



Transcending Realities: Analyzing the Mystical Aspects of Magical Realism in Usman T. Malik's *Midnight Doorways*

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Abstract: This research explores Usman T. Malik's *Midnight Doorways: Fables from Pakistan*, emphasizing the book's masterful use of magical realism. It underscores the transformative capacity of literature in reshaping cultural frameworks within the Pakistani setting. It emphasizes how literature has the power to change cultural frameworks in the context of Pakistan. The study looks at how Malik creatively incorporates magical realism's fictive and imaginative aspects of magical realism. The study conducts a thorough examination of Malik's *Midnight Doorways* using a close reading textual analysis technique and the theoretical framework of magical realism. Malik creates a realm where the lines between the supernatural and the mundane blur by weaving fantastical and supernatural elements into realistic surroundings. This allows for a more in-depth examination of multilayered tapestries. It elaborates on the understanding of the complex interplay between social discourses, cultural expressions, and storytelling within the domain of modern Pakistani literature.

Key words: Midnight Doorways, magical realism, cultural frameworks, transformative literature, cultural expressions.

1. Introduction

In the vast and boundless realm of literary inquiry, certain authors emerge as prominent figures, showcasing remarkable proficiency in traversing the intricate realms of storytelling with unparalleled finesse. Malik, a well-known novelist from Pakistan contributed significantly to the literary world by skillfully crafting narratives that defy accepted norms and conventions. In *Midnight Doorways: Fables from Pakistan*, his highly acclaimed anthology, Malik invites readers to enter a world where ordinary events give rise to extraordinary events, surreal and practical realities converge, and postmodernist ideas and magical realism mesh harmoniously. (Malik, 2021). Through the deft blending of Urdu and English, the book showcases Malik's extraordinary linguistic proficiency and leaves readers feeling a strong sense of sincerity and nostalgia (Wagner, 2020). "I contend that the blending of Urdu and English enhances the evocative power of folktales and fables, bringing back memories of wrapped up under blankets on chilly winter nights in Lahore, where I listened carefully as elders told me tales that were both mysterious and enthralling. Being proficient in both languages, I find great value in the subtleties inherent in the individual contributions made by each language to the story. When appropriate, the use of Urdu terminology enhances the book's atmospheric complexity, fostering a sense of authenticity and cultural depth (Sheikh, 2021)." Though there are occasionally plots that feel rushed or shallow, what captivates attention is the

carefully rendered setting and engrossing atmosphere. This research delves into the numerous interpretations of *Midnight Doorways: Fables from Pakistan*, encompassing linguistic and cultural subtleties together with the intricate narrative details that raise Malik's work to the pinnacle of modern storytelling. The study aims to demonstrate how Malik's stories subvert, stimulate, and ultimately deepen our comprehension of the wider world.

1.1 Problem Statement

The objective is to recognize and emphasize the utilization of magical realism as a means of effectively communicating significant ideas and emotions about topics such as grief, cognition, individuality, the fundamental nature of humanity, and distinctions in culture and religion.

1.2 Research Question

What elements/aspects of magical realism can be identified in *Midnight Doorways: Fables from Pakistan*?

1.3 Significance of the Study

The study's primary contribution lies in the growing knowledge of how a Pakistani writer skillfully negotiates and transcends conventional literary conventions to produce stories that are both distinctive and thought-provoking.

1.4 Limitations of the Study

This study focuses solely on examining the magical realism components found in the first three stories in Usman T. Malik's book *Midnight Doorways*.

2. Literature Review

Franz Roh's "Magical Realism: Post-Expressionism" was published in 1925, marking the second occasion of the entrance of the literary movement known as magical realism to the German literary sphere. Most studies on the history of magical realism acknowledge that this piece was the first to use the phrase. Recent research on realism has discovered some common themes and subjects, such as the integration of magic and myth, the investigation of identity, and the analysis of the connection between reason and development, as well as the evaluation of reality, viewpoints, and narrative structures. Magical realism, as a literary genre, enables an examination of the actuality of postcolonial states and functions as a forum for voices that have been marginalized. Hart defines this genre as "*a fusion of the supernatural with the mundane, resulting in a cohesive atmosphere*".

The term "realism" is derived from the root word "real." Realism places a higher importance on objectivity rather than subjectivity. "Below are multiple definitions of "realism" sourced from dictionaries: Epistemological stance that posits the presence of objective truths that can be apprehended and recognized by persons. The exploration encompasses various variables, including the pursuit of truth and reality in art and literature, the visualization of facts, the rejection of illusions, and the emphasis on adhering to factual information (Rajabi, 2020)." When examining all of these definitions, it becomes evident that the term "Real" (*referring to "the truth"*) relates to the objective condition and location of an object, in contrast to subjectivity. Realism centers on tangible challenges that are separate from intellectual pursuits, rendering it a multifaceted and intellectually stimulating notion. Certain individuals consider the concept of "realism" as disingenuous and deficient in sincerity. The aforementioned elements are the cause of this (Rajabi, 2020).

Originally, Rjabi denoted a novel viewpoint on the modern art landscape in Germany in the 1920s. Initially, it arose as a reaction to the artistic trends of Surrealism, Expressionism, and Impressionism. Artists of the magical realism genre sought to depict objects and creatures with a high degree of realism, while simultaneously highlighting the presence of magic and enigma through the use of illusions and alterations in perspective. Arturo Uslar-Pietri, a Venezuelan author, coined the term "*magical realism*". This term pertains to a genre of brief narratives that center on depicting humans as mysterious beings against a backdrop of authentic evidence. Soon after its inception, this expression came to encompass Latin American literature as a whole. The advancement can be primarily attributed to Angelo Flores' article titled "*Magical Realism in Spanish American Fiction*." The Latin American Boom originated in the 1960s when authors from countries beyond South America started incorporating elements of magical realism into their novels. The period of economic growth commenced at this time (Canivell, 2019).

Stephen Malcolm Hart defines Magical Realism in his research essay titled "Magical realism is the language of the emergent Post-Truth world." Magical realism challenges the constraints of conventional storytelling by seamlessly

integrating magical or supernatural elements into ordinary life, lending these themes an aura of genuineness (Mitchell, 2022). This literary technique flourishes in the realm where disparate belief systems intersect, by reconciling the divide between the logical and the supernatural. Readers are urged to explore the coexistence of the commonplace and the remarkable, which presents a difficulty to their conceptions of reality and prompts them to contemplate the enigmas of existence (Hart, 2021).

The works of magical realism have enthralled both readers and reviewers due to their fascinating essence. Authors can imbue their works with an element of astonishment and enigma by employing this literary tactic (Bhattacharya, 2019). This is achieved by grounding their narratives in everyday experiences. The novel *"One Hundred Years of Solitude"* (1967) by Gabriel García Márquez is a profound examination of the varying cultural perspectives on reality. The juxtaposition of spectacular happenings with mundane existence functions as a potent means of criticism. Phenomena like as women rising to heaven, ghosts returning to earth, or priests levitating may appear bizarre in the *"First World"*, but they are considered ordinary and unchallenged in the *"Third World"* (Bell-Villada, 2022). On the other hand, objects and events that are considered commonplace in more sophisticated societies, such as dentures, magnets, movies, railroads, or ice, may surprise and shock people in less developed countries. In Márquez's imaginary town of Macondo, the inhabitants are perplexed and captivated by the introduction of novel discoveries and technologies (Canivell, 2019). The depiction of the town exemplifies this cultural paradox. The initial chapter of the novel depicts the inhabitants of Macondo being astounded by advancements while grappling with the challenge of distinguishing between awe and tedium (Karimov, 2021). The categorization of the world into regions where scientific progress is either accepted or appreciated provides a valuable understanding of a wider global dynamic shaped by differences in technological capabilities and the marginalization of political and cultural groups. The significance of magical realism in postcolonial literature, as emphasized by Homi Bhabha, highlights its function as a literary device that tackles the difficulties of constructing postcolonial identities (Bell-Villada, 2022).

Pakistan has numerous authors who have written literature that integrates elements of magical realism. *Devil's Kiss*, *Firefly in the Dark*, and *Ice Candy Man* are English publications authored by Sarwat Chaddha, Shazaf Fatima Haider, and Bapsi Sidhwa respectively. Intizar Hussain and Bano Qudsia, both part of the same group of writers, have authored Pakistani Urdu literature that exhibits the features of magical realism. Nahal discusses the destructive human inclination to exert control over not only other humans but also all forms of life on earth, as one of the several worldwide concerns. In addition, she tackles various other global issues. Her writing centers on this worldwide problem. Qudsia has made various significant contributions to the world over her writing career. During the creation of her masterwork, *Raja Gidh-2023*, she incorporated stylistic elements that are characteristic of the magical realism genre (Sheikh, 2021).

The genre of realism has exposed concealed truths about urban areas, like Cuba, by presenting them through the lens of local inhabitants or an external narrator who shares their views and perspectives. This is accomplished by utilizing methods that are common to both magical realism and non-fiction writing, with a specific focus on the year 2020 (Kocznur, 2021). Kocznur's definition characterizes magical realism as a unique literary form that stands apart from other genres. Moreover, the presence of magical realism does not detract from the value of the authors or their literary creations (Kocznur, 2021).

The subgenre of magical realism is enriched by the inclusion of English literature, as it offers an essential framework and background. This approach establishes a substantial contextual basis for the artistic achievements of authors from South Asia. Qazi examines young adult novels such as *Devil's Kiss* by Sarwat Chaddha and *The Firefly in the Dark* by Shazaf Fatima Haider through the lens of magic realism, a concept developed by Wendy B. Faris in her important work, *Ordinary Enchantments: Magical Realism and Demystification*. Both of these novels are considered exemplary works of literature. Adolescent readers are urged to read both of these novels. Primary concentration revolves around two inquiries: the amalgamation of magic realism with the challenges encountered by youths, and the resultant ramifications of this fusion. Firstly, how has the concept of magic realism been amalgamated with the predicaments faced by young individuals, and secondly, what are the ramifications of this fusion?

Modern Pakistani literature is marked by a lively and diverse literary atmosphere that is constantly evolving and adapting to the swiftly changing dynamics of society. The presence of this literary atmosphere is a distinguishing characteristic of Pakistani literature. During the modern era, the literary environment has been a defining feature of Pakistani culture and literature. Furthermore, it is crucial to acknowledge that contemporary Pakistani writing possesses certain characteristics that set it apart from other forms of writing. A growing global population is

increasingly acknowledging and valuing the impact that Pakistani authors have made in the realm of literature. This movement is gaining increasing momentum. Jing Sun has observed that Pakistani literature has evolved into a thriving domain of scholarly investigation that reflects Pakistani culture, the heterogeneous populace of the nation, and the various identities that coexist within it. Sun, J. has confirmed this. The literary traditions of Pakistan have a long and ancient history, allowing for the possibility of tracing their origins. Pakistan is the geographical location where these practices originate. The traditions are primarily supported by the presence of creative expressions and diverse storytelling methods (Sun, 2019).

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study uses qualitative textual analysis techniques to comprehensively examine the components of magical realism, as well as the cultural facets and themes, present in Malik's *Midnight Doorways: Fables from Pakistan*, a compilation of short stories.

3.2 Data Collection

The main source of data is Malik's published literary work titled "*Midnight Doorways: Fables from Pakistan*," which is a compilation of short stories. The analysis is contextualized by reviewing secondary materials such as scholarly journal articles and books that focus on magical realism theory, Post-modernism, and South Asian literature. Systematic collection of data is conducted from both primary and secondary sources.

3.3 Data Analysis Technique

The data analysis technique employed is Catherine Belsi's close reading literary analytical technique. This technique thoroughly examines various textual elements, such as artistic devices, language, symbolism, imagery, themes, characters, and places (Bell-Villada, 2022).

3.4 Theoretical Framework

Magical realism is a literary technique that enables writers to seamlessly integrate imaginative elements into realistic works. The characters and settings in the story blend reality and imagination by embracing the extraordinary as a fundamental part of the natural world. The writer employs magical realism to seamlessly blend the aesthetic allure of language with cultural factors in the collection of short stories titled *Midnight Doorways: Fables from Pakistan* (Karimov, 2021). Malik skillfully used this strategy to create a universe in which the extraordinary and the ordinary dwell harmoniously.

4. Analysis

Magical realism, as first suggested by Franz Roh, focuses on the uncanny and unforeseen elements that arise in seemingly ordinary and routine circumstances. Malik's collection, titled "*Midnight Doorways: Fables from Pakistan: a collection of short stories*," adds a new dimension to the subject matter. This intriguing book explores the diverse Pakistani landscapes and folklore, providing a unique analysis of this literary style. Malik's narratives strongly resonate with the emphasis on the allure of everyday existence, where seemingly mundane elements and encounters reveal the remarkable and sometimes disconcerting aspects. Malik constructs a story that connects on multiple levels. The author urges readers to transcend a surface-level comprehension and delve into the profound verities and sentiments that underpin his storytelling. This method aligns perfectly with Franz Roh's viewpoint on magical realism, in which the commonplace and the extraordinary coexist, augmenting our understanding of the human condition.

Malik adeptly integrates imaginative aspects into commonplace environments in his most recent piece, resulting in a mesmerizing fusion of enchantment and the mundane. This research examines Malik's distinctive technique, highlighting his skill in effortlessly blending the magical with the ordinary in his collection of short stories, *Midnight Doorway fables from Pakistan*.

"[They met] under a peepal tree. From its branches, legend said, a Muslim girl hung herself after her clansmen sliced her Sikh lover's throat." (Fable 1: Ishq)

The peepal tree, amidst its seemingly mundane surroundings, assumes a transcendent nature as it gets intricately

entwined with a mesmerizing myth. The narrator utilizes the phrase "legend said" to contextualize the fantasy element of a self-inflicted hanging within a historical context. The process of normalizing the concept of the impossible results in the merging of the factual and mythological, creating a domain where they coexist harmoniously. The narrative also adds a hint of poignant romanticism to the environment, mirroring Parveen and Hashim's own story of illicit love. The correlation between love and defying societal norms epitomizes the fate of the renowned pair, implying a deep cultural acknowledgment of the power of love that transcends social constraints.

"He sang Sufi love verses.... 'Everywhere I turn I see Ranjha; so long I've chanted Ranjha Ranjha I've become him myself. Call me Ranjha, sisters, don't call me Heer no more.'" (Fable 1: Ishq)

Hashim's captivating harmonies, along with the profound lines of traditional Sufi love songs, transport the listener to a timeless universe. By incorporating folklore, Malik imbues the love narrative with a deep cultural value that remains meaningful over the ages. Hashim's association with the renowned character "Ranjha" fulfills two distinct purposes. The author's unwavering commitment to Parveen is apparent in his work, as he adeptly weaves together his own experiences with the overarching narrative of their extraordinary love story. The fusion of fiction and reality in this novel accentuates the tremendous influence of love, suggesting that Hashim's feelings transcend the confines of ordinary existence.

"A rare bone cancer bloomed from Parveen's femur and surged upward.... Near the end she couldn't speak because the cancer had pincered the speech centers in her brain."(Fable 1: Ishq)

The depiction of Parveen's condition oscillates between a direct, objective approach and a seemingly incomprehensible perception. While the vocabulary employed, such as "rare bone cancer" and "surged upward," is undeniably grounded in the medical domain, the inclusion of the metaphorical phrase "bloomed" introduces a hint of creativity. The absence of clearness heightens the emotional impact of her distress. Similarly, the depiction of her ultimate incapacity to speak is presented as a genuine medical observation ("pincered speech centers"). Nevertheless, it also has substantial significance, suggesting a repression that amplifies the sorrow of her situation. The merging of borders between the medical and poetic realms invites the reader to contemplate the mysterious aspects of illness and death, hinting at forces that are above our immediate understanding.

"The City flickers at the edge of a Florida wetland, and wanders into Lahore." (Fable 2: The Wandering City)

The techniques combine real-life events with fantastical components. The film depicts a remarkable event in which a metropolis inexplicably shifts between continents, although it is narrated in a casual and commonplace manner. No detailed explanation or doubt is expressed. The statement discusses the remarkable action of the City's mobility as if it is merely another element of the environment.

The perception of the unusual is a fundamental attribute of magical realism. The reader effortlessly assimilates the fantastical components that are skillfully interwoven into the mundane aspects of the story's universe. The citizens of Florida must be experiencing great perplexity as our focus now turns to Lahore, where the City has recently emerged. This grounds the imaginative element (exploring the city) in a relatable human experience (witnessing something out of the ordinary).

"Wide-eyed Lahoris gather outside the City's rectangular walls as they might at sites of massacre or accidents. Some are friends and family of those on whom the City landed, and these bereaved rend their clothes and wail. Their loved ones are gone and not a trace of them will be found." (Fable 2: The Wandering City)

The utilization of magical realism is exemplified through the contrasting presentation of an imaginary situation (individuals stuck in time) with an authentic human response (despair and sorrow). The reliability of the characters' emotions serves to anchor the paranormal element. The depiction of the petrified figures does not delve into the technical details of their condition but rather focuses on the emotional impact it has had on individuals. This places

a significant focus on the emotional impact of the imaginative elements within the context of everyday life.

"Civil engineers are called; they arrive debating whether it is a city or a microcity- 'It's two kilometers in length; about a kilometer and a half in width!' exclaims one leave with the argument still raging." (Fable 2: The Wandering City)

The use of magical realism is emphasized by juxtaposing the extraordinary nature of the City with a commonplace human activity - scientific discourse. The engineers must classify the City based on their present understanding, enabling them to appreciate the unusual elements from a perspective grounded in the commonplace. This highlights the disparity between these two domains.

The precise particulars of the City's magnitude further emphasize its typicality. The dimensions are precisely delineated, allowing us to imagine it inside the framework of our world. The City's allure is heightened by its depiction, which combines recognizable features that assist the reader in embracing its existence.

"They find them pristine-not a scratch or gouge. The Enchanted City is meticulous at maintaining itself... When they see the spectators watching, the girls smile in unison, bat their eyelashes, and gesture to the group to come close." (Fable 2: The Wandering City)

The characteristics of magical realism depict the marionettes, who seem devoid of life, participating in activities that resemble human behavior. The pristine condition of the City enhances its otherworldly atmosphere. The marionettes' mechanics and self-sustenance remain unexplained, despite their capacity to execute human-like actions such as smiling and waving. This elicits a sensation of the uncanny valley - a phenomenon that is simultaneously recognizable and yet oddly devoid of human qualities.

Furthermore, the depiction of the sirens' captivating melody resonating on the walls that they climb blurs the distinction between reality and the realm of magic. We understand the concept of seduction, yet, the enchanting charm of the sirens is portrayed as a mysterious force. The intriguing realm of the ever-changing marionettes, along with the scientific investigation of pheromones within the City boundaries, elegantly demonstrates the seamless cohabitation of mystical and logical interpretations.

"Then, one morning, the City is gone. Lahoris wakes up and there is nothing but blankness the size of Old Lahore on GT Road... Lahore reclaims the blankness. Appropriately bribed government officials sell the residential plots to a property tycoon for pennies." (Fable 2: The Wandering City)

The components of magical realism are quoted by contrasting the extraordinary disappearance of the City with the commonplace actions of humans returning to their everyday habits. The City vanishes with the same enigmatic nature it emerged, leaving a blank in its wake. The sudden shift emphasizes the extraordinary caliber of the City and its presence.

Nevertheless, the focus quickly shifts to the corrupt officials who have succumbed to bribery, as well as the opportunistic property tycoon who exploits the circumstances. These episodes are commonplace occurrences in the physical realm, and they provide a foundation for the narrative while also serving as a reminder that life persists, even in the face of unusual circumstances. The depiction of "Lahria Greens - The Community of Your Dreams" emphasizes the return to ordinary life, which sharply contrasts with the creative City.

"I took a glove off and placed it on Dead Boy's thigh... Dead Boy's right arm jerked... I shot the biocurrent again... and this time Dead Boy's arm jumped and flopped onto his chest." (Fable 3: Resurrection Points)

The occurrence of a bioelectric discharge capable of reviving the dead implies the inclusion of a magical element in the story. The concept of magical realism, as defined by Franz Roh, is the direct and realistic depiction of things that are beyond imagination. Here, no intricate scientific elucidation is supplied for the plausibility of this achievement. Instead, it is depicted as a skill that is passed on from one generation to the next, effortlessly blending the magical aspects into the fabric of the story. The characters' names, Baba (father) and Mama (mother), reinforce the concept of a hereditary tradition centered around a very inventive ceremony.

"Sorry," I said, jerking my fingers away. "Did that hurt?" "No." He massaged the foot with his hand. "I was... surprised. I haven't had any feeling in this for years... I felt it. I felt you touching me." (Fable 3: Resurrection Points)

The uncanny capacity to converse with the living showcases the genre of magical realism. The protagonist's ability to restore sensation blurs the distinction between life and death. Despite its emphasis on healing the patient's health, the technique nevertheless relies on rituals involving the deceased. This juxtaposition highlights the core concept of magical realism, which involves the fusion of the extraordinary and the ordinary.

"They have a written fatwa stating that since the dead boy was Christian he cannot be buried in a Muslim cemetery."... "You might be Muslim but blasphemy is blasphemy, brother, and punishable under the Haddood Ordinance. The boy is Christian. That cemetery is not." (Fable 3: Resurrection Points)

A narrative style that surpasses the commonplace, expressing the fundamental nature of the real world. The dynamic interaction among many religious factions, the allusion to specific legal measures (the Haddood Ordinance), and the nuanced perception of peril establish a firm basis for the imaginative elements of the story within the context of well-known societal conflicts. The incorporation of unusual elements into the fabric of our everyday life is a defining feature of magical realism, emphasizing the interaction between the fantastical and social critique.

"Later huddled in the charpoy, staring through the skylight window at the expansive darkness, I heard them arguing. At one point, I thought Ma said, 'Worry about the damn house,' and he tried to shush her, but she said something hot and angry and Baba got up and left. There was silence, then there was sobbing, and I lay there, filled with sorrow and excitement, listening to her grief, thinking if only there was a way to reconcile the two." (Fable 3: Resurrection Points)

The captivating combination of real and imaginary elements highlights the deep emotional impact it has on an individual. The noticeable disparity between Mama's anguish regarding their customs and Baba's emphasis on upholding the past is visible, along with Baba's apparent emotional aloofness. The absence of connection generates a disquieting atmosphere. The story emphasizes that the magical abilities, although appearing ordinary within their family, have significant consequences for their survival.

The juxtaposition of the sorrowful expression ("sobbing") and the endeavor to revive the departed ("sought out the nerve bundles") elicits a sense of unease. The extraordinary capability does not resolve all of their problems, and Mama's sincere reaction adds a personal element to the narrative.

"Dead Boy's face swam in front of my eyes. 'Baba, who do you think killed him?' His smile disappeared. 'Animals.' He didn't look at me when he tilted his jaw and said, 'How's your friend Sadiq these days? I haven't seen him in a while.'" (Fable 3: Resurrection Points)

The concept of magical realism involves exploring the ethical quandaries that emerge from the protagonists' distinctive capabilities. Baba's indifference towards the murder and his effort to redirect focus to another topic suggest a potential correlation between their behavior and the act of violence. The audience is left contemplating the underlying motive behind their behavior.

The concept of resurrection, initially depicted as a healing pursuit, now takes on a more sinister connotation. The extraordinary potency becomes entangled with potential wrongdoing, prompting the reader to contemplate its importance within the narrative. The inherent ambiguity in this environment is a vital element of magical realism because even the most remarkable events can have troubling connotations.

"I didn't know my hand was on it until I saw my fingertips curve. They pressed into the carcass like metal probes seeking, seeking. I didn't even need to feel for a point. In death, the creature's entire body was an enormous potential ready to be evoked... Blood trickled from the creature's right eye... My hand was hurting... leaving the newly risen feline tottering around the traffic median." (Fable 3: Resurrection Points)

The incorporation of the capability to resurrect a deceased kitty introduces an element of fantasy to the narrative. The objective depiction of the process - the scrutiny, the liberation, and the subsequent modification - shows the exceptional as if it were a customary scientific operation. This juxtaposition emphasizes the essential nature of magical realism, in which the extraordinary and the ordinary exist harmoniously together. What is particularly remarkable about this resurgence is the evident absence of happiness, which accentuates the protagonist's growing moral deterioration. His current pursuit stands in sharp opposition to his earlier ambition of promoting healing.

"I crouched, my eyes closed, and groped for the meat of the city with my other hand ... and let the current flow. The hand jerked, the fingers splayed. A sigh went through the shantytown. Somewhere in the dark bricks shifted. The ruins were stirring...Trembling, I crouched on my haunches and grasped the dead man's convulsing limb with both hands. I closed my eyes and jolted the Christian mohalla back to life." (Fable 3: Resurrection Points)

The revival of an entire town evokes a compelling and magical essence. The depiction of the run-down community undergoing rejuvenation evokes a majestic biblical tale. The selection of terms like "convulsing" and "jolted" emphasizes the highly intense character of this occurrence. This passage also signifies a shift in the distribution of authority. The protagonist undergoes a shift from utilizing his healing abilities for benevolent purposes to employing them as a means of seeking vengeance. This transformation introduces intricacy to the ethical dimensions of the story and blurs the line between the victims and perpetrators of violence.

"I looked at them, my people, faces shining with blood and fervor. Their shredded limbs dangled. Autopsy incisions crisscrossed their flesh, Blackened men, women and children swaying in rows, waiting for me.I raised my chin high and led my living thus on their final pilgrimage through this land of the dead." (Fable 3: Resurrection Points)

The portrayal of the deceased in the movement is a remarkable image that highlights the protagonist's exceptional abilities and the possible consequences of his anger. In this context, the examination of magical realism extends beyond just bringing back the deceased and dives into its purposeful use. The narrative's disconcerting ambiance is heightened by its focus on physical injury and the incorporation of militaristic terminology such as "army" and "pilgrimage." The juxtaposition of the mystical and the hideous lends a chilling aspect to the narrative. This underscores the possible adverse outcomes of uncontrolled power, a prevalent motif often encountered in magical realist literature.

5. Conclusion

Midnight Doorways: Fables from Pakistan defy convention by skillfully fusing aspects of magical realism into realistic surroundings. Malik urges readers to critically assess their presumptions and interpretations by challenging conventional notions of reality and narrative. His stories offer a variety of viewpoints for examining the complexities of the human condition against Pakistan's rich cultural setting. Ultimately, Malik's work shows how narrative can push boundaries, deepen our understanding, and spark critical thought on both personal and societal level.

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