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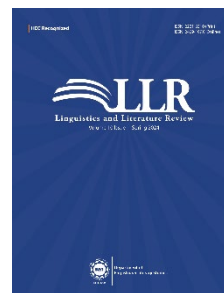
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Magical Realism and Mythmaking in Pakistani English Children Fiction: A Linguistic Critique of *A Firefly in the Dark*

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Abstract

The current study analyzes the linguistic choices and the language qualities through the co-textual study of the magical and mythical stories inscribed in literary texts in Pakistani fiction, *A Firefly in the Dark* by Haider (2018). The novel retrieves Pakistani history or magical and cultural embedment wherein these emerged. The aim is to examine whether the selected text involves language that deals with stories based upon magical realities, dreaming qualities, stories of ghosts and gods, daydreaming, horror and myth, imagery and identity, and an amalgamation of rational and irrational worldviews. The textual study would more deeply grasp the historical context and aspects of magical realism and mythmaking linguistic choices inherent in the respective writings. The research is carried out by developing an analytical framework from the existing theories of magical realism by Faris (2004) and Campbell's theory of hero, mythmaking, and monomyth (Campbell, 1988). By connecting traditional mythmaking with cutting-edge storytelling techniques, Shazaf Fatima Haider's *A Firefly in the Dark* encompasses the fundamental values of magical realism. By applying the analytical framework to this work, the research examined the text's bridging of the mythmaking traditions and gained a fresh perspective on cultural narratives. It may also open the door to a vast investigation of the language employed in magical and myth-forming literature from South Asia.

Keywords: belief system, identity, linguistic choices, magic, magical realism, mythmaking, Pakistani fiction

Introduction

Magical realism is a modern notion that addresses the relationship between magic and reality, the paranormal and the natural and delivers a certain type of light revealing aspects of the world that may have previously been concealed to the readers. As stated by Fredric Jameson (1986), "Individual works give various ways of perceiving and comprehending the world".

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However, this concept is intrinsically unstable and has continually shifting boundaries. Mythopoesis, often known as "mythmaking", is a narrative genre in contemporary writing and cinema in which a writer of prose, poetry, or other creative genres creates an artificial or fabricated mythology.

This definition of the word comes after J. R. R. Tolkien's use of it in the 1930s. Following a conversation with C. S. Lewis and Hugo Dyson on the evening of September 19, 1931, at Magdalen College in Oxford, J. R. R. Tolkien composed a poem titled *Mythopoeia* to defend and elucidate the practice of creating new myths. According to renowned folklorist, Alan Dundes, the novel "cannot satisfy the cultural requirements of myth". A work of art or artifice cannot be said to be the story of a religion or any other sacred tradition; at most, it is a manufactured myth (Adcox, 2003). In cultural domains, Alan Dundes makes a distinction between myth and new. Myths serve as pillars of society, establishing shared identities and ideals. Even with their profundity, novels are unable to perform their cultural roles. Myths have a crucial role in cultural customs whereas novels are works of art devoid of authority. As stated by Prahlow (2014), for C.S. Lewis the idea of myth was important, especially considering his conversion to Christianity and subsequent support of it. Lewis eventually developed a somewhat novel definition stating that "Myth, in general, is not just misinterpreted history... neither demonic illusion... not priesthood deceit... but at its most potent, a real scattered glimmer of eternal truth on mortal conceptions" (Lewis, 1947, p. 138). The importance of myth to C.S. Lewis's intellectual and spiritual life, particularly to his Christian beliefs, is emphasized in his perspective on the subject. Aligning with his theological and literary aspirations, he reinvented myth as a vehicle for transmitting eternal truths, going beyond common comprehension, and making the connection between the temporal and the eternal.

Research Objectives

The purpose of the study is to investigate whether mythmaking and magical realism are present and significant in Pakistani fiction. The goal of the study is to understand how authors use mythological aspects and combine the magical and the real to build compelling narrative frameworks and distinctive literary settings. In addition to this, the study also examines how magical realism and mythmaking interact, reflecting and questioning dominant social and cultural conventions. The research also seeks to advance knowledge about the function of mythmaking and magical realism

in forming linguistic landscapes and their possible consequences for representations of culture and social perspectives by adding to the body of knowledge already available on postcolonial literature and literary theory.

Research Questions

The current research attempts to answer the following questions.

1. What are the linguistic choices in *A Firefly in the Dark* to construct a magical realistic setting reflecting Pakistani cultural and socioeconomic narratives?
2. How does *A Firefly in the Dark* negotiate with magical realism and mythmaking in Pakistani children fiction?

Literature Review

This chapter has several segments and sections that describe mythmaking, magical realism, and the interrelationship of both concepts. It also elaborates on contemporary magical realist fiction, as well as mythmaking texts along with the significance of theories by Faris and Campbell.

Joseph Campbell's Monomyth and the Power of Myth

A linguistic and metaphorical perspective that was subsequently made popular by Joseph Campbell was added to the research methodology. Campbell used the term "monomyth" to define his theory of mythology after appropriating it from his writings. Campbell adopted concepts from Thomas Mann, a well-known German Modernist author known for his understanding of psychology and art and incorporated them into his works in several ways (Campbell, [1988](#)). Zimmer's view of the significance of mythology via symbolism, metaphors, imagery, and others, as contrasted with the dependence on psychoanalysis to comprehend the psyche within a story, may have also influenced Campbell's view of the story as a sign of the journey (Myers, [2017](#)). He thought that discovering one's purpose and path through myth and its metaphors or archetypes was sufficient. These myths have motifs as symbols that are difficult to decipher (Segal, [2015](#)). "What do ancient myths owe to our souls?" is a question Campbell poses in *The Power of Myth* published in 1988. He continues to explain it by saying that these beliefs from the past served to harmonize the body and the mind. His response is akin to the way he explains the monomyth in 'Hero' and claims that the character's physical and mental condition serves as a barometer for the society (Campbell, [1988](#)). As a result, Campbell suggests

that mythology, which transcends words and functions as a metaphor, makes the reality around people apparent. At that point, according to Campbell, a metaphor ceases to be a metaphor and instead refers to its underlying meaning explicitly. He further stated that "dream is the personalized myth", which a person perceives and lives in the setting of their circumstances. On the other hand, Campbell's theory of mythology itself is based on the idea that "myth is a depersonalized dream" (Campbell, [1988](#), p. 18). Therefore, it can be interpreted meaningfully in many ways.

Magical Realism

Magical realism combines all mythical, fantastical, and real aspects in a single sequence of events. Magical realism and mythmaking provide alternative ways of seeing and understanding the world. The current research studies both linguistics and thematic features for investigating the dreamlike environment discussed in the novel. The purpose of the investigation is to observe and describe the physical impact of a dreamlike environment and depict how it creates the moral world.

Wendy B. Faris's Mystical Narratives and Textual Poetics

Magical realism and its captivating environment created through myths interest the readers and observers through the scenes and language. It controls the subconscious mind, forcing the reader to think that the unusual is real. Faris, in her research works, focuses on how magical realism emerged in 20th-century cultural works and marginal voices through submerged traditions.

She discusses that magical realism destabilized a dominant form and a de-focalized narrative. It differentiates between realism and fantasy. It also shows how marvelous grows out of the ordinary and discusses how the distinctions between them are just blurred, witnessing events normal human beings do not usually notice. Faris ([2004](#)) narrates that the creative powers are portrayed through mystical narratives and textual poetics, making them look natural. There are unsettling doubts for the reader created by the fundamental element of magic, merging different realms and ideas about time, space, and identity. Spirits are used to differentiate the material reality, creating an elusive make-believe narrative and a black hole.

The inadequacy of language, the unimaginable universe, cosmic realms, and various registers make the narrative go beyond real in detail, said Borges (Borges, [1998](#)). He says that magical realism is the collection of

real-life-like examples to describe something that seems to be an impossible happening. Broke Rose says that techniques in magical realism invade the marvelous. Thus, changes the genre to allegory. In it, a separate realm is shown, and a realistic description flashes out of that realm which not only detaches it from the concrete reality but also transforms it into abstract ideas that are seemingly real. Magical realists strive to capture non-believers through the portrayal of unexpected events. This way, she talks about authorial relations where readers are coaxed to believe through bridging the past and future. A mythopoetic framework regularly breaks temporal development in *The Famished Road* and time is frequently unclear. In *A Firefly in the Dark*, the bridging of the past and future can be observed through the events mentioned in the research. Hallucinatory magical realism is frequently characterized by incomplete invocations, making it difficult to determine which occurrences occurred, dreamed, or imagined. This hallucinogenic, dreamy aspect moving from unconscious to consciousness, from mental image to actual occurrences, combined with poetic and metaphorical prose, provides the tale with a distinct style that leads readers to believe that the uncommon is both usual and strange. The narrator frequently thinks of the 'meanings' through the 'enormous hallucinating impact' phenomenon behind a hedge of shadow on the border of light.

Magical Realism in Latin America

Where social realism ends, magical realism begins and it rejects the symbolic structure of South American creolism (that is, of European roots). The attempt to categorize Latin American writing broadly or to pinpoint a style of writing that distinguishes between works that are deemed to be paradigmatically Latin American and poor copies of favored models have benefited greatly from "magical realism" (or "magic realism"). This suggests that South American literature may have an impact on international literature in ways that were previously supposed to be impossibly impossible for a literary heritage that was undeniably and even irreparably secondary. Perhaps as a result, the phrase has been applied in a sometimes-paradoxical manner and is frequently used to extol Latin American authors (such as Jorge Luis Borges or Gabriel Garcia Márquez) and to give First World writing a touch of exoticism (Wolff, [2006](#)). The term "magical realism" has been used as a qualifier to describe any plot structure of human behavior that appears to fall outside the norm, contradiction, or denial of

West European bourgeois rationalism as the predominant paradigm for understanding how the world and social connections function (Foster, [2019](#)). Alejo Carpentier, a Cuban author, invented it and many other Latin American and other authors, including Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Jorge Amado, Gorge Luis Borges, Miguel Angel Asturias, Julio Cortazar, and Isabel Allende, popularized it. This shows that this literary and artistic methodology has also been used outside Latin America (Wolff, [2006](#)). Haider's first book, *How It Happened* is completely different from *A Firefly in the Dark*. The novel becomes scarier and more beautiful when Haider writes this excerpt. Did you know that sounds never die? They hang around in the air, upside down like bats, so soft that even a whisper seems like a shout to them. Every word that is uttered lives forever in the space it was birthed. It has its frequency. Your ears are not powerful enough to hear them, but your hearts are sensitive to their energy. That is why houses feel happy or sad - because words lodged in them are thus (Haider, [2018](#)).

Even Aziz's efforts to save the individuals whom he loves turned out to be a challenging task that readers should not attempt on their own.

The Gulmohar and the banyan are unexpectedly not just typical garden trees and her Nani's bedtime tales are no longer restricted to the traditional definition of stories because, like Sharmeen, the target audience is thrust into this world of Jinns and Qarins, a world of a chatty firefly, a gecko, and a peacock. The novel is largely focused on how the theme of magical realism has been interlaced with the problems young adults are faced with. It also discusses the use of cultural and religious myths in the creation of otherness by young adult fiction (Qazi & Mahmood, [2023](#)). In her analysis of Shazaf Fatima Haider's use of magical realism in *A Firefly in the Dark*, Kamal ([2018](#)) emphasizes that it is an example of a 14-year-old boy and a 10-year-old girl, who each enthusiastically read through Haider's novel *A Firefly in the Dark* on a road trip. As a new contribution to Pakistan's little collection of children's and young adult fiction, this book blends regional mythology with Jinn folklore into a fanciful but real setting. 12-year-old Sharmeen just has a hard time in her life in Haider's story — and then she gains courage in her dealings with Jinns and her exposure to the mystical world that her grandmother presents her.

One almost anticipates that Jugnu and Sharmeen will return to lead the reader on several other adventures. It is past time to introduce intriguing tales about local myths to our children and teenagers in addition to their

reading of Enid Blyton, Roald Dahl, and J.K. Rowling. Not only will they identify with Sharmeen's narrative, but they will also find themselves laughing aloud and cheering for Sharmeen. Adults, meanwhile, will be enthralled by nostalgia for children's stories, particularly those with a taste for humor and horror (Javed, [2018](#)). Aslam et al. ([2020](#)) analyzed in this essay through qualitative and out textual analysis to examine the magical qualities of Jinns. The study says that jinn or demons are present in different forms and should not be seen as dangerous because they have certain abilities. Zamora's (2004) point of view is also reflected in stereotypes regarding Jinns and the information herein also deals with stereotypes related to Jinns.

Pakistani magical realist literature has not been accorded its due, says Khalid (2024), since much critical study on magic realism has to date been focused on Latin American literature. The surreal, a feature of Pakistani literary counterculture which is mainly Urdu literary traditions, receives its due consideration in the study. Pakistani Anglophone authors have recently been blending South Asian and Islamic cultural influences, and local mythology and folklore, into their futuristic fiction. It investigates how magical realism is incorporated with realism through means of a narrative technique and resources of the writers' magical aspects to two recent Pakistani magic realist writing (Haider, [2018](#)). This study also examines how these works reflect the Pakistani values and traditions. The end of the study, however, helps to localize magical realism by analyzing the way it manifests itself in Pakistani literature (Khalid, [2024](#)). While Shazaf Fatima Haider's second book, *Umru Ayyar*, is attacked for having supernatural overtones, her first book, *How It Happened*, is appreciated for its distinctive writing style and subject matter. With its original twists and thoughtfully resolved storyline, the book will appeal to both younger readers and readers with nostalgia.

Method

Using a hybrid analytical framework, this quantitative and qualitative study examines the existence of magical realism and mythmaking components in Pakistani fiction. The selected book shows the connection between magical realism and mythmaking through its genre, plot, and structure. The theoretical framework blends the theory of magical realism by Wendy B. Faris and the mythmaking and heroism theory of Joseph Campbell. Due to the fair and systematic data gathering and analysis, the research is regarded

as credible and genuine. The retrieved textual references are offered as evidence to support the thesis of this study. The core notions of magic realism, mythical creatures, and mythmaking utilizing the Pakistani magic realist traditions are examined. Individual analysis is an important component, and peer reviews were considered. Significant quotations and snippets from the book's reviews, as well as critical literature, have been studied. This study employs a technique that contends to locate the historical and cultural embedment in Pakistani magical realism and mythmaking formation.

Theoretical Foundation

The two primary theoretical pillars integrated are Joseph Campbell's theory of mythmaking and heroism and Wendy B. Faris's theory of magical realism. These theories were combined and altered to build a new analytical framework that suited the research objectives and methodology. It has been stated further in the methodology chapter. The analytical framework is appropriate for the context of evaluating magical realism in the selected novel, as well as how they complement one another.

Data Collection and Analysis

With the aid of digital tools in Microsoft Word, the text was examined for words, phrases, sentences, and dialogues that referred to magical realism and mythmaking. After that, the quotes and relevant texts were examined in the context of the analytical framework. The newly developed analytical framework was used to identify moments where magical realism, elements of heroism, and mythmaking intersected by analyzing word choices, themes, language, and context. Moreover, the meanings and importance of the selected instances were also reviewed.

Validity and Reliability

The research is reliable and valid as the data collection and analysis is completely unbiased and has been analyzed with consistency in applying the analytical framework. The research was conducted separately as peer-reviewed research and researchers having their field of expertise as the doctorate of specific realms of literature in magical realism, mythmaking, and identity crisis; were hired to research a few chapters using the analytical frameworks. Hence, the validity of the framework was determined.

Key Word Recognition

Based on the theoretical frameworks of Wendy B. Faris and Joseph Campbell, a special list of terminologies was produced to identify words and phrases pertinent to magical realism and mythmaking. This vocabulary included terms related to magical aspects, story arcs, hero's journey, and mythological archetypes.

Word Collection and Search

The specified keywords and phrases were carefully searched for throughout the text of the novel using Microsoft Word's "Find" function. The instances of the selected keywords were gathered and contextual passages were also retrieved for additional analysis.

Assembling and Data Preparation

The original context of the excerpted passages was preserved by compiling them into a separate document. By highlighting literary passages that displayed crossovers between magical realism and mythmaking features, this compilation aided focused analysis. Additionally, this method allowed for the development of a dataset that could be thoroughly and consistently evaluated inside the framework created by the combined theoretical viewpoints. The following are some instances of magical realism and mythmaking that are included in the text.

The *Janeeree* is a she-*jinn* who combines aspects of the normal and magical realms. She has spider-like legs and vicious teeth. A fundamental theme of magical realism is the blending of the supernatural and commonplace, which is explored by the *Amluq*, a hybrid creature born of *jinn* and man. Understanding how mythmaking is produced within the tale requires an understanding of the symbolic meaning of confinement and dominance represented by the tree.

Linguistic Choices in *A Firefly in the Dark*

Certain techniques have been seen as a utility of vocabulary and linguistic choices by the authors and these have been divided into subcategories that are used as a measuring instrument for the analysis of the selected novel.

1. Surreal+ Enchantment = Dreamlike/ Bizarre
2. Unreal = Illusion + Pseudo-realistic

3. Supernatural = Metaphysical + Otherworldly
4. Mysterious = Arcane + Enigmatic + Mysterious

Here are some alternative names for each united element.

1. Enchanted Dreams
2. Fantastic Illusions
3. Supernatural Realms
4. Mysterious Forces
5. Symbolic Insights

Enchanted Dreams

A dreamy and fascinating quality, frequently with a mystical or otherworldly quality. A state of consciousness in which reality is transformed into something magical, mystical, and alluring. It is an awe-inspiring and fascinating event, frequently creating a sense of otherworldliness and magic.

Unreal Illusions

Describes something that appears to be genuine yet is not, frequently with fantasy or supernatural components. A view or experience that appears to be true yet is false. It conveys a sense of uncertainty or unreality, frequently by employing fantastical or mystical themes.

Supernatural Realms

Describes a universe that is not physical or natural and often contains mystical or magical characteristics. A cosmos that exists outside the normal range of human experience. It is a mystical and magical land frequented by supernatural beings or spirits. This term could be referring to mythological or fictional worlds.

Mysterious Forces

Unknown factors shape our reality and experiences, including supernatural, spiritual, or psychological elements. These forces can be difficult to understand or describe and they are frequently accompanied by ambiguity or riddles. They influence a character's behavior and provide new stories.

Symbolic Insights

Identifies insights gained via metaphor or insights that often have more profound implications or significance. Intuition refers to insights gained through symbolism or intuition. It requires a more in-depth examination of the meaning and importance of symbols, many of which have a supernatural or metaphysical component. This expression refers to the insights gained from reading a dream or a work of art.

The Linguistic Choices and the Inscrutable Elements

The following symbols and metaphorical choices can be used as indicators for inscrutable elements in the magical realistic and mythmaking texts.

1. Enchanted Dreams symbolize starry skies, mythical animals, dark forests, magical spells, sparkling waters, aquatic creatures, fairy dust, imposing structures, and spellbound landscapes, highlighting the mystical and magical elements.
2. Unreal Illusions symbolize mirrors, mist and reflections, optical deception, shades, visions, mythical beings, disguises, bizarre scenery, inconceivable geometry, inconsistencies, and augmented reality.
3. Supernatural Realms include symbols and topics, such as black magic, ghosts, evil spirits, angels, gods and goddesses, portals, astral aircraft, ley paths, power fields, time journeys, perpendicular universes, and historical artifacts.
4. Mysterious Forces include elements and symbols, such as serendipity, destiny, luck, prophecy, instinct, psychic talents, synchronicity, karma, cosmic power, ethereal beings, and telepathy from the theory of quantum mechanics.
5. Symbolic Insights include elements and symbols, such as archetypal allegories, myths, rumors, misconceptions, symbols, tarot cards, runes, astrology, the theory of numerology mandalas, interpretation of dreams, prayer, and religious geometry.

These examples of vocabulary and linguistic choices have been identified within the selected text and are stated below for further analysis.

Delimitations

The analysis ignores non-literary materials, for instance, author screenings, historical documents, and cultural assets in favor of concentrating on literary texts. This might limit some places' ability to conduct in-depth analysis. The study is carried out in a single language, however creative translations into other languages might do away with jargon and linguistic complexity. While acknowledging the significance of South Asian literature, the study concentrates on Pakistani fiction, which limits its ability to draw comparisons and insights from other South Asian cultures.

Ethical Considerations

To maintain its integrity and legitimacy, research adheres to several ethical guidelines. These include protecting intellectual property, abstaining from cultural appropriation, upholding the analysis's correctness and integrity, avoiding bias, considering many points of view, guaranteeing privacy and confidentiality, and making a contribution to the academic community. Additionally, privacy and confidentiality in the research make a significant contribution to the academic community by offering unique and well-investigated findings.

Analysis

This section deals with the analysis of the selected text according to the devised framework. Magical realism is the incorporation of magical or mythical elements into a realistic story, blurring the barriers between the ordinary and the extraordinary. The fabrication or reworking of myths within the context of literature is known as mythmaking. Magical realism strengthened its origin in Pakistan with the arrival of Shazaf Fatima Haider's novel, *A Firefly in the Dark*. It not only paved the way for other magical and mystical stories but also inculcated an element of horror with *Jinn* stories and the immense saga of fairies and ghosts, good and evil.

The section also enlists the linguistic choices listed in the framework section related to magical realism and mythmaking. It discusses the quotes and examples, incidents, and scenarios by the author to write and describe magical realism and mythmaking in Pakistani fiction. As Pakistani diasporic texts and culture are replete with examples of mythmaking, this research employs its framework to find these in indigenous cultural fiction.

Linguistic Choices Employed in the Selected Text

The Table 1 represents the linguistics choices analysis of the selected work. These choices have been divided into four segments (enchanted dreams, unreal illusions, supernatural realms, and mysterious forces) as stated earlier.

Table 1
Linguistics Choices Analysis

Enchanted Dreams	Unreal Illusions	Supernatural Realms	Mysterious Forces
Snake-women	Fangs	Dark ones	Poison
Witches	Mangled feet	Black spells	Silver prayer beads
Dark forests	Heads of piglets	Samarkand (character)	God
Black willow tree	Smokeless fire	Rotting bark	Serendipity
Deep slumber	Clay, air, and smokeless fire as elements of creation	<i>Janeeree</i> (she- <i>jinn</i>)	Fate
Amber eyes Sabre-like teeth	Banishment from Heaven	<i>Labartu</i> (fire-demon)	Destiny
Spidery legs	Consequences of misdeeds	Loyalty of Jinn	Prophecy
Purity and atonement	The path of the damned	Arrogance and rebellion of <i>jinn</i>	Intuition
	Invisible to those who don't believe in <i>jinn</i> and <i>Janeeree</i>	<i>Amluq</i> (child of <i>jinn</i> and man)	Psychic abilities
	Angels		Synchronicity
Nightmares	Willow tree trapping souls	<i>jinn</i>	Karma
	Barbie doll's behavior	<i>Janeeree</i>	Cosmic energy
A cloud of black smoke	Teddy's abilities	<i>Labartu</i>	Telekinesis
Aliya's dream	Beds	<i>Amluq</i>	Quantum mechanics
Sharmeen's nightmares	Smoke and mirrors	Heaven and Hell	Fate and destiny
Sifting through the greys	Shadows on the wall	The book on <i>jinn</i>	Twisted tree
Haunted by visions	Cracks and groans		<i>Tasbeeh</i>
Darkness of the night			The veil has lifted from your eyes
			Let the invisible communicate with you
			Silver beads
			<i>Jinn</i> infants

Enchanted Dreams	Unreal Illusions	Supernatural Realms	Mysterious Forces
Snake- women	Crawling with invisible <i>Jinn</i> Watcher Witches with mangled feet	White hand cast over the bleeding wound	Moods of the mynahs

The above-cited linguistic choices were analyzed according to the above-stated analytical framework and discussed according to their context in next section.

Theoretical Analysis of the Selected Text

The metaphysical essence introduces the mind of readers to a mystical presence of magic and myth that exists for those who have eyes to see. It creates an atmosphere of mystery and wonder for the readers. A phenomenal world that describes the real-life noise, objects, and the happenings of the event along with magical and mythological events. Cosmopolitanism is a moral perspective that emphasizes individuals' inherent value, irrespective of where they live. In contrast to the nation-state, it considers the entire globe to be its society. Enchanting realism, figurative magic, and analogies are used to depict the phenomenal world. The story is used for cosmology, explaining the configuration of the universe, the universe itself, and the entire planet. Within the cosmic framework, each bend, stone, hillside, rock, and plant have a place and a meaning. The textual analysis has been discussed in detail below.

Little did he know that the willow was the special abode of a *Janeeree*: a cruel she-Jinn who lived within the cocooned spirals of the tree's dead leaves. As Samarkand snored, the *Janeeree* awoke. She drew the drooping curtains aside and scuttled down the thin branches. Her amber eyes spotted her sleeping prey, oblivious to the danger looming above him. Licking her lips with a forked tongue, she made her way further down. She was a fierce creature with sharp, saber-like teeth unfolding from the grooves of her mouth as she neared. Below her waist, eight spidery legs, slender and bent. (Haider, [2018](#), p. 17)

These lines give details about the *Jinn* and *Janeeree*, described in the text. Though both of these are magical and mythical figures, they have the characteristics of both humans and animals. *Jinn* (supernatural entities) and their interactions with humanity blur the differences between the visible and hidden worlds. The *Janeeree*, a she-*jinn* with spider-like legs and sharp fangs who lives within the cocooned spirals of a tree's dead leaves, is said to blend magical and natural elements. *Jinn's* ability to transform into human form and speak with humans while causing no harm exhibits magical realism. The *Janeeree's* ability to shift into a beautiful lady, her transformation of Samarkand's head into that of a child, and the presence of the *Labartu* underscore the supernatural elements of the story. *Janeeree's* ability to kidnap travelers and give them nightmares lends a supernatural touch to the plot.

They were made smokeless, but do not remain so. They thought, as the *Janeeree* did, that the smoke, like the evil inside them, was now a permanent part of their being. Thus, it came to pass that the *Janeeree* adopted the path of the damned, walked by all who are disobedient. (Haider, [2018](#), p. 13)

The text shows that the *Jinns* were created by a smokeless substance same as the evil in them. The *Jinn's* birth, early adoration for their splendor, and ultimately revolt against God's dominion serve as a mythical underpinning for comprehending the *Jinn* in this story. The *Janeeree*, a cursed and lonely figure bound to a willow tree, seduces unwary victims, adding to her allure.

Born of *Jinn* and man, neither *Jinn* nor man, he was an *Amluq*. He wandered the world, searching for hidden knowledge. He is a spirit whispered about, a legend who makes himself visible to those who need his help, invisible to those who do not believe in stupid things like *Jinn* and *Janeeree*. (Haider, [2018](#), p. 27)

The tree represents imprisonment and the dominion of the *Janeeree*, while the *Amluq*, a *jinn*-man hybrid, represents a fusion of human and unearthly features. The transition of the *Janeeree* from greedy and vicious to sympathy and salvation underscores themes of growth and change. *Amluq's* talents and whispered mythology add to the novel's mood. Illusions, such as *Janeeree's* delusions and Samarkand's change, give rise to mythical or supernatural features.

Mythical and Magical Presence through Phenomenal and Symbolical Functions in the Text

Similes and metaphors are used to explain magical subjects, with metaphors emphasizing the *Amluq's* mystical origins and relationship to gods. Embodiment and allegory are literary devices used to depict mystical symbols. The willow tree represents a sentient monster that captures travelers, alluding to its mythological significance as a portal to the afterlife. The protagonist's trip through the magical world serves as an analogy for personal growth, with the foreign setting and *Janeeree's* demeanor adding mystery. The protagonist's confusion and *Janeeree's* heighten the suspense, while the obscure backdrop emphasizes the enigmatic character of the scenario.

Janeeree's outstanding creative abilities demonstrate her ability to transform objects and people. With its vibrant colors, strange flowers, and creatures, the enchanted garden catches the reader's attention and evokes astonishment and fascination. The protagonist's flask's magical properties, which fill itself with water, represent the built world's boundless potential and wealth. It represents the miracles of creation, where even simple items have incredible properties. The *Janeeree's* ability to communicate with and command animals heightens the sense of awe. This power accentuates the mystical connection between humanity and the environment, emphasizing the beauty and grandeur of the natural world. The above instances reflect the fusion of the supernatural and ordinary, which contributes to the mythological elements of the story. The inclusion of magical or fantastical aspects into a realistic tale, blurring the lines between the ordinary and extraordinary, is referred to as magical realism.

The presence of *Jinns* (supernatural beings) and their interactions with humans blur the distinction between the visible and unseen worlds. The concept of *Jinn* as strong beings who created galaxies and have divine skills contributes to the mythmaking aspect. The tragedy and salvation themes run through the story of Samarkand, the *Janeeree*, and the *Amluq*. As supernatural aspects are combined with normal life and new narratives and mythical themes are produced, these examples highlight the occurrence of both magical realism and mythmaking in the novel.

The description of the willow tree with wreaths of ancient leaves, together with its connection to the *Janeeree*, produces an uncomfortable and

enigmatic mood and the presence of the *Labartu* underscores the supernatural elements of the story. The willow tree represents peril and temptation, while the trek to Samarkand represents ambition and selfish aspirations. The *Janeeree's* journey from selfishness to sympathy and salvation exemplifies growth and change. The tree acts as a focal point for the mythological components of the story. Similes and metaphors can be used to describe magical and legendary subjects like *Janeeree's* voice in exquisite detail, as well as the historical qualities of relics like the *Amluq*. These strategies add to the story's sense of magic and otherworldliness.

Use of Mythologized Settings in the Novel

A Firefly in the Dark is an Indigenous novel that mythologizes and creates a magical realistic world. Based on South Asian mythology, the story depicts the *jinn* realm as a place where anything is possible. In indigenous fiction, magical realism mixes the actual and otherworldly realms, encouraging wonder and possibilities. Sharmeen's understanding of *Jugnu*, the *jinn*, is extraordinary. Using language, imagery, and symbolism, the work mythologizes and creates an enchanted realistic world. The rich vocabulary and vivid images of the *jinn* world add to the awe and excitement of magical realism. The novel's use of terminology, analogies, and symbols adds to the work's sense of amazement and opportunity, which is prevalent in this genre.

Conclusion

The study examines how mythmaking and magical realism is used in children's books written in English, with a focus on Haider's "*A Firefly in the Dark*." It demonstrates that these research methods are effective means of subverting cultural, social, and historical narratives in addition to being stylistic decisions. By bridging the gap between the remarkable and the commonplace, the book enables readers to discover more nuanced aspects of Pakistani society. The protagonist Sharmeen is empowered by the novel's intricate web of mythological elements to challenge social standards. Haider's use of language, symbolism, and allusions to mythology deepens the reader's comprehension and stimulates more contemplation on how myth and magic influence individual and societal identities.

Conflict of Interest

The author of the manuscript has no financial or non-financial conflict of interest in the subject matter or materials discussed in this manuscript.

Data Availability Statement

The data associated with this study will be provided by the corresponding author upon request.

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