that create hesitation on all of the readers. For instance, the age of Pilar Ternare in *One Hundred Years Solitude*, the reader hesitates since she is more than 145 years old and she stops counting her age anymore (Faris 19). Allegory is a story with two meanings, a literal and symbolic meaning. Faris exemplifies this characteristic with Kundera’s *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting*. In the book, the people rise above the ground in a charmed circle of bliss. For Kundera this is “an example of unbearable lightness that the totalitarian ideologies will tend to engender” (Faris, *Ordinary Enchantments* 18).

As Faris lists, the fourth element is merging realms. In magical realist narrative, there are multiple realms. “The magical realist vision thus exists at the intersection of two worlds, at an imaginary point inside a double-sided mirror that reflects in both directions. Ghosts and texts, or people and words that seem ghostly, inhabit these two-sided mirrors, many times situated between the two worlds of life and death” (Faris, *Ordinary Enchantments* 21). In other words, the readers come across with many uncanny things that conventional norms of reason and logic can accept. However, the uncanny things are always different from the one used in fantastic novels since they are well assimilated into the story without causing any interpretation of narrators or characters who direct the readers.

The last characteristic of magical realism is the disruption of time, space, and identity. The magical realist fiction disturbs the received ideas about time, space, and identity. In *One Hundred Years of Solitude* (1967), the reader comes across an unusual expression of time, such as four years, eleven months, and two

days of rain insomnia plague that erases the past and the meaning of words, and the date is March and always Monday. Arcadia, who languishes half dead and half alive for years under a banana tree in the courtyard of his house, disturbs the received idea of space. Identity is also reoriented in magical realist fiction. Faris refers to novel *Midnight's Children* in which the character Salem questions himself. "I am glad,' my Padpa says, 'I am happy you ran away. 'But I insist: not I. He. He, the Buddha. Who, until the snake would remain not Saleem" (Rushdie 431). The character continues to reflect his multiple and mobile identity (Faris, *Ordinary Enchantments* 25).

After listing five fundamental characteristics of magical realist fiction, Faris lists secondary features of the magical realist fiction. The first one is metafiction. Magical realist texts may carry metafictional or self-referential features. "[T]he texts provide commentaries on themselves, often complete with occasional mises-en-abyme-those miniature emblematic textual self-portraits" (Faris, "Scheherazade's Children" 175). Indeed, metafiction is associated with modern and postmodern fiction. It is a fiction about a fiction. Some common examples are: A story about a writer creating a story; a story about a reader reading a book; a story containing another work of fiction within itself; a story addressing the specific convention of story such as title; character, conventions, paragraphing or plots; a story in which characters are aware they know that they are in a story. The writers employ this characteristic in order to take the attention of the readers that they are reading just a fiction. Faris gives several examples for this metafictional characteristic in magical realist fictions. One of them is taken from Toni Morrison's *Beloved* (1987): "Tell me, said Beloved, smiling wide happy smile. Tell me your diamonds. It became a way to feel her.... Sethe learned the profound satisfaction *Beloved* got from storytelling" (Morrison 58)." In *Distant Relations* (1980), written by Carlos Fuentes, near the end of novel, the narrator cries because she does want to be the one who knows the story. In *One Hundred Years of Solitude* (1967) there is a story in a story as Aureliano deciphers the prophecies of Melquiades. Also in novel *The Gaze* which is analysed in this study the writer stresses that she is controlling the story and she can change it as she wants: "Everything could have worked out differently. That means every story can be told differently. Of course if

it hadn't been necessary to see everything, if it hadn't been delivered at the beginning..." (Shafak 249).

The second feature of magical realist fiction is verbal magic. The text may carry a verbal magic where metaphors are treated as reality. Faris exemplifies this feature with the novel *One Hundred Years of Solitude* (1967); when Jose Arcadio Buendia shot himself, the blood "came out under the door ... went out in the street ... went down steps and climbed over curbs ... turned a corner to the right and another to the left" (Marquez 129-130). "The blood is thicker than water" is a metaphor that is used by the people, and this kind of magical metaphor creates magic when it is taken as real in the story (Faris, "Scheherazade's Children" 176). In the novel *Like a Water Chocolate* (1989), written by Laura Esquivel, the patchwork bedspread keeps growing throughout the novel. The long but very long bedspread symbolizes survival and hope of Tita. However, when the metaphor is taken as real, it creates a magical atmosphere. In the novel *The Gaze*, the numbers in the beginning of each chapter are used as a metaphor; the chapters are numbered as 3,2,1 because these numbers are taken from hide and seek and aim to tell the incident of the Obese Girl's past. It is a resolution of the story. B-C tries to resolve her secret and as the numbers go down, he learns the underlying causes of her being overweight.

The third secondary element is the repetition of the narration. The same events repeat in various ways. Thus, the readers come across with the same story as if they are reading for the first time. As Faris states the repetition of narration can take shape with mirrors or symbols in order to create magic in the story ("Scheherazade's Children" 177). Faris elucidates this characteristic with several examples. Salem's life in *Midnight's Children* (1983) mirrors Indian Nation or in *Distant Relations* (1980) doubling characters and stories constitutes a mirror principle by reflecting surfaces within the novel especially with windows. This example can be read in another novel *The White Hotel*. The same story is retold by reflecting personalities (Faris, "Scheherazade's Children" 178). In the novel *The Gaze*, the dream of the Obese Girl and the event of screaming woman in the street repeat in the story that shows the situation of the women in society. Also, the story of La Belle Anabella and the Sable Girl is told twice with different endings. In the

novel *Sexing the Cherry* Jordan and the Dog-Woman are reflected in 20<sup>th</sup> century as Nicholas and environmentalist woman. As Mrak claims: “Repetition contribute to fragmentation of linear time and the notion of the interconnectedness of the events, and give way to the idea of history repeating itself, of violence perpetuating itself” (12).

The fourth characteristic is the metamorphosis, which is the process of transforming into human to animal or other types of creatures or vice versa. In *Distant Relations*, Victor and Andre Heredia change into a sinister twin fetus or *Midnight's Children*, Parvati the Witch changes Saleem into an invisible entity for a while. In *The Gaze* Keramet Mumî Keşke Memiş Efendi came into existence from wax shaped by his aunt. Moreover, the writer stresses that he may melt again and turn back to his first form wax. “Surely one day he would melt; he would melt, and solidify again, and solidify and then melt again” (Shafak 254).

The fifth feature is that magical realist text can take an anti-bureaucratic position and use their magic against the established social order (Faris, “Scheherazade’s Children” 179). The magical texts are written to react to totalitarian regimes. *The Tin Drum* and Suskind’s *Perfume* were written after World War II as a response to the Nazi Regime. Latin American writers criticized North American hegemony; Kundera opposed the power of the Soviet Union; Rushdie wrote in opposition to Mrs. Gandhi’s autocratic rule. Toni Morrison wrote against slavery. Isabelle Allende wrote *The House of Sprints* as a critic of the Chilean regime. Angela Carter wrote *Nights at the Circus* to criticize dominant male power in society (Faris, “Scheherazade’s Children” 180). The novels analysed in this thesis also use this element to be against the stereotype roles of women in the society.

The next characteristic is that there are always a holy person, spells, old beliefs or traditions in magical realist fiction: “In Magical realist narrative, ancient systems of belief and local lore often underlie the text” (Faris, “Scheherazade’s Children” 182). In the novel *The Gaze*, Derviş appears in the dreams of Keramet Mumî Keşke Memiş Efendi’s mother who longs for a son and foretells that she will give birth to a son. A similar instance is found in the novel called *Sexing the Cherry*; the old woman who is the neighbour of the Dog-Woman has supernatural

powers like forecasting the destiny of Jordan when they found him in the river and curing Jordan with special medicine when everybody dies because of plague.

The last secondary characteristic of magical realist fiction is the employment of a carnivalesque spirit. Carnavalesque is a term used by Bakhtin in literature as a parody to official life or power structure. In medieval culture every kind of people, rich or poor, young or old, found a way of freely expressing themselves against the preestablished rules of the King and the Church by the help of carnivals. While people were celebrating the carnivals, they dressed up or changed role plays or used mockery as an act of rebellion or to break the hierarchical system. Magical realist fiction employs carnivalesque feature since they both prefer to express their opposition to system. “At the level of narrative structure, the spirit of the carnivalesque- grotesque manifests itself in a magic realist novel through the combination of plot elements derived from a variety of different symbolic systems associated with oral and folk culture, with all their myths, stereotypes, legends, jokes, superstitions and gossip” (Gesicka 398).

Faris’s article “Scheherazade’s Children: Magical Realism and Postmodern Fiction” clearly draws the lines of magical realist fiction. He lists primary and secondary elements that distinguish magical realist fiction from other literary modes. In this dissertation the two novels will be analysed according to Faris’s argument.

## CHAPTER TWO

### ANALYSIS OF SEXING THE CHERRY AND THE GAZE

#### 2. MAGICAL REALISM IN WINTERSON'S AND SHAFAK'S NOVELS

*Sexing the Cherry* written by Jeannette Winterson in 1989 is about a Dog-Woman who finds Jordan as a baby near the river Thames. She lives with her dogs and Jordan, who is fascinated with boats. When Jordan is ten, he meets John Tradescant, the gardener of King Charles I, while he was playing with his boats near the river Thames. John employs Jordan as a gardening assistant at Wimbledon. Thus, Jordan and the Dog-Woman move to Wimbledon. Then, Jordan becomes an adult and becomes infatuated with a dancer he sees and devotes his life to finding her. John, Tradescant and the Dog-Woman turn back to London to attend the King's trial. After the King's execution, Tradescant sails and Jordan follows him. During Jordan's absence, the Dog-Woman tries to get revenge of the King on the Puritans and unites with prostitutes, meanwhile Jordan lands in Barbados and finds the dancer Fortunata. The end of the novel flashes forward to twentieth century, when Jordan and the Dog-Woman double in the future in the form of Nicholas Jordan who joins the navy and an environmentalist woman. Nicholas Jordan is fascinated by the ships and decides to join the navy. The woman does pollution research on the banks of the Thames river. She hallucinates about being a giant and kidnaps all world readers to make them save the world. Then the story flashes back to Jordan and his mother traveling to London again and on the way the Dog-Woman learns about the dancer Fortunata. On the way home, Jordan and his mother decide to present the pineapple that Jordan got to King Charles II. The plague starts in England and the Dog-Woman believes that this plague is a God's judgement on England since they executed the King before. At the end of the story, the fire demolishes London, so the Dog-Woman and Jordan escape with a ship. Jordan knows that he will never return to his home. He looks forward to the future with hope.



Shafak's novel *The Gaze* has two stories rolled into one. Each story takes places in a different place and in a different time. Although the two stories seem unrelated, they have meaningful links. One of the stories is about Keramet Mumî Keşke Memiş Efendi, and the other one is about an Obese Girl. Keramet Mumî Keşke Memiş Efendi is the only son in a family with six daughters; however, he is not welcomed by his father since he is the reason for his mother's death at his birth. His appearance also makes him odd because he has a transparent face, as if it is made of wax, and it is drawn by his aunt soon after his birth. His expressionless face makes him suffer in a society where appearances have supreme importance. Thus, he changes his suffering into an advantage by his ability to see what others cannot. He displays the ugliest and very beautiful and grotesque creatures in his theatre of spectacles in the city called Pera. Each creature has his/her story. For instance, one of the stories goes back to 1648 to Siberia to La Belle Annabelle, a very beautiful girl. Then the story is interrupted, and the story of the Obese Girl and her dwarf lover starts. The dwarf writes a dictionary of "Gaze" that demonstrates entries seemingly unrelated to one another about how everything has to do with seeing and being seen. In the end, the Obese Girl commits suicide as she understands that she is just material used for the dictionary by the dwarf. However, the Obese Girl just falls asleep and dreams in the minibus and as a result the story turns back to where it started.

## **2.1. THE IRREDUCIBLE ELEMENT**

### **2.1.1. The Irreducible Element in *The Gaze***

The irreducible element is one of the key attributes in magical realist fiction. Faris defines this element as something that cannot be explained by the laws of universe which is formulated by Western empirically based discourse ("Scheherazade's Children" 167). In other words, the readers come across many uncanny things that conventional norms of reason and logic can accept. However, the uncanny things are always different from the ones used in fantastic novels since they are well assimilated into the story without causing any interpretation by narrators or characters who effect the readers. It is easy to find the traces of irreducible elements of magic realist fiction in the second story in Shafak's novel

*The Gaze.* The protagonist, Keramet Mumî Keşke Memiş Efendi, is the irreducible element all on his own in the story. His mother dies when she is giving birth to her last and the only son Keramet Mumî Keşke Memiş Efendi. He is born as votive since her mother wants a boy so much after six girls and many miscarriages. His birth differs from an ordinary one and creates an irreducible element in the story. The delivery of him cannot be accepted as normal but the way it is described conciliates the reader for further questioning:

Even stranger was the fact that the birth was painless. He was not born but rather; he slid out; he did not slide out but virtually flowed out. He followed from one shell to another without panic or hope as if he wanted was to establish himself here without bothering anyone, he slid himself into the midwife's hands without causing any trouble or inconvenience. (Shafak 33)

As Faris stresses, the irreducible element neither creates astonishment nor melts in the text (*Ordinary Enchantments* 8). Although Keramet Mumî Keşke Memiş Efendi's abnormalities are seen by the women who are in the house, the event does not shock anybody as Faris claims. When he is born, everybody notices that something is wrong with him since his face is transparent: "His mouth-nose-eyebrows-eyes had not come in person but had sent their shadows instead. [Each woman examines the face] and couldn't find anything extraordinary about his features, but at the same time not take their eyes off of these extraordinary features" (34). When the aunt comes to the room to see the baby, she accepts like the others his nephew's having flowed rather than being born. She also thinks that his birth is rather different from flowing since flowing is more active and louder whereas he dripped like wax. The scent that covers the room verifies the wax. The scent that covers the room is also smelled by the aunt and she gets scared but not because of his nephew's transparent face but because of being late to draw a face on him. Because as the mother's body solidifies, it will be difficult to draw a face on him. Different from fantastic novels, neither the characters of the novel nor the reader is bewildered by this event, but they accept it as ordinary. Immediately, the aunt takes a piece of hazelnut shell and burns it in fire and begins to shape the baby's face before it begins to harden: "With the black of the hazelnut shell, she drew the eyes and mouth, the eyebrows and eyelashes, the chin and forehead and the cheeks and the temples. When it came for the eyes the dead woman in bed was about to freeze and wax-drop baby was just on the point of hardening completely" (36). Although

the reader may normally come across this kind of situation in fantastic novels, the way of describing the event distinguishes it from fantastic novels. Moreover, as Lois Leal claims in his article “Magical Realism in Spanish America” in the fantastic novels the writers need to justify the mystery of events and supernatural always invade a world ruled by reason whereas “in magical realist novels the mystery does not descend to the represented world, but rather hides and palpitates behind it” (qtd in *Ordinary Enchantments* 123). These examples strengthen Shafak’s novel as a magical realist work.

Shafak presents another irreducible element with the boy and the Shaman. The tribe loses their Shaman and searches for a new one and finally decides that her brother is suitable. They test him by letting him alone with a visitor who could be an animal or a human or a plant. “Whatever happened, whatever the risks were, he was waiting for Him. If the visitor were human he would arrive on foot, if a bird, flying, if a fish, swimming, and if it were a plant it would emerge from the snow, see the basket and come. He would come and decide whether the boy was to be the tribe’s new Shaman” (Shafak 55). Shamanism is a belief system that is not acknowledged in Western logic, so this example underpins magical realist fiction’s characteristics as Faris listed. Moreover, before he leaves the village to be tested, he cuts off a lock of his sister’s hair and eats a slice of her flesh. This sentence cannot be accepted as normal and it reminds the reader of a horror novel. However, unlike the horror novel, the reader and the narrator do not question this event, which makes it magical realist. Again, another unnatural thing happens with the meeting of Sable and the boy: “Both of their eyes shone with the knowledge of death. They were like two mirrors facing each other” (Shafak 57). Later they begin to dance, and the sable licks the boy’s wounds. “Every wound healed as the animal’s tongue touched it” (57). When greedy Timofei Ankininov opens the basket, he sees them while they are uniting. As a result, Ankininov disrupts the spell. If the spell continued, they would go to a place where their body belonged, but their souls would not part and the boy would not be a boy and the sable would not be a sable again. Thus, a shaman leader would be born in the tribe. “Because the spell had been broken right in the middle of their union, they could neither step back and return to their former states, nor could they step forward and complete their transformation” (Shafak 59). Although the writer uses spells which

cannot be found in daily life but can be seen in a fairy tale, the reader does not feel a fairy tale atmosphere.

The other irreducible elements are created by different characters who are shown in Keramet Mumî Keşke Memiş Efendi's circus. The circus has two doors and women use the western doors to watch the characters and men use the eastern doors. The difference is not only the doors, but also the characters who are shown change according to men's and women's circus, since what women and men see differently in the world is different. The characters do not have any talent but have extraordinary appearances. Although their weird appearance can only be seen in science fiction stories, neither the audience in the circus nor the readers question the impossibility as they suit the stories perfectly. The three sisters Mari, Takuhi and Agavni are displayed in the theatre of spectacles for their odd bodies. The first one has one breast, the second one has two breasts and the third sister has three breasts. "They were so busy following each other's mistakes that they forgot about the audience, and even that they were on the stage. Mari hated Agavni because she felt she had stolen her missing breast. Agavni hated Mari for causing her to carry an extra breast. Both of them hated Takuhi more than anything in the world. They hated Takuhi who with her two breasts threw her sisters' deformities in their faces, and who, shining darkly like a pearl in mud, was ugly but not deformed" (Shafak 68). Then another extraordinary character, the snake-charmer, comes onto the stage; she has a scary appearance but the most extraordinary thing about her is her snake. It has eyes like a mirror when the audience looks at it, they see the world as the opposite. "The world was reflected in reverse in the snake's eyes. In the world shown in the mirror of its eyes, virgins were widow, and masters were slaves. It was crawling with life under the black earth; it flowed into those whose stepped on it" (Shafak 70). She continues to show the hell in its eyes. Then Kinar comes with her puppets on stage, she carries little puppets on her ten fingers and she imitates nature with them: "For deluge she would spray the place with water; for hail she would break the branches of young trees; for a wind storm she would tear apart a bird's nest; for a flood she would sweep the crops away; for drought she would burn the soil; for famine she would empty the granaries; for a typhoon she would spray on whoever was in front of her" (72). The last performance is Sable-Girl. She is half woman and half animal: "Like all of her ancestors she fearlessly displayed her

monumental ugliness. Like all of her ancestors she was fearlessly ugly. The top half of her body belonged to a woman, and the bottom half of her body belonged to an animal” (73). Her ancestor comes from a tribe member who tries to be Shaman by uniting with a sable yet, could not accomplish it. Thus, the family who owns him breeds a creature of half woman and half animal to pass down from generation to generation. Like in Garcia Marquez’s novel *One Hundred Years of Solitude* the destiny of her family follows the Sable-Girl. Once again Shafak creates characters who do not exist in Western approved logic.

As for the circus for men, one of the characters is the masked woman. She wears a mask; then, at the end of the show she takes off the mask and the audience see that there is no difference: “[S]he dropped the mask on her face. A cry of amazement rose from the audience. The face they saw now was the same as the one they’d seen before. When the violin stopped playing, the beautiful woman whose mask was her face, her face her mask, saluted the audience in a graceful manner” (Shafak 143). The face and the mask are the same. Then Snake charmer goes on the stage with her snake. When the snake looks into audience’s eyes, the people start to see. What men see is different from what women see. The heaven is depicted for the eyes of men. The next character Betri Hanım goes on stage with her puppets:

She would present the natural world through them. She would become rain, and rain down blessing; become a rainbow and open a passage for the impossible; become a dew droplet and stroke the cheek of grass, become a breeze and thrill the foot of the mountains, become herbs and restore to health, become snow and spread consolation in large flakes; become sun and cause swan-necked flowers to open; become fog and lower silvery curtains of mystery; become climate and have all of its conditions loved, become water and increase life. (Shafak 150)

The quotation given above is an example for irreducible element since the show is extraordinary. It is impossible to create a scene even with 21<sup>th</sup> century technology but Betri Hanım does it with only with her puppets. She creates all weather conditions at the same time and conducts the earth like the God.

The irreducible element as Faris claims “frequently disrupts the ordinary logic cause and effect” (10). Keramet Mumî Keşke Memiş Efendi goes out after his frustrated marriage and sees a woman. He wants to kiss her, but he tastes what she ate before they met: “He felt an urge to see the woman’s lips, and to kiss them but

before he'd even finished thinking this, he tasted a sweetness in his mouth" (Shafak 41). As seen in this example, the logic is the opposite; he should have kissed her and tasted the baklava but, should not have tasted the baklava before he kissed. As a reader, we experience the same situation with Madame de Marelle, who sees the same dream in which her innocence is tested every night. In each of her dreams she sees herself in a cave, so she gets accustomed to finding herself in front of an innocent face of the Holy Virgin Statue. She is expected to put her hand inside the face and test her innocence; however, she avoids this test until the last time. "This time she plucked up the courage, and, trembling with anxiety, extended her hand, at that moment, she realised that the innocent Face was slowly changing... suddenly, the face in front of her transformed into the face of the young man. At the same moment, the mouth of the Innocent Face shut loudly" (Shafak 132). After the nightmare, she wakes up and feels her hand throbbing. Also, each time she wakes up with her screams and her aching lips. Moreover, her lips get thinner and thinner and ready to be torn off. After this nightmare, she goes to the riverbank and comes across the young man who wants to kiss her lips and commits the sin. Thus, she first suffers from the sin and then commits a crime which disturbs the ordinary logic.

There is no doubt that the essential characteristic of magical realist fiction is the irreducible element and Shafak employs this element in her novel *The Gaze* with many examples aiming to make people focus on sexual discrimination in the society. The importance of giving birth to a son, the widespread notions of beauty for women in the society or gender roles are criticized through characters used in the story.

### **2.1.2. The Irreducible Element in *Sexing the Cherry***

*Sexing the Cherry* can be read as a fairy tale for adults because the novel includes dancing princesses, a giant woman and some magic. However, the novel also touches upon the real issues like environmental problems of the world and the role of women in the society and it also refers to some historical events in England. Therefore, although the novel seems to be a fairy tale in the beginning, it is a typical magical realist novel. On the one hand, there is magic; on the other hand, there is reality. In the novel *Sexing the Cherry*, there are some traces of the irreducible element that make the story magical realist, which the readers may also find in *The*

*Gaze.*

The protagonist the Dog-Woman in *Sexing the Cherry*, like the protagonist of the novel *The Gaze*, is not an ordinary character that the readers of the western logic accept. The Dog-Woman, one of the main characters in the story, is a very powerful woman who can resist male dominance: She has a vision which is against the stereotype woman figure; she is unmarried and out of the beauty conception: “My nose is flat my eyebrows are heavy. I have only a few teeth and those are poor show, being black and broken” (19). She is not only away from the traditional beauty conception, but she is also away from the accepted norms of size and delicacy for a woman. Her exaggerated strength which creates the irreducible element is shown many times in the story:

I was wearing my best dress, the one with wide skirt that would serve as a sail for some war-torn ship, and a bit of fancy lace at neck, made by a blind woman who intended it to be a shawl, I had given her some estimate of my dimension, but she would not believe me so, although I have nothing to go around my shoulders save a dozen blankets sewn together, I do have a fine-worked collar. (69)

Although the Dog-Woman warned the lady about her size, the lady could not envisage her size as that big. Thus, the Dog-Woman wears the shawl the lady made as a lace. Her huge body is not just big but also strong, even stronger than her father who prefers to stay away from her:

I know that people are afraid of me either for the yapping of my dogs or because I stand taller than any of them. When I was a child my father swung me up on to his knees to tell a story and I broke both his legs. He never touched again, except with the point of whip he used for the dogs. (21)

By using the irreducible element Winterson indeed aims to criticise wrong stereotype judgements according to which a man is expected to be strong, but a woman is expected to be weak. Contrary to her father, her mother can carry the Dog-Woman with her tiny body: “But my mother, who lived only a while and was so light that she dared not go out in a wind, could swing me on her back and carry me for miles. There was talk of witchcraft but what is stronger than love?” (21). This event takes the attention of the people of the neighbourhood, but they believe that her mother is a witch, so there is nothing to be surprised at since the explanation is given. Winterson creates the irreducible element very well while the western logic

questions this extraordinary phenomenon, the readers never question if the mother is a witch or not.

The Dog-Woman, Jordan and Tradescant return to London to her house after six years to watch the trial of the King. After the trial, the Dog-Woman goes to her house and sees smoke around her house. She sees the two Puritans Scroggs and Firebrace burning her house with some men. No different from Hercules, she beats them all on her own. No matter how it is exaggerated the readers do not question the truth. Winterson aims to create hesitation over the readers and wants to spread the idea that women are not weak but described as weak by male dominance discourses. Neither her exaggerated size nor her strength disturbs the reader because she mainly uses her strength for good like reacting against the Puritans who killed the King. The readers are settled because she seems to be a symbol of the justice. The Dog-Woman and her friends decide to take revenge of the King from the Puritans wherever and whenever they see them. They take an oath to kill the Puritans. The men cannot accomplish the duty they are responsible for, but she is the only one who accomplishes the task:

By the time of the full moon I had done gallantly, I thought, and went to the meeting to hear stories of injury and revenge. I was suspicious to see that no one had brought any trophy of their right-doings, and so, as an encouragement, I tipped my sack of takings over the floor. I had 119 eyeballs, one missing on account of a man who had lost one already, and 2.000 teeth. (95)

The Dog-Woman, as a loyal citizen, takes her revenge and collects her evidence. Except her, the other members of the group who aim to get revenge from the Puritans return to the meeting empty-handed and many men faint when they see what the Dog-Woman has brought. Winterson breaks the misconception that women are weak and men are brave. Traditionally it is expected from men to kill and women to faint: “A number of those in the room fainted immediately, and the preacher asked me to be less zealous in the next fortnight or, if I could not be, at least to leave my sack at home” (95). The irreducible element is the exaggerated strength and courage of a woman. The Dog-Woman is stronger than all men in London.



Another irreducible element, about her exaggerated strength, is seen in another event in which the Dog-Woman goes to the circus to watch a show. There is a deal as a part of the show. The deal is to guess if someone can outweigh the elephant. The prize is a vat of ale. No one succeeds. Then she makes a decision:

I took a deep breath, filling my lungs with air, and threw myself at the seat with all might. There was a roar from round about me. I opened my eyes and looked towards Samson. He had vanished. His chair swung empty like a summer-house seat, his eyeglass lay in the bottom. I looked higher, following the gaze of the people. Far above us, far away like a black star in a white sky, was Samson. (21)

If an elephant weighs 2,5 to 7 tons, it is impossible for a human being to weigh more than an elephant. As this event seems impossible to believe, the readers settle down since there is an explanation made by the Dog-Woman:

It is a responsibility for a woman to have forced an elephant into the sky. What it says of my size I cannot tell, for an elephant looks big, but how am I to know what it weighs? A balloon looks big and weighs nothing. (21)

While Winterson tries to break the conventional roles drawn by patriarchy, she stresses that women can be strong but still feel feminine and desire to be a mother or to love someone. However, in the society there is a belief that women should be beautiful and polite and weak need men's support. Otherwise, women are not chosen to be married as a result of which they cannot have a child. The Dog-Woman knows that she is ugly and too big, so she repeats the: "How hideous am I?" statement many times. She knows that she is not suitable for men: "I would like to pour out a child from my body, but you have to have a man for that and there's no man who's match for me" (4). Once she falls in love and tries to show her love:

In this new state I presented myself to my loved one, who graced me with all of his teeth at once and swore that if he could reach my mouth he would kiss me there and then I swept him from his feet and said 'Kiss me now' and closed my eyes for the delight. I kept them closed for some five minutes and then, opening them to see what had happened, I saw that he had fainted dead away. .... 'What is it?' I cried 'Is it love for me that affects you so?' No 'he said' It is terror.'" (35)

The man she loves is afraid of her and runs away; consequently, she is not refused but also he is being insulted. The man is weak and afraid of the Dog-Woman which is uncommon for western logic. The accepted rule is man should be strong and

woman should be beautiful. Therefore, irreducible element is used to show the prejudices of the society that women should be puny and passive but at the same time they should be beautiful. Winterson breaks this notion and aims to remind the readers of Simone de Beauvoir's statement when she adopts Jordan: "One is not born but rather becomes, a woman" (xviii) which means that gender is formed by some rules and structures of the society and that sex is biological. Thus, no one can prevent the Dog-Woman's desire to be a woman and a mother. If she cannot give birth, then she can adopt one. Her son Jordan does not feel uncomfortable about her giant mother: "He was happy. We were happy together, and if he noticed that I am bigger the most he never mentioned it. He was proud of me because no other child had a mother who could hold a dozen oranges in her mouth at once" (22). He never criticizes or complains about her, and it seems that he is proud of her mother. Jordan is not different from her mother since he does not complete the roles which are set for men in the society. He wants to be strong like his mother but indeed he is a sensitive person but unlike his mother he wants to live a conventional life like the one society idealises for a man; to get married and be strong:

I want to be brave and admired and have a beautiful wife and a fine house. I want to be a hero and wave goodbye to my wife and children at the docks, and be sorry to see them go but more excited about what is to come. I want to be like other men, one of the boys, a back-slapper and a man who knows a joke or two. I want to be like rip roaring who cares nothing for how she looks, only for what he does. She has never been in love, no never wanted to be either. She is self-sufficient and without self-doubt.... She is silent, the way men supposed to be. (116)

When he cannot accomplish to play the idealised roles by the society, he chooses to sail and travel the world to look for his lover and to find his own identity. While he is travelling and looking for love, he experiences many events in which the irreducible element is used. Although the stories are extraordinary it still does not disturb the western logic. While Jordan and Tradescant sail, Jordan leaves his body where it is and walks through a series of winding streets to a house standing back from the road. On the street, he sees words flying everywhere and people are in the balloon and try to cleanse the streets of the words: "Men and women in the balloons fly up from the main square and, armed with mops and scrubbing brushes, do battle with the canopy of words trapped under the sun" (11). Then he visits a house and

becomes a guest in this house. The family has different customs; they do not have a floor and must walk on ropes and the furniture of the house is suspended on the racks from the ceiling:

The family who lives in the house were dedicated to a strange custom. Not one of them would allow their feet to touch the floor. Open the doors off the hall and you will see, not floors, but bottomless pits. The furniture of the house is suspended on racks from the ceiling, the dining table supported by great chains, each link six inches thick... He comes last the householder already seated and making merry, swinging their feet over the abyss where crocodiles live. (15)

Although the house is so strange for the western logic, they have a very traditional custom like separating women and men. Men gather to talk about important subjects while women leave the room to chat and eat biscuits. This shows that it does not matter how odd the place is, and it still uses the stereotype attitudes in the society. Men speak about important subjects alone and women just chat with each other since they are accepted as an ornament: "When everyone has eaten their fill, the gentlemen remain at the table and the ladies walk in order of precedence across a tightrope to another room, where they may have biscuits and wine with water" (15). While they are eating dinner, a lady takes Jordan's attraction, but he cannot find an opportunity to talk with her. Then he sees her escape. How she escapes is weird for western logic because it subverts gender roles but still Winterson again accomplishes not to disturb the readers: "Then I saw her. She was climbing down from her window on a thin rope which she cut and re-knotted a number of times during the descent. I strained my eyes to follow her, but she was gone" (16). Indeed, she is running away from the society but the way she escapes is traditionally attributed to men. If she stayed like the others, she would be forced to marry one of the princes and be unhappy, but she chose to be free. Winterson aims to use the irreducible element to take attention to duties given to women. Finally, Jordan finds Fortunata, whom Jordan is in love with, and tells her own story which carries many irreducible elements. Fortunata is one of the sisters who is forced to marry the prince who solved their secret like it happened in the story of "Dancing Twelve Princess":

From this room, every night, we flew to a silver city where no one ate and drank. The occupation of the people was to dance. We wore out our dresses and slippers dancing, but because we were always sound asleep when our father came to wake us in the morning it

was impossible to fathom where we had been or how. (48)

The father of the princess lets the prince and his brothers marry her daughters. The prince who solved the secret of the girls wants the youngest princess as a gift. It is impossible for anyone to fly to a city and it is also impossible to have a silver city where no one ate according to western logic. Winterson stresses that patriarchy spread the message that the girls who break the rules will be domesticated by marriage (Sezer 155). However, Winterson changes the idea and finishes the story: “He had eleven brothers and we were all given in marriage, one to each other, and as it says lived happily ever after. We did, but not with our husbands” (48). The ending is different from the one we are taught. Winterson ends the story in contrast to what is taught for girls in the society; i.e., ‘They married and lived happily ever after’ image. The disobedient princess Fortunata runs away from marriage and does not see her sisters again. Jordan at the end of his journey finds her. However, it is hard for her to give up conventional roles immediately. In the beginning, she looks for someone to take care of her as it is taught for girls but then finally she remembers to be independent: “She told me that for years she had lived in hope of being rescued; of belonging to someone else, of dancing together. And then she had learned to dance alone, for its own sake and for hers” (114). The story that Fortunata tells Jordan has many weird events. First, she says that her sisters and she were so light that they had to tie themselves not to fly. Indeed, in this way they are kept indoors as it should be for all women:

My sisters and I have always been light. When my third sister was born she was prevented from banging her head against the ceiling only by the umbilical cord. Without that she would have come from the womb and ascended straight upwards. My fifth sister was so light that she rode on the back of our house cat until she was twelve. (111)

The sentences about Fortunata and her sister carry irreducible element since they cannot be so light and fly in the room and ride on the back of a cat. These sentences are accepted as weird for western logic. However, Winterson aims to show how women are seen in the society, weak and helpless.

The irreducible elements continue with Jordan’s journeys. While Jordan is travelling, he sees a town where nothing is stable. Everything moves, and it is hard to find something in the same place. The number of the houses never changes but

the places of the houses change. It is a kind of game played by the town and it makes the people live long and happily:

Tradescant sleeping beside me, there is a town I sometimes dream about, whose inhabitants are so cunning that to escape the insistence of creditors they knock down their hose in a single night and rebuild them elsewhere. So the number of the building in the city is always constant but they are never in the same place from one day to next. (43)

Jordan continues to travel and eyewitnesses a peculiar incident in a city he visits. In that city, love becomes forbidden because it always kills people. The strange thing in the story is that all the citizens die except the monk and the prostitute. The reason why they do not die is the water. The monk drinks only holy water and the prostitute never drinks water, so they are the only ones who are left in the town. Thus, they have a duty to create another city by breeding. This story reminds readers of the story of Adam and Eve and for this reason the readers do not feel the absurd elements:

In one city I visited, the entire population had been wiped out by love three times in a row. After the third occasion the only two survivors, a monk and a whore, determined that love should be illegal in their new state and that anyone found indulging in it would be put to death. (82)

In conclusion Winterson employs the irreducible element to reverse masculine roles and feminine attributes drawn by patriarchy. Expectations are always different from the realities. The stereotype woman is expected to be fragile, kind, weak and sensitive and obey the male dominance. However, this idea can collapse; even when the appearance of the woman may seem delicate and the men seem powerful, they may not always be powerful and strong. Winterson also wants to stress that there is not a myth that marriage ends like 'happily ever after' for a woman. To convey her ideas Winterson creates extraordinary events and characters who look like fairy tale heroes, but this depiction never discomforts the reader.

## 2.2. PHENOMENAL WORLD

### 2.2.1. Phenomenal World in *The Gaze*

As Faris expresses, magic realism diverges with its detailed descriptions from fantasy and allegory: Detailed description is the realistic part of the magical realist fiction. “Realistic descriptions create a fictional world that resembles the one we live in, in many instances by extensive use of detail” (“Scheherazade’s Children”169). Faris highlights that while detailed descriptions create the reality part in magical realist fiction, they also diverge from reality with their “entrancing magic details” (Faris “Scheherazade’s Children” 169). However, besides the magical events or phenomena, magical realist texts have details to create a phenomenal world.

Shafak uses detailed descriptions in order to bring attention to the stereotypical roles and stereotypical beauty concept of women. In the second narration of Shafak’s novel, Keramet Mumî Keşke Memiş Efendi creates a circus for women and men separately. Since the circus is separate, women and men watch different characters. Each show and each character are presented in the story with details. Women generally grow up with beauty myths and beauty expectations of patriarchal society, so they feel comfortable when they see uglier women than themselves. For this reason, the women who are shown in women’s circus are ugly and have negative performances. For instance, Madame Kınar goes on to the stage with her puppets and represents the natural world through them with the negative detailed description:

For a deluge, she would spray the place with water, for hail she would break the branches of young trees; for wind storm she would tear apart a bird’s nest; for a flood she would sweep the crops away; for drought she would burn the soil; for famine she would empty the granaries; for a typhoon she would spray on whoever was in front of her; for a cyclone she would swallow all living creature; for fire she would roast; for an earthquake she wouldn’t leave a stone understanding. There was no evil that nature did not inflict on mankind. (71)

Although women are always fertile in the eyes of society, Madame Kınar does not hesitate to destroy rather than breed. Indeed, what is described here is the inner self

of the women and the lines given above just mirror psychology of women in society who are always stuck in limited roles. In the men's circus, a similar show is presented by Betri Hanım and like women's circus she describes the natural world through her puppets, but this time she uses optimistic descriptions:

She would become rain, and rain down blessing; become a rainbow and open a passage for the impossible; become a dew droplet and stroke the cheek of the grass become a breeze and thrill the foot of the mountains, become herbs and restore to health; become snow and spread consolation in large flakes; become sun and cause swan-necked flowers to open; become fog and lower silvery curtains of mystery, become climate and have all of its conditions loved, become water and increase life. There was no favour that nature could not bestow on man. (150)

Women shown in men's side do not only differ with their appearances but also with optimistic view points. Whoever plays in the men's circus should make man happy for this reason Betri Hanım creates an optimistic view point.

Shafak further touches upon the difference on women's and men's roles in patriarchal society, and even what they see depends on how they are raised for the society. While women are climbing up the hill they look down to see the view of the sea. The view is just like the breast of women. The breast generally resembles nurturing and sustaining life which is fitted perfectly to women since their role in life is the same. Moreover, breasts can be seen as love, compassion and wisdom for they are close to the heart, a part of the body accepted as the house of emotions. Again, with this description the woman is described with this perspective:

The sea was a breast, gently swollen, aching calling softly from afar for a mouth for its milk. Now ... without regret for the past or concern for the future; as if --- just by relaxing, opening their mouths and closing their eyes it would be possible to be filled with the time by sucking deeply on the present moment. In any event, their responsibilities were ready and waiting to be wrapped up. (30)

Women are always giving and sacrificing and never regretting for what they have lost in time. Thus, what they see when they look down at the sea is different from what men see when they look at the same place.

The same event happens distinctively in the circus opened for men. Contrary to women, men see the sea as a womb which is the symbol of earth, birth or regeneration. For instance, in Greek mythology the mother of earth, sea and sky was named Delphi from Delphes “womb” ([www.constellationsofwords.com](http://www.constellationsofwords.com)). The role of a man is to be a part of the birth and earn for the living and look after the family and this role makes them proud. With the relief of accomplishing their duty men deserve to be out and discover new things. However, the duty of women never stops, so they are always inside as men travel:

To their eyes, the sea looked like a still and silent womb. Now neither complaining about poverty nor earning their living; as if ... only but only existing within was enough for all they'd desired, to set out on journeys not taken, to go back and forth between different lands. (115)

The women always long for the freedom to travel all around the world like the men. As a result, all characters in the circus given above are examples for phenomenal world since there are exaggerated details which make the events digress from realism. The aim of the writer is to question the roles of women and men.

The birth of Keramet Mumî Keşke Memiş Efendi, who is the creator of the circus, is another example for phenomenal world because the birth is described in detail to give the reader a clue that he is going to be different from an ordinary man. The event of birth is a regular thing for every human being and with this event it creates a realistic part in the story and with exaggerated description the story becomes magical realist: “He wasn’t born but rather slid out; he didn’t slide out but virtually flowed out. He flowed from one shell to another without panic or hope. As if all he wanted was to establish himself here without bothering anyone, he slid himself into the midwife’s hands without causing any trouble or inconvenience” (33). Faris states that “[o]ne of the most immediately striking ways in which magical realism imbricates the extraordinary within the ordinary is the accumulation of realistic details to describe an impossible event” (*Ordinary Enchantments* 90). Memiş’s aunt accepts every exaggerated detail as normal. The birth is a realistic event, but the way he was born creates the extraordinary part:



She agreed with the others about baby Keramet Memiş having flowed out rather than being born. But the way he flowed didn't quite resemble the flowing of nocturnal rivers vengefully scooping out beds, or of wild waterfalls cascading loudly, or of endless seas agitating sadly, shabby, heavy rains pouring down indifferently or of melting snow in the first warmth of the beginning of spring. (35)

In order to prove the reality of his extraordinary birth, she continues to depict the birth in detail and distinguishes it from other births as if she has come across this kind of situation before:

Water drips too, and blood; oil drips, and time; and tears also drip, for instance. Some of them could become steam and dry themselves with the desire to rise into the sky, some of them stayed in the place they'd landed, some of them could come to the top of whatever hollow they had been put into and show off, some of them could depart from their eternity and arrive at endless; some of them could leave behind deposits of anguish on the paths they'd travelled. When it came to the baby Keramet Memiş, his dripping didn't resemble any of these. He looked as if he would stay where he had dripped, in the state in which he had dripped; that is, he was more like a drop of wax rather than of water or blood, oil or time, or even tear drops. (35)

As it seen above, Keramet Mumî Keşke Memiş Efendi's birth does not resemble an ordinary birth but gives clues that he will be the magical part in the story. One of the characters who displays in Keramet Mumî Keşke Memiş Efendi's circus is Sable girl. Her ancestor is caught by Hunter Timofei Ankinovs in Siberia. While hunters are waiting for their prey, they have to endure the cold. There is always a race among human beings because of greediness; they are not just after the money, but they are also after their peaceful sleep:

If they continued to feel cold anyway, they would secretly take the dreams being dreamt by those next to the stove, and cover themselves in their warmth. Those whose dreams were stolen would wake up shivering, listen to the snores, mutters, moans and gnashing that broke the silence of the night, and wait for their eyes to grow accustomed to the darkness. But no matter how carefully he looked he couldn't determine who the thief was. In any event, everyone her was more or less a thief. (50)

Like the birth of Keramet Mumî Keşke Memiş Efendi, the death of one of the hunters is also real, but the way Shafak describes it creates the magical part in the story. In this way the natural events like birth and death become supernatural with exaggerated details. The ancestors of the Sable girl who also have a show in

Keramet Mumî Keşke Memiş Efendi's circus come from Russia. The writer tells some greedy hunters try to earn a fortune, but some are unlucky and they are defeated in a merciless nature:

Under the wave, hundreds of hollows and thousands of depths entered it and were increasing with passion; that's why its heart was mischievous. Within the wave, hundreds of sabres had joined hands with thousands of shadows; that's why its countenance was pale. On top of the wave, hundreds of voices and thousands of echoes were screaming to the point of choking; that's why it lisped. The wave was washing gently over his toes, sweetly tickling whatever it touched. (54)

Furthermore, in the first narration, Shafak continues to use a detailed description of the Obese Girl in many stances. The past of the Obese Girl hurts her since she was sexually harassed when she was just a little girl. Thus, her over eating starts with this event. To forget she eats, but as she eats she gets fat, which makes her unhappy. Whatever the reasons of her eating disorder, the beauty myth of beauty annoys her. The expectation of a young woman is to be thin; if you do not fit the myth you become the centre of the negative gaze. Even the kids in the kindergarten make fun of her. The parents trust her, not because she is a good teacher but because she is fat and can protect them from danger with her Hercules body:

I got home to wash my hair. The letters would wash off me and swirl away down the drain. But no matter how much I shampooed my hair, some of them wouldn't come out. They'd stick to me like burs. Then B-C would come help: he'd pick out f's, the a's, the t's, they y's. (95)

She depicts the event very normally as if letters can stick to someone's hair. She is so irritated to be fat but unfortunately, she cannot change herself. As she is not happy with her body she bites her finger nails. Her problem is not her finger nails but her bad memories of her childhood that she keeps in the drawer where she hid. Although this behaviour can be seen in many people the way she depicts the details create the phenomenal world: "I called [cuticles] with kisses and they stuck their little heads out to see where the sound was coming from. Then I bit each one of them off with my teeth. The taste was unpleasant, but it wasn't about the taste. Being fat doesn't just make me irritable, it also makes me anxious" (79). The simple action is depicted in detail as if she is calling her pet. In another event, before she goes out with B-C she changes her clothes and wears a corset for her costume. Later

she wants to take it out but unfortunately it does not come out:

My fat was used to wobbling about freely, and didn't know how to respond to the unexpected pressure. Some of it was weeping with abandon, some of it was swearing heavily, and some of it was begging pitifully for mercy. Some of it seeking a hole or a rip through which to escape, soon had to accept defeat. (100)

She hates her body for this reason she punishes herself by detailing every fat she has on her body like the example given above. Since she has an eating disorder, she connects everything with her stomach. Eventually her stomach becomes the heaven of her world. She tries to end her problems directly by swallowing any food and each time her stomach welcomes it without questioning. As a result, her stomach becomes a holy place for her. For this reason, she describes her stomach not as a simple organ but as a fairy tale atmosphere:

The stomach is a mythical land. It is a land of eternal bliss where the finest food is served on golden platters in banquets that last for forty days and forty nights, where Holly wine runs in the rivers where the elixir of immortality cascades down waterfalls, where healing honey flows on top of the mountains. (226)

Although she eats because of her bad experiences in the past, eating does not satisfy her anymore. Furthermore, being fat makes her unhappy. Even in her dreams she wants to get rid of her heavy body. After her many unsuccessful diet experiences, she is still an Obese Girl who cannot lose weight. Thus, the corset resembles her fatness that she cannot get rid of:

I stepped in front of the mirror and took off my disguise. The corset was causing me much pain. I unfastened the straps and opened the clasps one by one. The fat that had been confined all night should have started spreading out as soon as I opened the corset, but I did not feel any difference. Something strange was going on. I took the corset off completely. There was another corset underneath..... I was struck with terror. Each time I unfastened a corset, there was another one underneath it. Moreover, each corset resembled a grapefruit peel. (172).

The problem of the Obese Girl is not just the overweight problem but also her bad memories of her childhood. She cannot forget the sexual harassment that occurred in her childhood. Thus, she hates her body that she thinks caused this event to happen. As a result, she gets her revenge by maltreating her body for being fat:

My feet have resisted me, insisting 'I won't come with you, I won't carry you' my ankles are angrily swollen, my tights are chapped, my belly has folded itself into layers, I've blown my top; my blood pressure has jumped; my ears are not listening to what I say... .(82)

Being fat protects her from dangers but this time she is left alone, and she feels that she does not deserve a lover since only beautiful women can have one: "I just couldn't believe I had a lover. Sure, when you're as fat as I am you resign yourself to certain things (83).

B-C, her lover, is also dissatisfied because he cannot finish his dictionary project since the Obese Girl hides the secret of her childhood. Meanwhile B-C gets jealous of the Obese Girl who shows signs of recovery and losing weight; therefore, he breaks the agreement of criticizing their physical defect and criticizes her. After this event, her heartbeat changes and her heart acts like a human:

Sometimes the heart turns upside down. As it makes it's own way slowly, it bumps slowly, it bumps against the cage of the chest. It feels itself badly broken somewhere depending whether it managed to rise or not. It will examine itself but will not be able find a wound that is apparent from outside. It will shout at the top of its voice 'I have to get out immediately. I have to get out!' Weeping and moaning it will shake the bars of its cage. And when finally it succeeds in breaking free of the cage of the chest, it will stand looking at the roads stretching in front of it, uncertain of which direction to take; ground as yet not trodden. The roads will become confused with one another. The waters will become cloudy. (185)

The quotation given above depicts the real element heart, but the details form magical atmosphere. The heart is not depicted as an organ in the body but depicted as a human. The heart acts as if it is a woman who runs away from captive life.

As Faris states, sometimes when the readers focus on reference rather than description, they can find historical events which depend on writer's facts but not the dominant authority's facts. Thus, the writer proves that there is not just one truth. To sum up the historical facts cannot be found in Shafak's novel *The Gaze* but still she employs the element of phenomenal world with detailed descriptions in order to draw attention to woman issues. The writer uses phenomenal world and describes the realities in exaggerated details and creates a magical environment to call attention to the problems that people especially women are experiencing

### 2.2.2. Phenomenal World in *Sexing the Cherry*

If the term magical realism is an oxymoron, the binary oppositions in the narration always exist in magical realist fiction. The second element phenomenal world is not different from this concept. On the one hand, the detailed description creates the realistic part of magical realism; on the other hand, the exaggerated details make the fiction digress from realism. Faris states that “best magical realist fiction entices us with entrancing magic details, the magical nature of those details is a clear departure from realism” (169). The element of phenomenal world is divided into two kinds: one is the realities set by details and the other one is the realities based on historical events that are generally alternate versions of officially accepted ones. Both of the descriptions given above create a fictional world that resembles the one we live in but they are also too exaggerated to be real, which makes the story magical realist. Jordan, the adopted son of the Dog-Woman, looks like the river that he is found in and he is named after the river since he is not stable and changes place like it. When he grows up he either goes on journeys on his ship or in his dreams. He either travels in his mind or in reality and these travels carry the element of phenomenal world with exaggerated details that cannot be seen in western logic: “Every journey conceals another journey within its lines: the path not taken and the forgotten angle. These are journeys I wish to record. Not the ones I made, but the ones I might have made, or perhaps did make in some other place or time” (Winterson 2). The writer gives the message that each journey will be odd for the western logic to think. She uses exaggerated details that are found in magical realist texts. The novel starts with Jordan introducing himself and he describes his journeys as it happens all in the novel, but these journeys are sometimes either his dream or his real journeys, so the reader is never sure about this. The novel starts with his sentence about a description of his journey:

My name is Jordan, this is the first thing I saw.

It was night about quarter to twelve, the sky divided halves, one cloudy the other fair. The clouds hung over the wood, there was no distance between them and the top of the trees... Then the fog came. The fog came from the river in thin spirals like spirits in a churchyard and thickened with the force of a genie from a bottle. The bulrushes were buried first, then the trunks of the trees, then the forks and the junctions. The top of the trees floated in the fog, making suspended islands for birds. The cattle were all drowned

and moat-like, like a lighthouse, appeared and vanished and appeared, cutting the air like a bright sword. (1)

The journey carries many detailed bizarre descriptions like the fog that goes around the place and with these details the writer creates the phenomenal world.

Jordan admires John Tradescant, the gardener of the King whom he met when he was a child and playing with his sailing boats, because he is the symbol of manhood and a hero who brings the unseen vegetables and fruits to England. Jordan is tired of the materialistic society of London and has no obligation to stay there, but her mother the Dog-Woman earns money in London through racing dogs, so Jordan travels with Tradescant, but sometimes he travels in his dreams. Another example for the travels that he has in his dream is reflected in Jordan's words as follows: "To escape from the weight of the world, I leave my body where it is, in conversation or at a dinner, and walk through streets ..." (11). As he escapes he leaves his body, he makes journeys that western logic accepts as phenomenal:

The streets are badly lit and the distance from one side to the other no more than the span of my arms. ... the people who throng the streets shout at each other, their voices rising from the mass of heads and floating upwards towards the church spires and the great copper bells that clang the end of the day. Their words, rising up form a thick cloud over the city, which every so often must be thoroughly cleansed of too much language. Men and women in balloon fly up from the main square and, armed with mops and scrubbing brushes, do battle with canopy of word trapped under the sun. (11)

Winterson indeed criticizes the degenerated society that does not communicate. Although the detailed description creates a realistic atmosphere in the story, the intriguing details immediately make the story depart from realistic form. For instance, it is impossible to see women and men fly in the balloon. The same thing can be seen in the bottomless house which he visited: "Open the doors of the hall and you will see, not floors, but bottomless pits. The furniture of the house is suspended on racks from the ceiling; the dining table supported by great chains, each link six inches thick" (15). The detailed description of the house helps the readers to envisage the environment as if they were watching a panoramic view and this usage makes the story realistic but at the same time the things that are described are all impossible for western logic, so it makes the story fantastical. When Winterson

creates a very realistic vision like watching a painting on the wall with the details, she even adds the details of the colour and the smell so perfectly that although the city she describes is fantastic and fictional it does not create any discomfort on the readers:

In the city of words that I have told you about the smell of wild strawberries was the smell characteristic of the house that I have not yet told about. The runners of these plants spread from the beds bounded by stone tiles and fastened themselves over terracotta pots and flaking ironwork and hid the big flags that paved the courtyard. Anyone coming to the outer gate would find themselves confronted by waves of green dotted underneath with tiny red berries some clutched in spiders' webs like forgotten rubies. (14)

These realistic details aim to create realistic part with the smell but then she exaggerates the details and the story breaks off with reality.

Winterson does not only create a phenomenal world with the place, but she also creates phenomenal characters in the novel. For instance, the old lady who is the neighbour of the Dog-Woman is a good example of a phenomenal character since the description of the old lady does not create a stereotype woman image but creates a peculiar person that can be only seen in fairy tales, so Winterson fulfils the second element in magical realist novels. The description of the lady is given in detail but at the same time all details are implausible:

My neighbour, who is so blackened and hairless that she has twice been mistaken for a side of salt beef wrapped in muslin, airs herself abroad as a witch. No one knows her age; what age can there be for a piece fantastical mass of rags that serves as a body? Not I nor anyone else has ever seen her feet beneath her skirt, so always beckoning and twisting, look like the shrivelled monkeys the organ-grinders carry. (7)

The detailed description of the old lady reminds the readers of the vision of a witch and also the Dog-Woman states that she is a witch in the novel as if Winterson supports the readers' views. However, this description does not arouse horror in the readers. The phenomenal aspect about the character is that the old lady accomplishes to live until the end of the story but as she gets very old "she is much shrunken, even more then she was when Jordan was found she is the height of a beagle, with great eyes ears to match" (121). She gets too small to live in a dog kennel. Once more Winterson creates something that is against western logic

Faris also indicates in his article “Scheherazade’s Children” that “... in many cases, in magical realist fiction, we witness an idiosyncratic recreation of historical events, but events grounded firmly in historical realities” (170). As Faris mentions Winterson touches upon history in her novel *Sexing the Cherry* to refer to British history to show that history is not objective, but has many perspectives that depend on how you see and interpret it. In other words, the events mentioned in *Sexing the Cherry* are not told from a generalist and totalitarian perspective but from marginal narrators’ perspective. The important events that are referred in *Sexing the Cherry* include the Civil War, the trial and execution of King Charles I, the struggles between the loyalists and the Puritans, the Great Plague and the Great Fire in London. Winterson aims to show the history from loser side. She criticizes the Puritans who are bigoted and responsible for the unjust trial of the King. The Puritans do not like the King because he is married to a Catholic French lady. They also hate everything that has life in it, even the theatres. Winterson aims show that people can be really conservative and narrow minded and as a result they are extremists and have no tolerance to the concept of ‘the other’ like the Dog-Woman’s Puritan neighbour:

They said that the king was a wanton spend-shift, that bishops were corrupt, that our Book of Common Prayer was full of Popish ways, that the Queen herself, being French, was bound to be full of Popish ways. Oh they hated everything that was grand and fine and full of life, and they went about in their flat grey suits with their flat grey faces poking out the top. The only thing fancy about them was their handkerchiefs, which they liked reckoned their souls to be. I’ve seen Puritans going past a theatre where all was merriment and pleasure and holding their starched linen to their noses for fear they might smell pleasure and be infected by it. (23)

Winterson criticizes the Puritans “who wanted a rule of saints on earth, and no king but Jesus, forgot that we are born into flesh and in flesh must remain. Their women bind their breasts and cook plain food without salt, and the men are so afraid of their member uprising that they kept it strapped between their legs with bandages” (72). Essentially, Winterson aims to stress that these people do not only run away from worldly pleasures, but they also run away from basic elements of being a human. Moreover, Winterson emphasizes the self-contraction of getting rid of worldly pleasures but acting immorally like burning the house of the Dog-Woman because she does not support the Puritans. After the King’s trial, the Puritans come to the



Dog-Woman's house to burn it. Fortunately, before they start the fire, the Dog-Woman comes to her house and sees the Puritans and prevents her house from burning. The reason for the sabotage is that she is accused of keeping papers denouncing the King but indeed they were Peck's:

‘We have requisitioned your house for Jesus and Oliver Cromwell,’ said Firebrace, his cranesbill nose red with righteousness. These are papers denouncing the King. I snatched one from the top of the file and found it to be a copy of ‘A Perfect Diurnal’, a foul and hackish screed written by Samuel Peck, a man well known for his knavery and misdeeds. (70)

This is another way of looking at history; the things we see may not be true. The Dog- Woman was opposed to having wrong papers but indeed it was just a false accusation. In this sense they accused her because she supported the King but not the Puritans, so it was a good way to get rid of her. Fortunately, with her huge body the Dog-Woman becomes invincible. In addition to Puritans' primitive way of thinking they are unjust since without a fair trial, they sentence the King to death without a real evidence:

The king tried to speak, but Bradshaw would have none of it and motioned for him to be led away. The King was already dead in law, and a man cannot speak. . . .

The trial lasted seven days, and it was no trial but a means to an execution. . . . He won sympathy even from his enemies. It was not until the afternoon that the king appeared in his linen shirt, his beard trimmed and nothing of him shivering, though many a spectator had fainted with cold. (76-77)

Bigoted people hate everybody different from themselves, so Winterson criticizes bigoted people who can be found in every society and in every century through English history through phenomenal world. Thus, Winterson touches upon the global shame of human beings.

Winterson elaborates on the opposites in many examples in order to show that history does not have one truth and while she is using this idea, she creates the basic characteristic of magical realism. For instance, the Dog-Woman has a primitive appearance, but she has a heart and wisdom to see the justice and agrees to help the loyalists. On the other hand, Puritans with their ordinary appearance are bigoted and untruthful citizens. Thus, with the opposites the writer aims to show that the human beings can be mistaken when they comment on and view the world

with prejudgement. The writer stresses that there is not only one way of looking at the world but there may be many perspectives as it happens in the story.

Another historical allusion in the novel is about the plague which happened in London in the 17<sup>th</sup> century: “God’s judgement on the murder of the King has befallen us. London is consumed by the plague. The city is thick with the dead” (161). “God’s revenge is still upon us’ I said to Jordan, ‘We are corrupted, and our city is corrupted. There is no whole or thing left” (165). Many people died in that time and the Dog- Woman is one of the people who are not affected by the plague. She gives a full description of London and it is not different from hell. All these details create the realistic part in the story. However, Winterson does not hesitate to add an exaggerated description with her character the Dog-Woman, who helps men carry the corpse. Although carters cannot go into the burning hole she goes to bottom of it without harming herself and she says:

He tried to dissuade me, on account of prodigious heat, but I made my way down step by step, reached the ledge I walked round until I saw a calm and pleasant branch not yet suffused in fire. (163)

While she uses an extraordinary character, she does not refrain herself from criticizing the society. Back in that time in that condition the poor and the rich people were diverse. They burned the poor ones and they buried the rich ones. She asks the caters where they take the dead and the answer makes all human beings think since even the dead bodies of the people have a value: “There is no way but burning. The grave- diggers have no strength left, there are too many for them. Only the moneyed may be buried. For us it is the pit” (163). Thus, Winterson criticizes the unjust view point of the human kind that can be found in every era.

Depicting the plague and the big fire as God’s punishment, Winterson indeed wants to show that the authorities can act immorally and unjustly, and the truths are not always like the ones told. The Dog-Woman was saved by a chicken bone necklace. Although this seems just a myth to western world it does not create any questions on the readers mind:

In the world there is a horror of plagues. Of mysterious diseases that wipe out towns and cities, leaving empty churches and bedclothes that must be burned. Holly water and crosses and mountain air and the protection of saints and a diet of watercress are all thought to save us as a species from love? A man sold me a necklace made of chicken bones; he said these chickens who had

scattered around the crib at Bethlehem. The bones would save me from the pain of every kind and lead me piously to Heaven. (80)

It is beyond logic that a person can be saved by a necklace from the big plague that kills everybody. These sentences are far from the empirical logic but how Winterson makes up the story does not create an absurd image in readers' mind

Winterson uses real events in the history as realistic part and while she is using them she adds extraordinary details and creates magical part. In addition to this usage the writer also adds new things to the historical events:

On September the second, in the year of our Lord, sixteen hundred and sixty-six, a fire broke out in a baker's yard in Pudding Lane. The flames were as high as a man, and quickly spread to the next. I had been drinking and it was fortunate for them that I was able to pull their bodies to safe place. I did not start the fire- how could I, having resolved to lead a blameless life? -but I did not stop it. (167)

Winterson writes about the real event which is the big fire in London in her story but then she adds her fictional character's confession. The Dog-Woman confesses that she did not start the fire. Thus, she mixes the real and the imaginary.

Consequently, like all magical realist fiction, the real and the fantastic always switch in order to challenge the romantic mood and show the brutal part of the world. The magical realist works always exist where there is something false going on. *Sexing the Cherry* touches upon the things deficient and touches upon history from a different perspective to create a more modern and clean environment. Thus, magical realist works force readers to look at everything from many perspectives because the narration is never objective and changes according to the ideologies of the time and narrators. Moreover, the historical events that Winterson mentions may seem to be taken from British history, but the events and the reaction of the people are universal and ageless.

## **2.3. UNSETTLING DOUBTS**

### **2.3.1. Unsettling Doubts in *The Gaze***

The third feature of magical realism is the unsettling doubts. This element creates two contradictory understandings of the events in the story, "... readers may hesitate to believe the penetration of the preternatural norms into the primary world

and vice versa; however, some convincing evidence can be detected in the text that attests to the interaction of the magical and the realistic in the story and consequently causes the audience to admit the fusion of these two paradoxical realms” (Hosseinpour and Moghadam 96). In addition, the readers may sometimes hesitate to understand the events as a hallucination of the character. To perceive these features generally depends on the reader’s cultural background. The reader who is close to western culture will hesitate more than others since western logic tries to accept happenings through scientific facts whereas eastern logic sees magic as very ordinary.

In Shafak’s novel *The Gaze*, there are many events in the story that make the reader doubt whether they are hallucination and dream or real. The first instance in the novel is about the Obese Girl’s dream. She dreams of a flying balloon whose colour she cannot identify. The flying balloon rises rhythmically. As the storm starts she closes her eyes to prevent the storm from taking away what she sees. She opens her eyes and sees that the balloon does not exist anymore. Then, she wakes up in her bedroom, B-C sitting on the edge of her bed trying to wake her up. As she was sleeping, a woman betrayed by her husband becomes insane and starts to dance in her sleeping gown and with her sleepers in the street. The Obese Girl witnesses this event from B- C’s eyes (Shafak 10). As the reader continues to read the novel, he/she comes across the same dream of the Obese Girl but this time she sees the flying balloon is swept away so she runs after it and sees that she is not wearing her shoes. Then she buys mixed fruit flavoured shoes. Suddenly she wakes up and this time finds herself in the minibus (Shafak 11). The reader hesitates whether the first story is true or not because Shafak never mentions that story again in her novel. The readers’ doubt continues since this event is only told from B-C’s eyes and the second time she sees the screaming women in the street she wakes up in the minibus as her story starts. The reader never fully finds out whether the Obese Girl is dreaming the same dream every time or not. Also, the reader is suspicious about the dancing and questions if she is insane, real or just a made-up story character of B-C.

Another example for this element is found in the second story of Shafak's novel *The Gaze*. The reader reads the story of the most beautiful girl in Keramet Mumî Memiş Efendi's cherry coloured tent, La Belle Annabelle, with different plots. In the first plot Keramet Mumî Memiş Efendi buys the unwanted child of forbidden love, La Belle Annabelle, from the owner of the troupe. She becomes a member of the troupe when she is playing in her garden. Her mother, Madame de Marelle, is a faithful widow who lives in her mansion with a major-domo whom she hates but still continues to live with. One day a handsome boy comes to work with them in the mansion and Madame falls in love with him. Although she punishes herself for dreaming of him, she cannot stop herself. Many times, she considers dismissing him but each time she gives up on that idea. Unfortunately, one day she loses her control and has sexual intercourse with him and becomes pregnant according to Madame de Marelle's assertion:

This is how the twins were born. They put one baby into each of her arms. Madame de Marelle looked first at the first-born. This baby was so ugly that it was more of demon than human baby. She smiled tenderly. What was more natural than that ugliness should result from such shameful intercourse? At least God would never let her forget the sin she had committed. After that moment, until her last breath, whenever she looked at that child, the clamp squeezing her conscience would tighten, and it would be harder to carry the weight of her crime... The second baby was so beautiful that it was more like a lost jinni than human baby. The tiny lips flowering on her rosy skin were moving slightly as if at any moment she would learn how to speak. Madame de Marelle examined it with curiosity at first, then with hatred. (134)

While she thinks that she pays for her sin with the ugly baby and gets relief, she remembers her sin with her beautiful baby and she escapes from her. Thus, when they sell the beautiful daughter, La Belle Annabelle, she does not feel sorrow or regret. Then the second version of the same story is told by Monsieur Marelle; as a result, the readers are in a quandary over which story to believe:

Marking the page of the book he was reading with the sapphire studded dagger that he always kept within reach. Monsieur de Marelle sighed with distress. Even holding the babies in his arms a few minutes ago hadn't helped. Whenever he felt distressed like this, he stared combing his rust coloured hair with his stubby fingers. He liked his hair. He'd never seen anyone else with such hair. This rust-coloured hair passed from generation to generation

in his family. One of the twins resembled its father, but the other one? (135)

The story changes and is retold from the husband's perspective. Madame Marelle is not a widow but lives with her husband and the rust coloured man is her husband but not a major-domo as the Madame believes; therefore, the ugly baby looks like her husband. Shafak does not let her readers completely believe the second narration. According to the second narration Monsieur is the father and there is not a handsome boy. However, the story does not last and give relief to his/her readers, as the story continues, the reader starts to doubt again with Monsieur's sentences. With his sentences, he creates a sense of infidelity. Thus, the reader starts to wonder if the lover really exists or not: "He has been accustomed to his wife's coldness but what had happened in the last year was a mystery to him. She was growing stranger by the day" (135). The reader cannot reliably determine that the lover does not exist:

When she came back, Monsieur de Marelle was grooming the horses. When he attempted to ask her where she'd gone and why she'd return so soon, Madeline looked at him in disgust and closed the door of her room without a word. Over time, incidents like this had become so common that Monsieur de Marelle began to wonder whether or not his wife recognized him. As if ...as if she mistook him for someone else, who wasn't there. And as she was fleeing from someone nobody else could see perhaps a ghost. This region was already better known for its ghost stories than for its yew trees. (135)

The writer not only creates doubt about the lover but also creates doubt about a ghost. Contrary to a horror novel, the ghost does not create fear for the reader but creates wonder.

Unsettling doubt continues with the same story of Madame. She sends a note to the handsome boy and offers to meet him. Madame claims that the handsome man wanted to kiss her when they meet: "Give me your lips, said the young man. He was so relaxed, so fearless that it was as if he wanted her to give her lips to bushes on the river; at first out of surprise, and then in frenzy, he half kissed those lips" (Shafak132). Indeed, she is the one who offers her lips to her husband according to Monsieur's narration: "He tried to understand how this woman who had not let him touch her since they married and looked him in disgust had changed so suddenly. Then suddenly, she offered him her lips. The man was astounded; at first out of surprise, and then in a frenzy, he half kissed those lips" (134). When the babies are

born, Monsieur sees the hatred of the mother to the second baby, so he finds a wet-nurse. One day the wet-nurse comes into the library to find the Monsieur and sees the picture of the handsome man who is believed to bring unhappiness to virgin girls, and tells the story to Monsieur. The wet-nurse asks Monsieur how they hung the picture. Monsieur tells her that his wife found it in the attic while she was decorating. After that event, Monsieur believes that Madame's beautiful girl is the daughter of the man in the picture like the curse told by the wet-nurse. The resemblance reminds him of the betrayal of his wife. The reader hesitates over whether the story told by the wet-nurse is true and there is a curse over the virgins.

As the reader continues to read the novel, the story of La Belle Annabelle changes completely. The story goes back to the same scene where Madame de Marelle told her husband that she wanted to redecorate the mansion. She goes to the attic and sees a box in the chest and tries to unlock it with her hair pin, but the maid stops her opening it by telling her an ominous story. Thus, she never sees the handsome man and never falls in love and never has sexual intercourse with the young man:

Madame de Marelle hesitated. She felt that she could get the lock open if she tried a bit more. She was curious about this young man and his famous beauty. She wanted to see. She stood silent for a moment, holding her hair-clip. As the old maid watched her anxiously to try to see what she was going to, she stood looking at the box as if she was spellbound. Then, suddenly, whatever it was that passed through her mind, she let go of the box. She'd changed her mind about opening the box. (250)

The years pass, and she forgets about that incident in the attic, so she lives with her husband and gives birth to rusty-headed children: "She raised rusty headed children. As the new names echoed through the mansion, and the branches of the family tree grew heavier, the name La Belle Annabelle was never encountered" (251). This third narration denies what the reader has read up to now:

If Madame de Marelle had insisted on seeing what she shouldn't see, this sin would in the future result in Annabella being surrounded by people who wanted to see her terrible beauty. But because the box had never been opened, nothing like this happened. La Belle Annebelle was never born. There was never a such a person. She didn't exist. There was never a figure, no matter how beautiful it was, that lived simply in order to be looked at. (251)

Throughout the story the reader reads the story in a dilemma of believing and not believing. Even if the reader believes the story, he/she hesitates about which one to believe, but this situation never creates a discomfort for the reader as a typical characteristic of magical realist fiction.

The example for unsettling doubt is created by another character, Timofei Ankidinov, a greedy man who wants to find sable, and sees a basket while he is in Siberia and opens it. He witnesses the spiritual intercourse of Shamans and spoils all the magic. He hinders the boy from becoming a Shaman leader. "Because the spell had been broken right in the middle of their reunion, they could neither step back and return their former states, nor could they step forward and complete their transformation" but become a creature to be sold (59). As the reader continues to read, the story changes and this time Timofei sees the basket but does not open it: "But suddenly, whatever it was that went through his mind, he took a step backward. He'd changed his mind. He wasn't going to open the basket, he wasn't going to look inside. Indeed, he already found the place spooky enough, and didn't want to linger" (252). Since he goes away, he lets the sable and young man unite in the basket. Thus, the young man becomes the Shaman of his tribe:

If Timofei Ankidinov had insisted on seeing what he shouldn't see, the sin would in the future result in the Sable-Girl being surrounded by people who wanted to see terrible ugliness. However, he didn't open the box, nothing like this happened. The sable girl was never born. There was never a figure, no matter how ugly she was, who lived simply in order to be looked at. .... One never was. The number One was missing. (253)

Shafak never stops creating hesitation for her readers until the end of the novel. Even at the end of the novel, the readers cannot be sure about which story to believe. After reading the second story of the same characters, the reader again finds herself/himself in a dilemma about which one to believe. Moreover, at the end of the story, Keramet Mumî Memiş Efendi comes to his tent and looks for his most valuable characters, Sable-Girl and La Belle Annabelle, and unfortunately, he cannot find them. The reader questions if these characters existed or not:

Keramet Mumî Memiş Efendi ran up to the westward-facing door of the cherry-colored tent. He was out of breath. He looked everywhere. The Sable-Girl wasn't there. He stopped for a



moment to try to think where she might have gone, but at the same moment a worse suspicion was aroused. He ran to the eastward-facing section of the tent. He looked everywhere, searched every corner. What he'd feared come to pass. La Belle Annabelle was also missing. (253)

Indeed, if they have never existed according to the second version of the story it is nonsense to look for people who do not exist; however, Keramet Mumî Memiş Efendi looks for them and accepts them as missing. This situation creates and raises doubts.

In conclusion, Hegerfeldt defines the difference of 'hesitation' in fantastic and magical realist texts: "The discrepancy between tone and content leads to hesitation on the reader's part about how to reconcile the apparently incompatible elements, for the usual means of recontextualization, such as writing the elements off as a hallucination, attributing it to an unreliable narrator, etc. are not supported by the text" (55). Shafak fulfils the third element unsettling doubts of magical realist fiction with the four stances that Hegerfeldt stresses. While in all the examples the readers cannot determine which event is a hallucination or fact, the writer never discomforts or shocks her readers. Also, the writer never tells her readers that there are doubts in the story, but creates them as if they are common features of life. Thus, she differs from other fantastic novel writers. In fact, Shafak wants to emphasize that truths we know may be false and the falsities we know may be true in life.

### **2.3.2. Unsettling Doubts in *Sexing the Cherry***

In this element, there is hesitation between two contradictory understandings of events. Faris states: "[t]he reader's primary doubt in most cases is between understanding an event as character's dream or hallucination and alternatively understanding it as a miracle" ("Scheherazade's Children" 171). The reader always hesitates to believe what she/he reads because the writer does not create usual events or characters.

In *Sexing the Cherry*, the reader faces perplexing events beyond the logic due to bewildering characters such as the Dog-Woman, Jordan, Fortunata, the Neighbour of the Dog-Woman and with the mystifying journeys of Jordan. One of the main characters in the novel is the Dog-Woman, who has a fantastical

appearance that people are not used to seeing in daily life. She has a very huge body and strength that can beat even an elephant or kill many men easily without any technological help. Although she has a magical appearance she has a very ordinary life and has not ever thought of leaving London. On the other hand, Jordan has an average look that the readers are familiar with, but he experiences many journeys that carry fantastical elements; for instance, the places he visits are against the Laws of Physics. Thus, for the readers, which character is magical and which character real is the dilemma. The neighbour of the Dog-Woman is bizarre with her physical appearance, unknown age and behaviours. For instance, she can easily eat every kind of stone. In addition to this she is a sibyl and has the power to cure people, which gives her a magical quality. When Jordan is found in the river Thames she helps the Dog-Woman clean him and she foresees his destiny and again when Jordan is affected by the plague she gives medicine to the Dog-Woman to cure him when other people are dying: "At night-time she came in with an evil-smelling pan of fluid and set it on the hearth. 'Let him drink it, bathe in it and sleep within sight of it,' was what she said, and then she scuttled back to her bed of bones" (164). The next character Fortunata, the lover of Jordan, is full of doubts because the readers cannot be sure if she exists or not. Jordan and everybody at the house have dinner together when Jordan notices a quiet lady: "... I noticed a woman whose face was a sea voyage I had not the courage to attempt. I did not speak to her, though I spoke to all the rest...She was a dancer" (16). The readers are convinced that she exists but later nobody at the house remembers her although she was with them at the dinner: "No one in the house recalled her, though how that were possible with her loveliness that devoured the rest of the company in tongues of flame I do not know" (27). When Jordan is looking for her, he is advised to ask the place of the dancer Fortunata to the Twelve Dancing Princesses. After this advice Jordan knocks on the Princesses' door and then he is welcomed, listens to the eleven stories of the princesses but wonders the missing twelfth dancer. Later when Jordan is again in one of his journeys he wanders around the island and comes across the ballet shoes and hears music eventually; all these paths take him to Fortunata. This event strengthens the idea that she exists for the readers. When Jordan comes back to his mother the epidemic has broken out in London and Jordan is affected by it and when he is unconscious he repeats the name of Fortunata. The Dog-Woman claims

that she does not exist: “I am a resourceful woman and believe I can do almost anything if it falls within the mortal realm, but I could not find a woman who does not exist” (163). Once more in a different example the readers feel the dilemma of to believe or not to believe; When Jordan meets with his mother after one of his long journeys at the beach, they talk, and Jordan falls asleep. Then the Dog-Woman sees the necklace on Jordan’s neck and asks. Once more the answer creates hesitation over the readers: “It was given to me by a woman who does not exist. Her name is Fortunata” (151). The readers may also see Fortunata as a hallucination of Jordan since he claims: “Memory1: The scene I have just described to you may lie in the future or the past. Either I have found Fortunata or I will find her. I cannot be sure. Either I am remembering her, or I am still imagining her” (106). If she exists then is it true that she really “flew away and walked on a wire stretched from the steeple of the church to the mast of a ship at anchor in the bay” like the Twelve Dancing Princesses told or she just took a boat and sailed round the world earning her living as an ordinary human being as Fortunata told?:

[She] walked on a wire stretched from the steeple of the church to the mast of a ship at anchor in the bay? She laughed. How could such a thing be possible? ‘But I said, ‘how could it be possible to fly every night from the window to enchanted city when there are no such places? Are there not such places? she said, and I fell silent, not knowing how to answer. (108)

As a result, the readers go back and forth in believing or not believing that she exists. The readers doubt the validity and accuracy of the events experienced by the characters. With this element Winterson aims to create the idea that nothing is precise and stereotype as the social rules dictate to us.

Winterson once more creates hesitation by other characters. For instance, the Dog-Woman turns into a modern environmentalist woman who moves back and forth between different centuries. The environmentalist woman feels like the Dog-Woman, so she can be the 21<sup>st</sup> version of the Dog-Woman. In such condition, the reader hesitates to believe if the Dog-Woman has ever existed or everything is just a hallucination of the environmentalist woman:

I am a woman going mad. I am a woman hallucinating. I imagine I am huge, raw, a giant. When I am a giant I go out with my sleeves rolled up and my skirts swirling round me like a whirlpool. I have a sack such as kittens are drowned in and I stop off all over

this world filling it up. Men shoot at me, but I take the bullets out of my cleavage and I chew them up. Then I laugh and laugh and break their guns between my fingers the way you would a wish-bone. (140)

Winterson also creates hesitation for the readers with Jordan's travels. Jordan is a sailor and an explorer who always looks for the unseen vegetables, fruits and precious items to bring them to England and presents them to the King. These travels are not always physical journeys, since they may sometimes be happening as a dream. Thus, the reader remains in doubt and stuck between the imaginary and reality. Jordan always mentions his travels whether it is the concrete or spiritual. His first sentence about his journey starts with: "The shining water and the size of the world. I have seen both again and again since I left my mother on the banks of the black Thames" (11). After this sentence, he adds that he also makes spiritual journeys "To escape from the weight of the world, I leave my body where it is, in conversation or at dinner, and walk through a series of winding streets to a house standing back from the road" (11). His friend and his instructor Tradescant also makes long journeys and always turns back with precise gifts to King. However, Jordan differs from him since Jordan does not only look for Fortunata, he is looking for himself, so his journeys also include dreams and hallucinations:

Curiously, the further I have pursued my voyages the more distant they have become. For Tradescant, voyages can be completed. They occupy time comfortably, with some leeway, they are predictable. I have set off and found that there is no end to even the simplest journey of the mind. I begin, and straight away a hundred alternative routes present themselves. I choose one, no sooner begin, than a hundred more appear. Every time I try to narrow down my intent I expand it, and yet those straits and canals still lead me to the open sea, and then I realize how vast it all is, this matter of the mind. (117)

From the quotation above, the reader hesitates about the reality of the situation. Is Jordan telling what he desires or is he day dreaming? The other journey is about a city that he talks over in details. In this journey, he visits the city of words: "In the city of the words that I have told you about the smell of wild strawberries was the smell characteristic of the house that I have not told you about" (14). He continues telling about the city and a house which are both bizarre to the readers. Should a reader believe what he tells or react as if it were just his hallucination?

Jordan in one of his journeys goes to theatres and the opera, cafes, casinos and bawdy-houses and a pen of prostitutes and there he experiences women's world since he is wandering around and looking for Fortunata, his dream lover. While he is with prostitutes he learns many secrets of women and women's ideas about men. Then suddenly he wants to escape since he does not want to hear them. Suddenly he wants to fly and escape a way of escaping the burdens of the world. Thus, he holds a fish to make the birds come towards him and finally a fish takes him up and throws him to unknown place where a woman called Zillah lives (35). Could he possibly fly with a bird and wake up at another place? What he has heard from women may have created a trauma for Jordan and made him see some hallucinations but at the same time maybe he really ran away from prostitutes and found himself in other women's arms since he does not like to learn the thoughts of women. Also, he is a stereotypical man who wants to get married and have children (116). As the reader continues to read he/she comes across different doubts. According to Zillah, a woman who lives in that building, they are up the tower and she is locked in but according to Jordan they are just in a house:

In the morning the young girl, whose name was Zillah told me she had been locked in this tower since her birth. 'This is not a tower' I said. 'it is a house of some stature but nothing more'. 'No, she said. You are mistaken. Go to the window' I did as she asked, and looked down a few feet over a street setting up for market. (35)

Then Jordan runs away from her as he sees her holding the rats for a meal and her eyes disappearing, so he jumps down the tower and goes to people in the market. When they ask him where he comes from he answers: "From the tower, I said pointing upwards. The market stopped its bustle, and all fell to the ground and made the sign of the cross. The purveyor of Holy Relics hung a set of martyr's teeth round his neck and sprinkled me with the dust of St Anthony" (37). If he rejects that they are in the tower why does he tell the villagers that he comes from the tower? Later the citizens of the town tell the true story of the young girl caught incestuously with her sister. She was sentenced to build her own death tower. To delay her death, she builds it as high as she could. But then the stones finish, and she has to lock in herself and the villagers evacuated to a faraway place so as not to hear her screams. Many years later the tower is demolished by a foreigner who builds the house in which Jordan has been (37). This story seems like a fairy tale that the readers come

across, and as a result the readers never stop doubting and asking questions about the existence of Zilliah.

Jordan is an independent character who does not want to be in one place; therefore, he sails around the world. If he cannot move he feels the burden and flies spiritually as happened when he was with the prostitutes. He admits that he escapes from burdens by leaving his body where it is and travelling spiritually (11). For this reason, one day when he was with Tradescant on the ship, he dreams about a city whose inhabitants are not stable and change location when approached by their creditors.

The readers may never be sure whether he really desires to be there, or he really has been in such a place:

At sea and away from home in a creaking boat, with Tradescant sleeping beside me, there is a town I sometimes dream about, whose inhabitants are so cunning that to escape the insistence of creditors they knock down their house in a single night and rebuild them elsewhere. So, the number of the buildings in the city is always constant but they are never in the same place from one day to the next. (43)

Jordan also visits a city where love is forbidden because love destroyed the city many times:

In one city I visited, the entire population had been wiped out by love three times in a row. After the third occasion the only two survivors, a monk and a whore, determined that love should be illegal in their new state and that anyone found indulging in it would be put to death. (82)

The strange thing about the city is that it is saved by a monk and a whore, the two poles that cannot be thought together in a society since one symbolizes the right and the other symbolizes the wrong. Furthermore, these poles save humankind. Winterson aims to bring them together to tell her readers that there is not one absolute right and one absolute wrong in society. Besides the happenings in the city, the readers question if the city was extinct by the love plague and created again and again by the whore and the monk or all the things told by Jordan are just his hallucination. With this instance, as readers we will never know what has happened; it may be a hallucination, or it may be a real journey since Jordan claims that Tradescant and he navigate to a different place and collect many worthy exotic

things from there:

When I left the city where love is an epidemic I re-joined Tradescant's ship and we continued our course towards the Bermudas. It was Tradescant's plan to stock up with seeds and pods and any exotic thing that might take the fancy of English and so be natural in gardens. (86)

While Jordan is looking for Fortunata he is advised to look for the Twelve Dancing Princesses who are a little bit older. He goes to find them and when he arrives there he is welcomed by the mermaid who is very different from the mermaid the readers expect from fairy tales they read when they were children. The awkward thing about the mermaid is that she is very greedy, which is not a suitable adjective to depict a mermaid that the readers are used to seeing in fairy tales. For instance, she grabs the herring that Jordan brought as a gift and eats very rudely. Winterson aims to break the myth that idealizes mermaids, depicts them as very beautiful and very kind. The truth is they may be very ordinary and rude, so it is wrong to create stereotypes about women in society. This idea is supported with statements of the Dog-Woman: "Already the mermaid, who was very beautiful but without fine graces, was gobbling the fish, dropping them back into her throat the way you or I would an oyster" (47). Winterson stresses that society's expectation of being beautiful and kind may change, and that women can be ugly and rude like men. The Twelve Dancing Princesses except the youngest all tell their own stories to Jordan. However, their stories are different from those the readers are used to read since their stories do not have married-and-lived-happily-ever-after endings. Winterson wants her readers to question those expectations and see that the truths may not be the same. As a result, the readers hesitate over which story to believe; should they believe the stories they have read since their childhood or should they believe what they have listened from the twelve dancing princesses?

To conclude, Winterson employs the third element of Faris's framework to create questions in the minds of the readers in various ways. She uses odd characters who have an unusual physical appearance or behaviours, characters who remind us of fairy tale heroes/heroines or characters who experience imaginary journeys. While the readers are hesitating over the doubtful events, they question their way of thinking in which there is only one absolute right and absolute wrong in the society. Thus, *Sexing the Cherry* makes its readers rethink and break the prejudices of society.

## 2.4. MERGING REALMS

### 2.4.1. Merging Realms in *The Gaze*

The fourth element of magical realism is merging realms. Faris clarifies this element with imagery of a two sided-mirror: “The magical realist vision thus exists at the intersection of two worlds, at an imaginary point inside a double-sided mirror that reflects in both directions” (*Ordinary Enchantments* 21). The writer creates these double-sided mirrors in many ways, but mostly he/she connects the dead or ghosts with the living beings. The characters mainly have a connection with both land of the death and the land of the living. Sometimes the writer uses different physical and discursive worlds to enable the element of merging realms. For example, a character or an element of a fairy tale or novel can be reinterpreted and interact with the characters of magical realist fiction. In this way, the narrative is incorporated with a literary past. Thus, as Faris claims, the reader experiences different discursive space with the old and the new story. Another way of creating the element of merging realms is to use indefinite pronouns, the reader wonders who is speaking so the references are unclear, and the identity of the characters are questioned.

The novel *The Gaze* involves various examples of Faris’ fourth element and enables the narrative to conflate different worlds. By using this element, she aims to focus attention on women’s position in society. The first example for this element is the relation of Keramet Mumî Keşke Memiş Efendi’s mother and the dervish. Although his mother has six children, she is dying for a son. She believes that her life would not be fulfilled without a son because this idea is imposed on her by the society. Thus, she decides to try all kinds of superstitions until she sees the dervish in her dream. She interacts with him and does whatever the dervish tells her to do and never hesitates to have sexual intercourse with her husband in their garden although she is a conservative person:

[F]inally, having learned this in a dream one night from a hairless, beardless dervish, tied locks of her hair to the thin branches of the blackberry trees in the garden and arranged candles in eccentric circles, and her husband, who she pleaded with, shaking with embarrassment at having to undress in the innermost circle, not saying it was not because of the cold but because ‘the neighbours



will see and we'll never live it down', was made to believe her, and not change his mind. (33)

Eventually, she gets pregnant and gives birth to a strange boy for accepted western norms and she dies comfortably as a good wife since she gives birth to a son as society demands. The communication of a living being and a dervish in a dream creates a double-sided mirror. There is a relationship between the living being and the holy spirit. By bringing the dervish and the mother together, Shafak wants to touch upon women's issues in non-western societies. She wants to stress how important it is to have a son rather than a daughter in non-western societies. As the example of Shafak's character, women can even risk death for the sake of giving birth to a boy because women do not have value in the society:

The second example of the merging realms element is a boy who is tested to be a shaman and a sable. Shamanism is the oldest religion seen in Asia. It is based on magic. Moreover, it does not have any holy book or a founder. Shamanism embraces a matriarchal period, and for this reason shamans prefer to wear a skirt and have long hair. Shamanism passes from generation to generation; it not impossible to be a shaman just by learning. Moreover, to be a Shaman leader, members of the tribe do not volunteer but are chosen in their tribe in order to take the place of their ancestors after they die without discriminating (<https://www.britannica.com/topic/shamanism>). Shafak aims to show that there should not be a difference between women and men:

The last image his eyes had seen was that of his elder sister's lifeless body. It was stretched full-length on the ground. Her very long, jet- black hair waved in the wind that rose from the frozen ground. The whole tribe was in mourning. They didn't have a single shaman. The elders thought that the migrating soul of the sister? might take its place in her brother. The look in the boy's eyes was like that of sable's eyes. Looking deeply into his pupils, it was clear he could be the new shaman. But no one knew yet if he was the right person. In order to know it was necessary to test him. (55)

Contrary to the first example, there is no sexual superiority between the sexes. In other words, neither of the sexes is superior. Therefore, there is no pressure to have a son in the society. When the previous female leader dies, the duty of being the Shaman leader is given to her brother. Shafak uses shamanism to create two worlds; the world of ordinary living and the world of spiritual living. The boy is left alone to

be tested and is expected to gain superpowers by connecting with a Sable that is known as a good hunter in nature:

Both of their eyes shone with the knowledge of death. They were like two mirrors facing each other. As they looked, they flowed into each other and strengthened one another. ... as they spun they were like two beside themselves. In that dark, narrow basket they discovered the boundlessness and the brilliance of their souls. Later when they emerged from the basket, each would go to the place where his body belonged, but their souls would not part. This was their secret. And this moment was their moment. The intimacy of the shaman and the animal. (57)

Shafak not only merges the spiritual world and the world of the living but also merges an animal and a human being as a two sided-mirror. They connect their animal and human souls to have super magical powers. With this instance Shafak creates a magical realist atmosphere in her novel. The quotation given below visualize the spiritual atmosphere:

And inside that overturned basket, when the moment came for his soul to embrace its twin; that is, at the moment when he was about to draw the sable's soul into himself and blow his soul into himself and blow his soul into the sable; I mean, at the moment when he was about to complete the transformation he had to undergo in order to become the tribe's new shaman, first becoming two beings in one with the sable, then later becoming one being in two. (62)

Unfortunately, such an encounter is not completed because one of the fur hunters interrupts the spiritual ceremony by seeing it. After the incomplete ceremony, an ugly half man half animal creature is born instead of a super powerful Shaman leader. "What had happened was that the boy, who hadn't become the tribe's new shaman, had become stuck somewhere between being a human and being a sable for the soul mate. ...[E]verything remained half-finished simply because a hand had opened the basket from outside ..." (62).

Shafak also employs fairy tales and mythological characters in her novel *The Gaze* through the dictionary which is being written by BC. In this way she merges two worlds and fulfils the requirements of magical realist fiction. She employs western fairy tales like "Hansel and Gretel" and "Snow White" and "Pandora":

cadi (witch): before roasting in the oven, the witch wanted to be certain he'd been fattened enough. Every morning she inspected the child's index finger. But the finger was always bony and thin. Because Hansel was tricking the witch by showing her a twig

instead of his finger. Since the witch couldn't see well, she never managed to eat Hansel. (102)

Pamuk Prenses (Snow White): The dwarves wept at Snow White's death, and were heartsick to think they'd never see her beauty again. In the end they decided to put her in a glass coffin so they could look at her forever. (193)

Pandora: Because she'd lifted the lid in order to see what was in the box, all of the evils were scattered across the face of the earth. (193)

She also uses her own stories; for instance, she starts the chapter "Siberia" as if she is telling a fairy tale: "God was above, the Czar was far away. The witches were wandering around. The witches were blowing the mouldy poison they hid under their knotted tongues onto the hops" (47). In another example when the Obese Girl is visiting a physician for her eating disorder, she describes her stomach as if she tells a fairy tale, she even adds typical fairy tale elements like 'forty days and forty nights':

The stomach is a mythical land. It is a land of eternal bliss where the finest food is served on golden platters in banquets that last for forty days and nights, where the elixir of immortality cascades down waterfalls, where healing honey flows on top of the mountains... .

The stomach is a mythical land. At the end of every fortieth day dragon emerges from fortieth gate and breathes fire that burns to ashes every grain of wheat and leaves; not a drop of water in the cisterns; an endlessly cursed land where the harvest is dried up seven year droughts and whose dark forests evil-hearted witches brew cauldron after cauldron of catastrophe. (226)

Shafak aims to take the readers from the real-life atmosphere where the Obese Girl denies telling of her sexual harassment to a fairy tale atmosphere where dragons, witches and dark forest can be seen. In this way she merges two elements, the real and magical.

The other stories are found in the dictionary of Gaze written by B-C. The words in this dictionary carry various stories taken from Greek Mythology, Turkish folklore and religion:

Kykloplar: Cyclops are giants with one eye. They live in enormous caves; they herd sheep and grow vegetables...".

Lamia: Before Lamia became a monster with a human head and the legs of a donkey, she was a woman whose beauty was much

more spoken. Zeus had made love to her many times. (185-186)

The writer does not create merging realms only with characters, but she also adds mythologic and religious stories. Religious beliefs in the novel create cultural richness. For instance, the story of ‘Adam and Eve’ is told again:

(Adam and Eve): When Adam and Eve tasted the forbidden fruit, they saw their differences for the first time. They became shamed, and wanted to hide their nakedness with fig leaves. But one had a single fig leaf, and the other had three. Once they learned how to count, they were never the same again. (93)

By merging two elements with stories she aims to emphasize that there is inequality between women and men which starts at the beginning of humankind.

Shafak not only merges two elements but also she merges two different times with her two stories which take place in completely different centuries. However, the different stories and different centuries are not irrelevant. At the end of the novel she combines them when she mentions that Keramet Keşke Mumî Memiş Efendi could be the ancestor of B-C since they have the same eyes.

Consequently, Shafak uses the fourth element of magical realism. Faris describes in her novel *The Gaze* with various examples. She connects the world of the spiritual and the world of the living being with a dervish and the mother figure and with the relation between the shaman boy and a sable. Also, she merges two worlds with two different stories that have different times and spaces. Besides, she combines western fairy tales and items of mythology in her story. She uses the fourth element in her novel in order to focus attention on the fact that there is still inequality between the positions of women and men, and she also uses this element to embellish her story.

#### **2.4.2. Merging Realms in *Sexing the Cherry***

Faris’ fourth trait of magical realism called merging realms means experiencing the ‘closeness or near merging of two realms’; in other words, two worlds such as life and death, real and imaginary, waking and dream, past and future, human and animal join and break the perceived notion of the real. Magical realist fiction is against all accepted rules such as having only ordinary characters and creates its own rules merging ordinary and supernatural or dead characters.

Winterson is not eager to create stereotypical characters in her fiction; therefore, she does not hesitate to combine the dead and alive, miraculous and ordinary characters; she also adds fairy tale characters as if they normally existed in daily life. The first instance is taken from one of Jordan's journeys. While he was with the women working in the bawdyhouse, he learns women's unfavourable ideas about men and eventually he feels uncomfortable and wants to escape. When he lifts a fish up, a bird grabs the fish with Jordan and they begin to fly until the fish leaves him in a tower near a woman called Zillah. After a while he notices that she is not an ordinary woman: "She was silent, I noticed how pale her face was, and that her eyes were unnaturally bright" (36). He asks why she is kept there and learns that she herself is the reason for her imprisonment. The odd thing is not her sin and her captive life, but her attitudes and her pale face:

'Is there anything for me to eat?' I asked her.  
She smiled, leaned under the bed and pulled out two rats by her tails. She laughed, and walked toward me, the rats in each hand. Her eyes were clouding over, her eyes were disappearing. I could smell her breath like cheese in muslin (36).

After he escapes from the tower he learns that nobody is living there but years and years ago a girl was sentenced there, so Jordan made a contact with a dead person:

When there were no stones left she sealed the room and the village, driven mad by her death cries, evacuated to far-off spot where no one could hear her. Many years later the tower had been demolished by a foreigner who had built the house I saw in its place. Slowly the village had returned, but not the foreigner, nor anyone else, could live in the house. At night, the cries were too loud. (37)

Although the readers can be sure that Jordan has contact with the dead Zillah, they do not feel horror in the story. The dead person who has relations with the living beings in the novel is not just Zillah, as years and years later, in the twentieth century, the spirit of Jordan speaks with a mortal called Nicolas who resembles Jordan:

'I used to make them,' said the man. 'and sail them too. I've been everywhere, but I still have a feeling I've missed it. I feel like I'm being laughed at, I don't know what by, it sounds silly. I think I may have missed the world, that the one I've seen is a decoy to get me off the scent...' (132).  
'Who was that?' he said.  
'I don't know. A sailor or someone.' He must be a nut.  
Why?

Nobody wears clothes like that anymore.' (132)

This is not only an incident; after Nicholas is accepted by the Navy, he is with his friend on board an admiralty tug in the Thames Estuary outside Deptford and he experiences something odd that day. He hears a man wearing clothes from ancient times and talking about the execution of King Charles I:

I felt I was falling and falling into a black hole with no stars and no life and no helmet... Then a man's voice said, 'They are burying the King at Windsor today'. I snapped upright and looked full in the face of the man, who was staring out over the water. I knew him but from where? And his clothes ... nobody wears clothes like that anymore. (139)

The dead and alive persons easily meet with each other, but it is impossible to merge the two realms in today's western logic.

The readers also come across characters taken from fairy tales and the writer does not hesitate to mix them with ordinary characters in her fiction. For instance, Jordan is advised to ask Fortunata to *The Twelve Dancing Princesses*, which is known as a worldwide fairy tale told children: "He asked me if I knew the story of the Twelve Dancing Princesses. I said I had heard it, and he told me they were still living just down the road, though of course they were quite a bit older now" (44). His search to find them starts with these words. Thereafter he knocks on the door of the twelve dancing princesses to ask for his love, Fortunata. The princesses' stories are the same as the original worldwide story except the ending. Winterson used the characters as if it were very normal to have them in the story and makes them interact with the real characters deliberately: "I explained to the head now poking over the edge of the well that I had come to pay my respect to the Twelve Dancing Princesses. 'You can start here then.' said the head. "I am the eldest" (47). After listening to their love stories whose endings break the myth of 'They lived happily ever after' endings, he continues to his adventures.

The missing sister of the Twelve Dancing Princesses and whom Jordan is looking for is Fortunata. She is like a spider woman who "...flew from altar like a bird from a snare and walked a tightrope between the steeple of the church and the mast of a ship weighting anchor in the bay. She was so light that she could climb down a rope, cut it and tie it again in mid-air without plunging to her death. The winds supported her" (63). These sentences do not describe an ordinary mortal but

a woman with supernatural characteristics. The other supernatural feature about her is her age as she never gets old. She must be old as seen in her sister's claim:

We have not seen her for years and years, not since that day when we were dressed in red with our black hair unbraided. She must be old now, she must be stiff. Her body can only be a memory. The body she has will not be the body she had. (63)

On the contrary, when Jordan finds her she is very young. As if years did not pass: "Then I saw a young woman, darting in a figure of eight in between the lights and turning her hands through it as a potter turns clay on the wheel" (106).

Jordan's mother, the Dog-Woman, has extraordinary powers which are reminiscent of fairy tale character qualities for the readers. "I know that people are afraid of me, either for the yapping of my dogs or because I stand taller than any of them" (21). All her physical features and her power are too much and too extraordinary to be found in a logical world, but she still has the daily problems of the world like being far away from her son and missing him too much but cannot tell him (126). She is protective and loving like all other mothers: "Safe sound and protected. That's how I wanted Jordan to be. When he left me, I was proud and broken-hearted ..." (93). Besides she is sorry for not being loved or refused by a man whom she loved (34).

Last but not least Winterson uses a bizarre character that resembles a witch with eccentric appearance and behaviours that readers can find in fairy tales. Although the old woman lives with mortals she does not carry any characteristics of mortals. Everybody gets ill from plague and die or but she is never effected. She resembles a witch who can prepare magical soup to protect Jordan from the plague that covered all London or can foretell Jordan's life. When Jordan was a baby she can foretell the destiny "'He'll break your heart', said she, glad to have found a mischief so close to home. 'He'll make you love him and he'll make you love him and he'll break your heart'" (21).

As a conclusion, Winterson combines the ordinary and unusual characters in her story without creating any discomfort. Although this element does not create any discomfort over the readers, it still arouses the readers' attention that all the extraordinary characters are women. Zillah, the Dog-Woman, the old neighbour, the twelve dancing princesses, and Fortunata are all female, whereas the ordinary

characters like Jordan and Tradescant are male. The reason why she uses the fourth element in her story of female characters can be Winterson's wish to break the roles or stereotypical models drawn by men for women in the society. It can be said that she rebels against society and undermines its imposed values.

## **2.5. DISRUPTION OF TIME, SPACE, AND IDENTITY**

### **2.5.1. Disruption of Time, Space, and Identity in *The Gaze***

The final distinctive feature of magical realism is the disruption of time, space and identity. There is not any explicit concept of time, space or identity in magical realist novels as the readers are used to reading in other kinds of novels. The mundane characters, space and time metamorphose into magical elements in magical realist novels to stress that the odd one in the society is always confined to seem as 'the other'. To be accepted one should be in the borders of normality drawn by men in the society. The borders may even include physical appearance and behaviours.

The writer exemplifies this fifth element in her novel *The Gaze* to rebel against being the same as everybody in the society; in other words, she refuses to be within the pre-established borders. She tries to rebel disrupting the concept of accepted time, space, and identity. The first example for the fifth element in the story is about time. The writer disturbs the linear time in the story to show that linear time is common for the ordinary but for 'the other' there is no need to live in linear time. The characters are not ordinary, so why should they obey the ordinary time? The writer disturbs the linear time in many ways. For instance, the reader cannot reliably determine whether the events being described represent the narrator's actual experiences or just her hallucination since the reader cannot follow the linear time. The first story in the novel starts with the journey of an Obese Girl in the minibus listening to a child counting and then the story continues with different events but when the story is over, the reader finds out that the Obese Girl is still in the minibus and still sitting next to another woman and the girl counting as nothing happened. Thus, the reader hesitates: 'Did all the events really happen or were all the events were just dream?' Whatever it is, it is precisely that the time is not obvious since it is limited in a dream.



Another instance for disruption of time can be seen with B-C who demonstrates his disobedience towards the concept of straight linear time many times in the story. Conventional time is created for physically perfect dominant male culture. For this reason, B-C thinks that time should not be fixed like life of human beings. If each person differs from each other, how then time their experience could be the same:

The past, the present, the future... we line them all up and draw a straight line. That's why we believe that the past is gone and future hasn't arrived yet. And worst of all, we've obliged to walk through time along this straight line we've already drawn. But perhaps he's so drunk he can't see as far as the end of his nose.... Yes, if only time wouldn't come to its senses. If it would make lots of mistakes ... if it couldn't succeed at any place. It had made beforehand. If it couldn't make its own speed. (159)

Life is not easy for a person who differs from the accepted norms of society, so time does not move in straight linear time for physically odd people like the Obese Girl, B-C, Keramet Mumî Memiş Efendi or all the characters shown in the tent. B-C is a dwarf, Obese Girl as it is understood by her name is an overweight woman, Keramet Mumî Memiş Efendi is made of wax and looks odd with very tiny eyes that cannot show any expression. Thus, the readers feel marginalisation challenge.

Another reason why each character lives a different concept of time is that life is not the same for each person. Some are born lucky and live with love of their families, but for the others life starts with lack of love and patience. Thus, time moves differently for them unlike the one the reader is forced to believe. The definition found for the word 'time' in the dictionary of B-C verifies this conception. Thus, for some people time goes fast and for some people time goes slowly. Time does not move as we are forced to live as in the western conception because life is not the same for everybody. Sometimes it may be hard to live; for this reason, time passes more slowly than it does for the others. For instance, La Belle Annabelle resembles the sin of her mother becomes an outcast in her family and feels the lack of love and so time passes slowly for her:

Not all children grow up alike. Some children grow up diluting the dense thickness of time through the existence of those who love them sip by sip. Some drink the time without mixing it, gulp by gulp. The baby they called the beautiful baby was one of these, and before she emerges from infancy, she had her share of loneliness. (140)

The Obese Girl like La Belle Annabelle feels lack of her love of her family too. She is sent to her grandmother by her parents. Moreover, the very conservative and strict grandmother is inexperienced in raising a child. She does not fulfil the patient, forgiven and affectionate grandmother figure. Indeed, the grandmother resembles the view of the conservative society which limits the life especially the life of the women. “On the evening of the day the child put on the long-sleeved brown dress her paternal grandmother had bought for her.... The clothes in the suitcase could be worn neither outside nor inside. The child could understand why she shouldn’t wear shorts outside, but she couldn’t understand who she would be hiding from inside” (208).

Sometimes people perceive time differently because of bad experiences they have. The Obese Girl wants to forget the past harassment; for this reason, lives time differently. First, she feels freed from her former unhappiness when she is in Hayalifener Apartment and everything goes as usual but then something happens and she remembers the bad event and feels that everything could return to the past and time cannot extinguish happenings:

Which meant that everything could return to the past, and the old somehow doesn’t grow old. B-C was right. Time didn’t proceed in a straight line from yesterday, through today, and into the future. Sometimes it went forwards and sometimes it went backwards; sometimes it walked and sometimes it stood still; it staggers about drunkenly. (191)

Not only human beings live time differently but also the cats feel time differently. The writer aims to stress that all living things have right not to be stuck into limited borders drawn by society and every living thing deserves to have love:

Time passed differently on the top floor and the bottom floor. The people on the bottom floor kept their clocks by the people on the top floor, but they were always late. When they saw the cats, the habitants of the house began to believe that they could see time. On the top floor time was sleek and fat, and on the bottom floor time was weak and puny. Years passed in this manner. The cats grew older. The cat on the top floor soon became ungainly, the cat on the bottom floor aged slowly. Now time was proceeding backwards. (Shafak 79)

The sentences given above disrupt the ordinary concept of time of the western world since time passes same in the world, it is always 24 hours a day. However,

writer creates different times in the same place because every person accepts and lives the time differently.

The writer disrupts time by using Shamanism's reincarnation element in her novel to show the transformation of her characters like other magical realist novels. "[M]agical realist narrative resembles the performance of a shaman who constructs a persona and a discourse that imaginatively negotiate different realms, joining the everyday world of concrete reality and the world of the spirits" (Faris, *Ordinary Enchantment* 75). Furthermore, reincarnation as an element of Shamanism, allows a person to impersonate different identities without space borders. In this way, the concept of time and place and identity disappears and gives human beings freedom:

It was like a shaman's patched and threadbare cloak  
Reflected in in the broken pieces of mirror  
Time was without end, space was without limit  
So why did it end up squeezed into this form?  
He took his scissors and  
Cut up the story on which the name had been  
stamped; Scattering the pieces through time and  
space  
In another time  
Either much or later or very  
soon And in other place  
Very far away but also just here  
On the point of returning to the world  
It had immediately to cease existing. (40)

Keramet Mumî Memiş Efendi has always a chance to stop his life and start it in various forms when and wherever he wants:

Time was endless, and space was limitless. Surely one day he would melt again. In any event he would return to this world at another time, much later but very soon, and in another place very very far away but just here. (254)

Like the characters of the novel, the plot of *The Gaze* disrupts the linear time. There are years and names of the places in the beginning of each chapter; however, dates do not follow each other. The dates in the novel go back and forward; the reader cannot follow the story in a linear time. However, the writer does not bother to follow a linear time. Shafak tells the story of Sable-Girl but she emphasizes that there is no obligation to read the story, so she gives freedom to her readers to skip whenever they want: "it is two centuries ago in Siberia that the story

of the ugliest of the ugly, the strangest of creatures, the despicable, plague ridden Sable-Girl begins. But to tell the truth it is possible not to write it; and not to read it. You can jump ahead to the next one without tarrying here, the next number, that is any event they may not even have lived what happened” (46).

As Faris describes, the novel disrupts the concept of place by either using unrelated places or using reincarnation in places. The story takes place in various places such as Istanbul, Pera, Siberia, and France. The writer never aims to show meaningful explanations to choose these places. By disrupting the usual concept of space and time the writer aims to question the ordinary. The cherry-coloured tent also turns into Hayalifener apartment in the second story. In the first story in 1885 in Pera people climb up to hill to see the tent of Keramet Mumî Memiş Efendi:

The fountain on the hill was a turning point for them. When they arrived on the hill they had no choice but to come together. The fountain on the hill was a turning point for them. When they arrived at the fountain, they had no choice but come to together. The fountain put on airs; It sprayed out water with enthusiasm. (29)

In the second story the Obese-Girl climbs up to hill to reach her apartment in 1999 in Istanbul:

And right at the point where one hill finished and the other began, there was an old fountain that had dried up who knew how many years ago. It was completely covered with bills that had been posted on top of one another, and spray-painted slogans and darkened obscenities. But the fountain was still there, even if it was no longer functioning as a fountain. (181)

The description of both places is the same because the writer creates reincarnation in places.

Faris mentions disruption of identity as another element of magical realist fiction. The novel *The Gaze* fulfils this element with some examples. The writer disrupts the identity in two ways. She either does not give her characters the names of the western world and names them as the ‘Obese girl’ or ‘B-C’ or ‘Sable-Girl’, which are specific names given according to their abilities or creates characters with peculiarities that cannot exist in western logic. For instance, Sable-Girl is half human and half animal. Her ancestor is a tribe member who had tried to be a Shaman leader by uniting his soul with a sable, but unfortunately the spiritual ceremony is hindered

by the hunters; thus, he could not be Shaman leader but become half man half animal creature. The second instance, Keramet Mumî Memiş Efendi has unusual characteristics like being born as wax. “And when she determined that the smell wafting from the baby was definitely that of wax, she became frightened. Because a drop of wax stays where it flows and hardens where it stays as soon as it is far from the source of heat” (35). This example shows that the baby is not a mundane being even though his aunt seems to accept it as if it happens all the time. His difference from the others is not only physical but also his supernatural abilities like tasting the sweet without eating it. “Keramet Mumî Memiş Efendi drew himself up very close to the woman. He felt an urge to see the woman’s lips, and to kiss them, but before he’d even finished thinking this, he tasted a sweetness in his mouth” (41). In addition, he is born like a wax and being wax and he can melt and come to life again and again. Keramet Mumî Memiş Efendi comes to the world years and years later, in the form of B-C identity. B-C is described as:

There was a strange lack of lustre in his eyes that wasn’t immediately apparent at first glance, but which at certain times became evident. Indeed sometimes his face didn’t say anything; it remained completely without feeling or expression; as if they were somehow free of emotion, as if standing there in transparent calm, he gazed at the world with indifference. (235)

In another story Keramet Mumî Memiş Efendi’s eyes again described as follows: “The very eyes that were the cause of his strangeness and unhappiness, those two narrow slits that had been drawn on his face, that is, the eyes that had ever opened... (43). Thus, the writer does not only create reincarnation with the places but also with the characters in order to resist.

The concept of identity is also disturbed by way creating characters that readers cannot be sure if they existed or not. At the end of the story the readers learn that Sable-Girl and La Belle Annabelle have never existed. The readers come across with the lines that support the idea that both characters have not existed in the story. Timofei changes his mind and he does not open the box: But because he didn’t open the box, nothing like this happened. The Sable-Girl was never born. There was never anyone like that he never existed” (253). The same thing happens with the La Belle Annabelle. Madame suddenly quits and lets the box remain in the attic: “But because the box had never been opened, nothing like this happened. La Belle Annabelle was never born. There was never such a person” (251). The writer

changes the story as she feels comfortable and leaves the reader in doubt.

When everything is taken into consideration *The Gaze* is not written in a traditional novel style that the readers are used to reading. For this reason, the novel does not follow linear time or relevant space. Moreover, the writer creates characters without either names or with odd characteristics or appearances. She uses reincarnation in order to create freedom to transform the places and characters. She also creates characters and then makes them disappear to disrupt the concept of identity. At the end of the novel she combines all events, characters and places. With all the examples given above, the novel *The Gaze* fulfils the characteristic of magical realist fiction's fifth element listed by Faris.

### **2.5.2. Disruption of Time, Space, and Identity in *Sexing the Cherry***

Matter, that thing the most solid and the well-known, which you are holding in your hands and which makes up your body, is now known to be mostly empty space. Empty space and points of light. What does this say about the reality of the world? (Winterson vi)

The fifth in the list of Faris' criteria for magical realist fiction is the disruption of received ideas about time, space and identity. "Winterson is a writer who aims to transgress the boundaries of time and space, and narrate what it is to be a human being living within the bounds of a patriarchal, traditional and polarised culture" (Sönmez and Kılıç X). The reader is confronted with multiple realities, and the uncertainties that she/he has accepted without questioning before. In *Sexing the Cherry* time, space and identity are all defined differently from those western logic accepts and Jordan defines it as:

Time has no meaning, space and place have no meaning, on this journey. All times can be inhabited all places visited. In a single day the mind can make a millpond of the oceans. Some people who have never crossed the land they were born have travelled all over the world. The journey is not linear, it is always back and forth, denying the calendar, the wrinkles and lines of the body. The self is not contained in any moment or any place, but it is only in the intersection of moment and the place that self might disappears at once. (89)

Time is used differently from what the readers are used to seeing in other fictions; generally, stories start from a specific time and go either forward or backward but

not in both directions. However, in the novel called *Sexing the Cherry*, the plot moves backward and forward with dual characters transforming from 17<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> century and vice versa:

Time 2: ... she is too fat, too tall. She walks home along the river bank to a council flat in Upper Thames street. The traffic deafens her. She climbs up the steps at Waterloo Bridge to look at St Paul's glinting in the evening... She can't hear the traffic any more, the roar of dogs is deafening... she can see her hut ... Jordan will be waiting for her. (92)

The quotation above epitomizes shifting characters and century since the environmentalist woman suddenly turns into the Dog-Woman. With this characteristic, the readers can witness King Charles' trial in the 17<sup>th</sup> century and the environmental problems of the 20<sup>th</sup> century which are the important issues of their time: "The trial lasted seven days, and it was no trial but a means to an execution" (75). When the character goes forward to be the environmentalist, this time she fights against big companies to protect the world:

First Stop: the World Bank.  
... Men in suits are discussing how to deal with the problem of the Third World. They want to build dams, clear the rain forests, finance huge Coca-Cola plants and exploit the rubber potential. (140)

At this point readers come across the environmentalist who is the new form of the Dog-Woman. The century changes so she fights with technology that destroys the world instead of fighting with Puritans.

Jordan's journeys to exotic places and his relations with fairy tale characters also engender this timeless structure. Winterson claims that the concept of time is created by western culture. Contrary to western culture, others like Hopi tribe do not bother with 'time' and for this reason time is not defined in their language: "The Hopi, an Indian tribe, have a language as sophisticated as ours, but no tenses for past, present and the future. The division does not exist. What does this say about time? (1). From this quotation it can be seen that, if the sentences do not include tenses like the Hopi's language, human beings will feel free to shift in time and places. Winterson endorses her thoughts about time in one of the chapters named 'The Nature of Time'. For her there are two types of time; the first one is the time established by western logic like hours and seasons, and the other one is the time we experience in our minds (101). With this way of thinking she breaks down all

theories about earth and time that is thought by western logic:

The future and the present and the past exist only in our minds, and from a distance the borders of each shrink and fade like the borders of hostile countries seen from a floating city in the sky. The river runs from one country to another without stopping. And even the most solid of things and the most real, the best-loved and the well-known, are only hand-shadows on the wall. Empty space and points of light. (169)

Thus, Winterson claims in her novel that there are some lies that people tell, that there is not one right or one wrong in the universe, and that the truths and wrongs are established by human beings. She lists the lies told and believed by human beings:

Lies 1: There is only the present and nothing to

remember. Lies 2: Time is a straight line

Lies 3: The difference between the past and the future is that one has happened while the other has not.

Lies 4: We can only be in one place at a time. (92)

The lies listed above are shown in the novel with some examples; for instance, Jordan can be in more than one place at the same time. However, Jordan does not make physical journeys that the readers are familiar with. Thus, Jordan stresses that time, space and identities can change and there is not any obligation that it has to be physical. Moreover, time does not move in a straight line since dual characters shift back and forth. With King Charles, the readers learn that there is not only present and there is also past and will be future, but they do not have to be in a straight line:

Lies Memory 1: The scene I have just described to you may lie in the future or the past. Either I have found Fortunata or I will find her. I cannot be sure. Either I am remembering her or I am still imagining her. But she is somewhere in the grind of time, a co-ordinate, as I am. (106)

Also, the writer does not hesitate to mix fairy tale characters with her own characters, and this action disrupts time. For example, the story characters of The Twelve Dancing Princesses interact with Jordan by telling their stories with a new perspective to Jordan. In addition, she does not hesitate to question the scientific facts because she hates being on the borders of pre-established rules since it destroys the imagination and free thinking. Fortunata turns into a light while she is dancing, in other words, she changes form which is against the rules of science:



Then I saw a young woman, darting in a figure of eight in between the lighted and turning her hands through it as a potter turns clay on the Wheel. At last she stood back, and one by one I watched the light form into a head and arms and legs. Slower and slower, the sound dying with the light, until on the floor were ten women, their shoes in holes, their bodies wet with sweat. (106)

Like time, Winterson's employment of space also disrupts conventional thoughts in various ways. The Dog-Woman raises dogs for races and never leaves London. With her giant body, she is the authority who sits in the centre and waits for Jordan and Tradescant to turn back to her. Despite the Dog-Woman, Jordan and Tradescant travel all around the world and in that point Winterson disrupts the concept of space with Jordan's journeys to bizarre places. Jordan's journeys disrupt the concept of space since his journeys either carry utopic elements or look like his hallucination that readers hesitate to believe in. He admits that he can be in various places at the same time. In other words, he accepts that the journeys do not have to be physical which is not acceptable in science: "To escape from the weight of the world, I leave my body where it is, in conversation or at dinner, and walk through a series of winding streets to a house standing back from the road" (11). Jordan escapes from burdens in his own way, in this journey, he even experiences flying in a balloon of words that cover the city. "I once accompanied a cleaner in a balloon and was amazed to hear, as the sights of the city dropped away, a faint murmuring like bees" (12). The place that he depicts does not follow the ordinary idea of a place in western logic but still Winterson's realistic depiction creates acceptance in readers' minds. Indeed, she aims to criticize science that obstructs imagination in human minds with what is possible and what is impossible. She questions whether we can be at two places at the same time. She claims that other than this way of thinking life becomes mundane as we try to maintain in the name of modern life.

Jordan's journeys to bizarre places put readers in a dilemma since readers cannot decide whether these are real places or just the hallucinations of Jordan's. While Jordan aims to find precious items in exotic places and introduces them to the King of England, he is looking for Fortunata whom he loves. If he accomplishes what he aims to in these journeys, he will be as strong as his mother and be a hero like Tradescant. In other words, he will actualize himself. Thus, he starts sailing with Tradescant and visits many locations and in each of the places readers come

across bizarre things. One of the bizarre places is a town that has moving houses all the time; nothing is stable in this town: “There is a town I sometimes dream about; whose inhabitants are so cunning that to escape the insistence of creditors they knock down their houses in a single night and rebuild them elsewhere” (43). Also, the residents of the city support Winterson’s idea that human beings can be in two places simultaneously and resist science which rejects this idea: “In the city the inhabitants have reconciled two discordant desires: to remain in one place and to leave it behind for ever” (44). The second place which Jordan visits is a city of words, where he is invited to dinner in one of the houses that does not have any floors and people must walk on ropes to pass from one room to another:

The furniture of the house is suspended on racks from the ceiling; the dining table supported by great chains, each link six inches thick. To dine here is a great curiosity, for the visitor must sit in a gilded chair and allow himself to be winched up to join his place setting. (15)

Winterson describes a room that is very unusual to find in a conventional house. The house members and all items in the house seem to be against gravity. While the story continues, Jordan visits the twelve dancing princesses and listens to their story in which he learns that the room they used to sleep in and used to go for dancing also carry irreducible elements: “We all slept in the same room, my sisters and I, and that room was narrower than a new river and longer than the beard of the prophet. From this room, every night, we flew to a silver city where no one ate or drank” (48). Not only the room in which they sleep but also the silver city that they visited is bizarre because the silver city does not have gravity either:

The city, being freed from the laws of gravity, began to drift upwards for some 200 miles, until it was out of the earth’s atmosphere. It lay for a while above Africa and then began to circle the earth at leisure, never in one place for long. (111)

The third place is the city where all romantic items are forbidden because the entire population is wiped out by love three times. As a result, with the intercourse of a monk and a whore, they reproduce the city many times and forbid love and all the items that remind them of love in the city (82). Therefore, the city is extinct and reproduced by two persons. It is love which separates us from other living things that creates danger in the eyes of readers, but at the same time readers can notice that without love life would be dull and just a fertility factory only to continue the

generation.

While all these places are against the law of physics and creates perplexity in the minds of readers, the details that the writer uses in the story and the painting that Nicholas Jordan sees in the 20<sup>th</sup> century that depicts the Gardener of the Royal presenting a pineapple to the King resembles the story that Jordan tells that makes the reader accept the disruption of conventional place concept in the story (129).

Winterson also disrupts the identity norms as a characteristic of magical realist fiction in various ways. Firstly, at the beginning of each chapter Winterson uses fruit icons like pineapple, banana, pineapple in halves and banana in halves that give a clue that characters change. The banana creates the image of the phallus and the pineapple creates the image of femininity for the readers. However, the writer likes to use them as subversively. The Dog-Woman is described under the banana icon with her giant appearance (32). The writer never portrays her with feminine details but still she has female senses like motherhood to Jordan: “Safe, sound and protected. That’s how I wanted Jordan to be. When he left me, I was proud and broken hearted, but he came from the water and I knew the water would claim him again” (93). However, she is not extroverted person, so although she loves she is shy to show her love towards her son: “I wanted to tell him things, to tell him I loved him and how much I’d miss him, but thirteen years of words were fighting in my throat and I couldn’t get any of them out” (126). Both sentences describe her typical motherly feelings towards her child. Once more, contrary to her exaggerated power, because of which people are afraid to approach her, she tries to be neat and kind in her own style as much as she can on special occasions. For instance, she falls in love and as a consequence of feminine instincts she wants to look beautiful to someone of the opposite sex: “I used to get up an hour early and comb, which normally I would do at Christmas-time in honour of Saviour. I decked myself in my best clothes like a bullock at a fair, but none of this made him notice me and I felt my heart shrivel to the size of a pea (34). She also tries to be neat in the King’s trial whom she respects: “I was wearing my best dress, the one with a wide skirt that would serve as a sail for some war-torn hip, and a bit of fancy lace at the neck” (69). She is in love and as human instinct she wants to look beautiful to someone opposite of the sex. The quotation given below details her preparing for her son who

was away for a long time:

Whilst Jordan was at the Crown of Thorns, dressing himself to present his pineapple to the King, I busied myself as a good woman should, cleaning the hut and brushing down dogs. He had not seen his home for so long, I wanted him to be surprised for I have risen in the world myself these last years. (157)

She also does not hesitate to criticize rude people like her neighbour whom she expected to be kind as a female:

She hardly moves but her hands are never still, scratching her head and her groin and darting out to snatch food and ram it square into her mouth. I'm not one for a knife and spoon myself, but I do know how to eat in company. I know how to use my bread as a plate and dollop the stew on it without spilling the lot down my dress. (7)

The Dog-Woman criticizes rude people as if she lives in an elegant place with elegant environment.

The pineapple icon is used for Jordan who is too sensitive and wants to be powerful like his mother. He does not fulfil social roles expected of him like being a husband, a father for someone and he is not brave like his mother who fights against Puritans to save the King. For this reason, while he is looking for his Fortunata, he is searching for his identity and wants to fulfil his deficiencies with utopic journeys:

Running away from uncertainty and confusion but most of all running away from myself. I thought I might become someone else in time, grafted on to something better and stronger. And then I saw that running away was running towards. An effort to catch up with my fleet-footed self, living another life in a different way. (89)

At last he becomes the hero and besides the other valuable items, he brings a pineapple to England (120). All instances support Lozana who claims that "the banana and pineapple enter physically into the order of signifiers taking on a visible presence in the double discourse, double voice" (ed. Makinen 95). Winterson aims to be against the absolute rules that divide genders since she stresses this idea many times in her fiction. A similar instance is seen in the story when Jordan goes to prostitutes and learns about women's inner world and he also learns that there are many people who want to change their burdens: "I have met a number of people

who, anxious to be free of the burdens of their gender, have dressed themselves men as women and women as men” (29).

Another thing in the novel that disrupts identity is the employment of dual characters. The Dog-Woman and Jordan are the 17<sup>th</sup> century versions of the ecologist and Nicholas Jordan who are living in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. They illustrate how identities transform into a new form:

The weight persisted in my mind. I had an alter ego who was huge and powerful, a woman whose only morality was her own and whose loyalties were fierce and few. She was my patron saint, the one I called on when I felt myself dwindling away through cracks in the floor slowly fading in the street. (144)

The environmentalist woman feels like the Dog-Woman. She feels huge and powerful. The Dog-Woman, instead of being obedient, gentle and being a wife of someone, fights against Puritans who killed King Charles and have bigoted and narrow morality. The ecologist woman is also single and works in places which are suitable for men: “As a chemist with a good degree, and as an attractive woman whom men like to work with, I could have taught in a university...” (144). She is not as huge as the Dog-Woman but still feels that way and as if she is huge like the Dog-Woman she fights against men who contaminate the world with guns and wars and money. “I force all the fat ones to go on a die, and all the men line up for compulsory training in feminism and ecology. Then they start on the food surpluses, backing it with their own hands distributing it in a great human chain of what used to be power and is now co-operation” (141). The other thing they have in common is that neither has a name; one is called the ecologist the other one is called the Dog-Woman. The Dog-Woman introduces herself in the beginning of the novel with this sentence: “I had a name but I have forgotten it” (3). Also, the environmentalist woman is never mentioned with a name so the readers know her as environmentalist woman. Winterson seems to have created them nameless deliberately because they are not stereotypical women; they are unmarried, with no babies that they gave birth to. Thus, they have not accomplished their traditional roles in the society.

To conclude, Winterson uses the fifth element in her novel in various ways to disrupt the ossified prejudices of the society since the things that the human beings know may not be always accurate, the readers should question everything

and always be ready to accept other ways of thinking. As a result, she disrupts time, space and identity to show the world other perspectives. Time does not move on a straight line, for it can shift back and forth, and different characters can come together regardless of what century they live in. Space is not in the traditional form, as seen in Jordan's visits to bizarre places which have houses that do not have floors or cities that have moving houses. Last but not least, dual characters living in two different centuries and characters breaking gender stereotypes disrupt identity politics.

## **2.6. SECONDARY ELEMENTS IN *SEXING THE CHERRY* AND *THE GAZE***

After listing five fundamental characteristics of magical realism, Faris lists some secondary elements that can be found in magical realist fiction in his article "Scheherazade's Children". The first one is metafictional dimensions. With this characteristic the text provides commentaries on themselves. The second one is the verbal magic where metaphors are treated as reality. The magic happens when a metaphor is made real. As a third characteristic is that phenomenological states may include primitive or childless that seem to dislocate our initial perceptions/understandings. Wonders are recounted without comment and accepted as a child would accept it. Another characteristic is the repetitions. Repetitions as a narrative principle, in conjunction with mirrors used symbolically or structurally creates the magic part in the texts. The fifth characteristic is the metamorphoses. Time, place even characters may metamorphose. Another characteristic is taking an antibureaucratic position. Magic often is used against the established order. The seventh characteristic is the ancient systems of belief and local lore that often underlie the text. Next one is the collective symbols and myth rather than individual haunt the work. The magic cannot usually be explained away as individual or even as collective hallucination or invention. The last characteristic is that fiction in form and language often embraces the carnivalesque.

Both of the novels analysed in this thesis carry the sixth of the secondary elements taken from Faris' list. This element emphasizes that "[m]any of these texts take a position that is antibureaucratic, and so they often use their magic against the established social order" (179). Although Winterson and Shafak are from different

parts of the world, they are both disturbed by the inequality between men and women and preestablished rules for women and for this reason, they bring this issue to the forefront in their magical realist novels.

Both writers criticize the idea that women should be beautiful and there is no need for them to have other features or abilities. The issue of beauty causes negative effects like jealousy and unhappiness over women especially when they compare themselves with other women since beauty is the only treasury for them to exist in society. Keramet Mumî Keşke Memiş Efendi in *The Gaze* benefits from this idea by displaying ugly women to a female audience and beautiful women to a male audience in his circus. La Belle Annabelle is very beautiful but has no talent and it is enough for men: “Keramet Mumî Keşke Memiş Efendi didn’t want her to dance or sing either. He wanted nothing more than her being on the stage, more accurately, it was enough simply for her to be seen” (151). Like Shafak, Winterson criticizes that women should only be beautiful and women do not have to be talented and adds the story of the goddess in her novel. For instance, Orion hears of the fame of the goddess Artemis who wants to be independent like men and not to marry and have children:

She had envied men their long-legged freedom to roam the world and return full of glory to wives who only waited. She knew about the heroes and the home-makers, the great division that made life possible without rejecting it she has simply hoped to take on the freedoms of the other side, but what if she travelled the world and the seven seas like a hero? Would she find something different or the old things in different disguises? (Winterson 152)

Winterson with her character Artemis tries to subvert the borders of society’s stereotypes thereby she chooses to be alone until Orion disturbs her. Why cannot a woman be free and travel the world and come home as a hero like a man? Artemis wants to be free; however, one day her lonely life is disturbed by Orion who visits her. Orion does not let her live a life of her dreams. She talks but he is not interested in listening to her. His absolute decision is to marry her, and he does not need to ask Artemis to marry: “He didn’t want her to talk, he knew about her already, he’d been looking for her, she was a curiosity; he was famous. What a marriage” (153). When Artemis resists Orion, she is raped by him since she has no right to reject men. However, Winterson showed her reaction to the event by letting

Artemis get her revenge by killing him with a scorpion. Finally, she becomes independent as she wants.

Both writers also criticize the idea that marriage is necessary and a happy ending for women and for this reason they deal with this issue in their stories. In Shafak's novel *The Obese Girl* she sees a woman shouting and dancing and her relatives are trying to stop her. Her problem is that she is jilted by her husband and wants to divorce, but the woman is criticized for her idea in the society since she is a woman and cannot take care of herself, so she should accept the situation and sit quietly at home and wait for her husband. Her brother in love reflects the ideas of the society and says:

This is my sister-in-law, my sister-in-law, she left her house and has been staying with us since last summer insisting she wants to get divorced, she has three children as big as herself as if her it will be easy to be divorced, these women have never provided for a household, they've always been looked after by their husbands, they think it's easy to make it to end of the month. (Shafak 15)

These sentences stress that women are always shown as disabled who need men's care. However, in Winterson's novel *The Twelve Dancing Princesses* the twelve dancing princesses resist the idea that marriage equals happiness. The twelve dancing princesses escape and dance till morning and when their secret is found by one of the princes, they are obliged to marry: "He has eleven brothers and we were all given in marriage, one to each brother, and says lived happily ever after. We did, but not with our husbands" (48). None of them was happy because their husbands did not behave respectfully towards them. One of them complains about her marriage:

She had not minded her husband much more than any wife does until he had tried to stop her hobby. 'He built a bonfire and burned the body of a saint. The saint was very old and wrapped in cloth. I liked him about the house; he added something.' After that she had wrapped her own husband in cloth and gone on wrapping the stale bandages round and round until she reached his nose. She had a moment's regret, and continued. (47)

The other princesses' marriages are as bad as their sister's. She is her husband's possession: "Day by day I felt myself disappearing. For my husband I was no longer a reality, I was one of the things around him. I was the fence which needed to be replaced" (60). But she does not submit to stay with her husband:



I could stay and be unhappy and humiliated.  
I could leave and be unhappy and dignified.  
I could beg him to touch me again.  
I could live in hope and die of bitterness. (61)

She leaves the house because she respects herself. Winterson again revolts against the society with her character. The twelfth dancing princess accomplishes her escape before the wedding and she does not marry like her sisters. She loves dancing and travels all around until she finds a place on an island. She opens a dancing school and maintains her life, but when Jordan finds her, he learns that for a long time she has waited for someone to take her and live happily ever after. Unfortunately, years pass, and nobody come and finally she finds out that she is enough for herself. Jordan quotes her ideas: “She told me that for years she has lived in hope of being rescued; of belonging to someone else, of dancing together. And then she had learned to dance alone, for its own sake and for hers” (Winterson 114). Jordan respects her ideas and although Jordan’s only aim was to find her, he leaves her alone and turns back to London without her. Winterson’s character awakens with the reality that there is not an obligation for women to marry to survive and to be happy. All the princesses tell their own stories which do not end as ‘They got married-and-lived-happily ever after’ but end as ‘She lived happily ever after’.

Winterson criticizes the idea that women should be patient and obedient in order to be rewarded at the end. For example, in a popular fairy tale a princess is obliged to kiss the frog and suddenly the frog turns into very handsome prince. The formula is drawn very simply: when women obey men, they are rewarded. However, this time Winterson changes the myth to the exact the opposite and tries to break the formula with Princess’ words: “My own husband? Oh well, the first time I kissed him turned into a frog. There he is, just by your foot. His name is Anton” (32).

Both writers are against the idea that chores are regarded as a woman’s duty, which is imposed by the society. Moreover, women are generally praised for their talent in chores. For instance, in the novel *The Gaze*, the woman who is cheated on by her husband and who lives with her sister for a while is praised by her brother-in-

law because of her excellent cooking. “No one would have made spinach pastry like she did ... she could fit nine dumplings onto a spoon... would how rolled them as thin as a pencil... her grape-leaf dolma” (11). On the other hand, a man is not expected to do any chores even if he lives alone. A man cannot look after himself and either his mother or his wife should take care of him. The neighbours of the B-C always bring food to him because he does not have a wife: “She examined B-C from head to toe, and on learning he was a bachelor, asked how he was going to look after himself (Shafak 155). After this dialogue with the neighbour and the B-C, the neighbours take turns to bring some food every day. The same belief is accepted for working women. Working women are defective since they are not good housewives. The neighbours also do not stop bringing food to B-C after they see him with the Obese Girl because she works: “But later after seeing me coming and going to work and labelling me a ‘working woman’ and after noticing that I didn’t cook at home on weekends, ..... they started to send even more food than they had before” (Shafak 155). Winterson and Shafak stress that there is a misconception that women should be good cleaners and good cooks in the society:

..... the irritable next-door neighbour had come to complain about the noise we made and threatened to make a complaint to our landlord. As soon as the women entered the house and carefully examined how messy it was, she couldn’t keep herself from making a comment to me. (Shafak 161)

One of the stories told by the dancing twelve princesses is another example of chores that are imposed on women. In this one, the seventh princess refuses to cook for her voracious husband albeit the imposed roles given by the society forcing them and she refuses the role and poisons him and gets her freedom:

He swelled out of the house, cracking the roof, and within a few moments had exploded. Out of his belly came a herd of cattle and a fleet of pigs, all blinking in the light and covered in milk. He had always complained about his digestion I rounded them up and set off to find my sisters. I prefer farming to cooking. (Winterson 57)

The roles given to women are established by the society and according to this, women can only work with their husbands’ permission; otherwise, they should sit at home and take care of the children. The readers learn the idea of the taxi driver about ‘working women’ in the novel: “the taxi driver ...young hunt... newly married allowed his wife... to work... until they had children praised for being

progressive...” (Shafak 13). Although the sentence given above seems favourable, it stills disturbs the freedom of the women since men give the decision on behalf of their wives. However, the other driver does not let his wife work and young taxi driver criticizes him and says: “he won’t allow his wife to work even if he did who would hire someone like her ... She gave birth to five children one after the other...” (Shafak 13). She cannot work but looks after many children because it is her basic duty. If a woman is single then she does not need to get permission, but this time she will be encouraged on to work at suitable jobs for women. The environmentalist reflects the ideas about the society: “As a chemist with a good degree, and as an attractive woman whom men like to work with, I could have taught in a university or got” (Winterson 144). For this reason, the environmentalist woman is criticized for not working at places which are suitable for women but for doing a man’s job especially by her father. The other deficiency in women’s life is that unlike men women cannot be the heroine in the films just as they cannot be in real life. Jacks asserts that women are seen as singers or waitress in the films as it is expected in real life, but this idea can change:

My father watches space films. They’re different: they’re the only area of undiminished hope. They’re happy and they have women in them who are sometime scientists rather than singers or waitresses. Sometimes the women get to be heroes too, though this is still not as popular. (Winterson 138)

Winterson implies that women are always nameless and they vanish without any trace or being accepted as heroines. Although the women working in the brothel help the Dog-Woman and her friends punish the Puritans, nobody remembers them: “The brothel is gone now, my friend dead from disease and other sisters vanished the way women do” (121).

Although Shamans are regarded as primitive, their way of thinking is more developed than western thinking since pre-established rules and prejudices about women are not valid in their society. They regard the talent but not the biological sex in every subject. When Shamans are choosing their leader, they only listen to their hearts. The biological sex of their leader is not an important issue, but the important thing is their talent and for this reason the brother is left alone to test himself:

The elders thought that the migrating soul of the shaman might take its place in her brother. The look in the boy's eyes was like that of a sable familiar with death. They were as black as a sable's eyes. Looking deeply into his pupils, it was clear that he could be the new shaman. But no one knew yet if he was the right person. In order to know it was necessary to test him. (Shafak 55)

Both writers try to show a distorted sense of equality between women and men. These writers feel uncomfortable with the preestablished rules created for women. Although they show their discomfort, neither of the writers hates men but they both demand equal rights and want to share the same roles in the society as environmentalist woman tells her feelings about men: "I don't hate men, I just wish they'd try harder. They all want to be heroes and all we want is for them to stay at home and help with the housework and the kids. That's not the kind of heroism they enjoy" (Winterson 147). As a result, both writers take a position that is antibureaucratic and show their reaction

## CONCLUSION

It is a fact that Franz Roh is the starting point of magical realism in painting. However, the key figures in the development of the term in literature are the Italian writer Massimo Bontempelli from the 1920s and 1930s, the mid-twentieth-century Latin American literary critic Angel Flores, the mid-twentieth-century Cuban writer Alejo Carpentier, and the late twentieth-century Latin American novelist Gabriel García Márquez (Bowers 7). It is a “mode suited to exploring and transgressing boundaries, whether the boundaries are ontological, political, geographical or generic” (Zamora and Farris 5). The consensus is that magical realism does not belong to one country. “It has also been used as a common narrative mode for fictions written from the perspective of politically or culturally disempowered indigenous people such as Native Americans or women writing from a feminist perspective or those whose lives incorporate different cultural beliefs and practices from those dominant in their country of residence...” (Bowers 32). This thesis is an attempt to analyse magical realist elements in two contemporary women writers who touch upon women issues. Although Winterson and Shafak are from different parts of the world, they are both disturbed by the inequality between men and women, and the preestablished rules for women and for this reason, they bring this issue to the forefront in their magical realist novels. This shows that the issues related to women are universal.

Jeanette Winterson makes use of these magic realist elements in her novel *Sexing the Cherry*, which she wrote in 1989 to convey her message to the reader. While embellishing her novel with “The Twelve Dancing Princesses” fairy tale and physically extraordinary characters, she does not create a completely fantastic world but a real world in which there are some ordinary people who have been labelled as bizarre. She also changes the fairy tale myth taught for centuries to girls in order to make them fit male desires.

Shafak applies magic realist techniques in her novel *The Gaze*, which she wrote in 2000, two stories rolled into one. Each story takes place in a different place and in a different era. Although the two stories seem unrelated, they have meaningful links. One of the stories is about Keramet Mumî Keşke Memiş Efendi, and the other one is about an Obese Girl and a dwarf. All of the characters in both of the stories are odd because of their physical appearance.

If these Magical realist fictions provide a means to attack the dominant culture, what are the common characteristics that make the fiction magical realist? Wendy B. Faris in his article “Scheherazade’s Children: Magical Realism and Postmodern Fiction” lists five primary characteristics of magical realist fiction. The irreducible element is the first characteristic of magical realist fiction. The second characteristic of magical realism is the detailed description which creates the realism part in the story. The third element is unsettling doubts. The reader must hesitate in magical realist fiction before categorizing the irreducible element as irreducible, and the reader’s doubt is “between understanding an event as character’s hallucination or as a miracle” (Faris, “Scheherazade’s Children” 171). As Faris lists, the fourth element is merging realms. In magical realist narrative, there are realms or worlds. The writer creates these double-sided mirrors in many ways, but mostly he/she connects the dead or ghosts with the living beings. Sometimes the writer uses different physical and discursive worlds to enable the element of the merging realms. The last characteristic of magical realism is the disruption of time, space, and identity. Magical realist fiction disturbs the received ideas about time, space, and identity. After listing five fundamental characteristics of magical realist fiction, Faris lists secondary features of magical realist fiction.

The essential characteristic of magical realist fiction is the irreducible element and Shafak fulfils this element in her novel *The Gaze* with many examples aiming to highlight the sexual discrimination in society. The protagonist, Keramet Mumî Keşke Memiş Efendi, is the irreducible element all on his own in the story. As Faris stresses, the irreducible element neither creates astonishment nor melts in the text (*Ordinary Enchantments* 8). Although Keramet Mumî Keşke Memiş Efendi’s abnormalities are seen by the women who are in the house, the event does not shock anybody as Faris claims. When he is born, everybody notices that

something is wrong with him since his face is transparent. The other irreducible elements are created by different characters who are shown in Keramet Mumî Keşke Memiş Efendi's circus. The characters do not have any talent but have extraordinary appearances. Although their weird appearance can only be seen in science fiction stories, neither the audience in the circus nor the readers question the impossibility as they suit the stories perfectly. The importance of giving birth to a son, accepted beauty concept for women in a society or being a leader according to biological sex, are criticized through characterization alongside with used by irreducible element in the story.

The irreducible element in *Sexing the Cherry* can be seen with one of the characters called the Dog-Woman who is different from the stereotypical woman image since she is exaggeratedly huge and strong which cannot be seen in an ordinary woman. Winterson, like Shafak, aims to break the prejudices on the beauty concept of women by using irreducible element. Winterson also uses irreducible element with the story of the twelve dancing princesses. Although they are fairy tale characters, they are integrated into the story of Winterson as if it is something ordinary. Moreover, they are different from the original story since they all resist the dominant male hegemony and idea and the supporting idea that marriage is the sole happiness for women. Another irreducible element is found in Jordan's journey, which the readers cannot decide whether it is real or not.

Both Shafak and Winterson use the second element of a phenomenal world in their novels. Shafak uses detailed descriptions in order to bring attention to the stereotypical roles and stereotypical beauty concept of women. In the novel *The Gaze*, Keramet Mumî Keşke Memiş Efendi's birth and all the characters shown in his tent are described in detail. Furthermore, in the first narration, Shafak continues to use detailed descriptions of the Obese Girl in many stances. The past of the Obese Girl hurts her since she was sexually harassed when she was just a little girl. Thus, her overeating starts with this event. To forget, she eats, but as she eats, she gets fat, and this makes her unhappy. Her weight is a kind of a shield to protect herself from dangers.

In *Sexing the Cherry*, the detailed descriptions are used in Jordan's journeys. Winterson not only creates a phenomenal world with the place but she also creates

phenomenal characters in the novel. For instance, the old lady who is the neighbour of the Dog-Woman is a good example of a phenomenal character since the description of the old lady does not create a stereotypical woman image, but creates a peculiar person that can be only seen in fairy tales, so Winterson fulfils the second element in magical realist novels. Although the detailed description creates a realistic atmosphere in the story, the intriguing details immediately make the story depart from a realistic form. Faris also indicates in his article “Scheherazade’s Children” that “... in many cases, in magical realist fiction, we witness an idiosyncratic recreation of historical events, but events grounded firmly in historical realities” (170). As Faris mentions, Winterson touches upon history in her novel *Sexing the Cherry* referring to British history to show that history is not objective, but has many perspectives depending on how you see and interpret it. In other words, the events mentioned in *Sexing the Cherry* are not told from a generalist and totalitarian perspective but from a marginal narrator’s perspective. However, this characteristic is not seen in the novel *The Gaze*.

In Shafak’s novel, *The Gaze*, there are many events in the story that make the reader doubt whether they are hallucination, dream or real. Shafak fulfils the third element unsettling doubts of magical realist fiction with four stances. The story starts with the dream and ends when she wakes up and the reader can never be sure whether all the things read were part of her dream or not. In the second story of Keramet Mumî Memiş Efendi there are two characters that readers cannot be sure whether they existed. One of them is La Belle Annabelle and the other is the Sable Girl; their stories are told with many versions which makes the reader doubt. While in all the examples the readers cannot determine which event is a hallucination or fact, the writer never discomforts or shocks her readers. Also, the writer never tells her readers that there are doubts in the story, but creates them as if they are common features of life. Thus, she differs from other fantastic novel writers. In fact, Shafak wants to emphasize that truths we know may be false and the falsities we know may be true in life.

In some parts of *Sexing the Cherry*, the reader faces perplexing events beyond logic with its bewildering characters such as the Dog-Woman, Jordan, Fortunata and the Neighbour of the Dog-Woman as well as with the mystifying



journeys of Jordan. The next character Fortunata, the lover of Jordan, is full of doubts because the readers cannot be sure if she exists or not. Winterson employs the third element of Faris's framework to create questions in the minds of the readers in various ways. She uses odd characters who have an unusual physical appearance or behaviours, characters who remind us of fairy tale heroes/heroines or characters who experience unreal journeys. While the readers are hesitating over the doubtful events, they question their way of thinking in which there is only one absolute right and absolute wrong in the society. Thus, *Sexing the Cherry* makes its readers rethink and break the prejudices of the society.

Shafak uses the fourth element in her novel *The Gaze* with various examples. She connects the world of the spiritual and the world of the living beings with a dervish and the mother figure, and with the relation between the shaman boy and a sable. The first example for this element is the relation of Keramet Mumî Keşke Memiş Efendi's mother and the dervish; she decides to try all kinds of superstitions until she sees the dervish in her dream. The second example of the merging realms element is a boy who is tested to be a shaman and a sable. Shafak also adds fairy tales and mythological characters in her novel, *The Gaze*, through the dictionary which is being written by B.C. Also, she merges two worlds with two different stories that have different times and spaces; she also combines western fairy tales and items of mythology in her story. She uses the fourth element in her novel in order to emphasize on the fact that there is still inequality between the positions of women and men, and also, she uses this element to embellish her story.

Winterson is not eager to create stereotypical characters in her fiction; therefore, she does not hesitate to combine the dead and alive, miraculous and ordinary characters; she also adds fairy tale characters as if they normally existed in daily life. For instance, Jordan is advised to ask Fortunata of The Twelve Dancing Princesses, which is a worldwide known fairy tale told children. Winterson combines the ordinary and unusual characters in her story without creating any discomfort. Although this element does not create any discomfort for the readers, it still arouses the readers' attention that all the extraordinary characters are women. Zillah, the Dog-Woman, the old neighbour, the twelve dancing princesses, and Fortunata are all female, whereas the ordinary characters like Jordan and Tradescant

are male. The reason why she uses this element in female character portrayal can be Winterson's wish to take attention to stereotypical models drawn by men for women in the society.

There is not an explicit concept of time, space and identity in magical realist novels as the readers are used to reading in other kinds of novels. *The Gaze* is not written in a traditional novel style that the readers are used to reading. For this reason, the novel does not follow linear time or relevant space. Moreover, the writer creates characters without either names or with odd characteristics or appearances. She uses reincarnation in order to create the freedom to transform places and characters. She also creates characters and then makes them disappear to disrupt the concept of identity. At the end of the novel she combines all events, characters and places. With all the examples given above the novel fulfils the characteristic of fifth element, that is, disruption of time, space and identity.

Winterson uses the fifth element in her novel in various ways to make her readers question and think about what is accurate. She also wants her readers to purify themselves from prejudices of the society. For this reason, she disrupts the traditional time, space and identity concept. Time never moves on straight line as readers expect. Characters always moves back and forth between different centuries. Space is also different from traditional form with bizarre places. Winterson also disrupts the traditional identity frame with dual and bizarre characters.

The present dissertation has revealed that neither Winterson nor Shafak distinguishes between fact and fiction believing that the novels can create a world which builds a new perspective or new realities in an attempt to change the dominant discourses and ideologies limiting individuals' imagination. Finally, with the harmony of different genres such as fantasy, fairy tale and realism, the deconstruction of conventional roles, the characters with supernatural powers, the criticism of historical truth, the alternative realities put forward instead of the traditional ones, it can be asserted that *Sexing the Cherry* and *The Gaze* are great examples of magical realism.

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