



RESEARCH PAPER

Revealing the Unrevealed: An Investigation of Gothic Marxism in Ayesha Muzaffar's *Jinnistan*

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ABSTRACT

The research paper dissects the major characters along with their encounters with the ghosts in their daily life routine revealing the unrevealed political cards behind their narration endeavoring to achieve the utilitarian cause of contemporary Pakistani horror literature. Capitalism being an immortal malice has its own set of traumas attached to it and any revolution beyond that is believed to have its own kind of traumatic risks. The theory of 'Gothic Marxism' has been kept under scrutiny to sketch the fears aroused after apprehending the unconsciousness of capitalism which plagues a society through a particular cultural expression. All these dilemmas being clearly witnessed in the ideologies of laymen by anatomizing the genre of horror fiction depict the blind following of the unauthentic beliefs and cultural superstitions, leading the proletariats being processed into the corporeal fragility of capitalism. The cause ultimately compels to capture an aesthetic capacity along with a culturally therapeutic effect in the selected short stories of *Abu's Jinn* by Ayesha Muzaffar, through colossal fears engraved into cultural imaginations, on a mass level and their shift resonating with anxieties of rapid economic development historically.

KEYWORDS Capitalism, Culture, Economy, Gothic Marxism, Horror, Monster, Political Agenda

Introduction

Horror fiction commonly perceived as thriller entertainment holds a significant role in constructing deep reactionary politics through its patterns of narrations by entering and leaving the discourse on power. The term "Gothic" innately introduced by Italian authors towards the end of the Renaissance was commonly perceived for negative implementations standing as a synonym of the previously existing word, 'barbaric'. Whereas, Gothic Marxism being a branch of Marxism proposed by the communist, Karl Marx being keenly dissected by David McNally in his book, *Monsters of the Market; Zombies, Vampires and Global Capitalism*, mentions that how often the notion of capitalism only emerging from the older communal forms where economic life has been degraded is mistaken and the fact that for capitalism to prevail, it is necessary to tie customary arguments with the people, and the land is kept under ignorance. However, the bourgeois English class was not inclined towards the methodologies of dissection, refining the anatomy and corpse economy into an ill-omened weapon hired for class discipline for a long time until it all began in 1540 when Henry VII conferred the surgeons the right to the four corpses which were the annually hanged felons.

Gothicism gradually developed its way into enactments and was regarded as the theater of power from its first play in 1636 directed by Inigo Jones who had designed the

phoenix playhouse of the city. The first ever recognized publication under this genre was Horace Walpole's, *The Castle of Otranto* during the late 1764 from where began the criticism by tracing and identifying gothic elements in earlier texts of Shakespeare and the Graveyard poetry. Soon Gothic fiction through the self-conscious spirit of revival got recognition in the literary world. To reconnoiter its imprints in South Asia, a few Gothic texts were produced here during the peak of imperialism which featured characters belonging to India following a similar story narration and plot. These works generated during the nineteenth century illustrated the fascination of the British with the Orient considered to be exotic as it clashed with their fears of foreign races, ideas, and religions. Laureates such as Rabindranath Tagore, also lent their contributions to this genre where the monster instead of appearing in the domestic sphere confronted its victim in nature around a tree, pond, or cultivation fields. Tagore portrays ghosts as violating objects, harming the private homes of an individual or a family.

The punitive dissection became a mandatory rising matter among the elite irrespective of the elevating poverty with the spreading capitalism as the poor witnessed the market economy as a monster while the ruling class scrutinized it as the presence of a monstrosity in the mob. Meanwhile during the dissection of its fraction debating on the current era, the monster is observed not as a creature from an external realm but rather as a disturbing human whose presence is a threat to the lives, customary obligations, and societal order of the common masses. The monsters of the early modern period were also peculiar since they were clearly human and not supernatural. They were mainly the creations of degenerating social relations, and their conventional corporeal abnormality was replaced by social behavior which became the foremost sign of recognition for monstrosity. David McNally debates upon the anxious denials which deal with the returning of what has been suppressed as capitalism's power of illusion relies on its own method of concealing these monstrous illusions. Seemingly deprived of palpable reality, the monster in various appearances is cast across the screens through multi-media or read through the pages of popular fiction which the audience tends to deny. These faded substitutes designed in accordance with the ritual codes of the cultural industry further find their credibility from collective unconsciousness categorizing the domesticated beasts as harmless products of mass consumption. In accord to it, McNally states that: "Perseus wore a magic cap so that the monsters he hunted down might not see him. We draw the magic cap down over our eyes and ears so as to deny that there are any monsters" (McNally, 2011, p. 126).

Literature Review

The book, *Monsters of the Market; Zombies, Vampires and Global Capitalism* written by David McNally being divided into three major portions, commences with the dissection of the laborer body, political economy, and the rise of global capitalism highlighting the history of capitalism from the very institute shifting towards societal science functioning on corpse economy and lastly, the rapid establishments of literature conveying mediums emphasizing on Gothicism such as theater plays. The second chapter proving crucial for the research, named, "Marx's Monsters: Vampire -Capital and the Nightmare-World of Late Capitalism" forges the nucleus on the arousal of monstrosity from the ever-growing capitalism and its appearance and confrontation with the lower middle class further linking it with nightmares and fetishism.

Monster Culture (Seven Theses) by Jeffery Jerome Cohen through its seven parts scrutinizes the depiction of monsters in various cultures classifying it as a "modus legend" which is defined as the method of reading the cultures a society engenders. He establishes his position as a writer by categorizing the contemporary era as the one which has given

up on unified theory and follows the fragments instead of smooth epistemological wholes. History similar to culture, gender, individuality, and subjectivity is also completed in the form of rough fragments which are collected and tied together to construct a loose interconnected net similar to an unassimilated hybrid body of a monster. "Like a letter on the page, the monster signifies something other than itself: it is always a displacement, always inhabits the gap between the time of upheaval that created it and the moment into which it is received, to be born again" (Cohen, 1996, p. 2). Cohen defines the monster as the harbinger of a new category of crisis. A monster always escapes easy recognition because of its characteristic of smashing distinctions tactfully and therefore, due to this attribute of its ontological limitations, monsters always appear as a third being at the crucial time of crisis. They worsen the situation by problematizing the clash of extremes which puts into interrogation binary thinking. Harvey Greenberg being a creator of a nightmarish alien states that:

"It is a Linnaean nightmare, defying every natural law of evolution, by turn's bivalve, crustacean, reptilian, and humanoid. It seems capable of lying dormant within its egg indefinitely. It sheds its skin like a snake, its carapace like an arthropod. It deposits its young into other species like a wasp. It responds according to Lamarckian and Darwinian principles." (Greenberg, 1996, p. 4)

The podcast, "What is Gothic Marxism? A conversation with the Lit Crit guy" on the YouTube channel *Acid Horizon*, dissects the phenomena of rendering the monsters and living through capitalism systematically by describing the gothic depending on the spatial exposure similar to being confined in a particular environment opposite to the settings of other scientific fiction which moves forward. A reference is drawn from Carl Jung's archetypes of dreams where fairy tales depict the capacity of maintaining creative power present on the fringes of the dominant order and their elimination symbolizing the ending of the repressed forces which exist outside of the domain. Furthermore, the idea of a monster playing a dual role by being either the product of capitalism or a victim of horror in some gothic stories portrays them as second-class citizens and depicts the atrocities entrusted upon them. Possession and confession are known as the major attributes of gothic fiction along with the symbols and metaphors associated with zombies. Monsters are considered to have an objectively exact physical appearance but do have the flexibility of being probed under a specific cultural code. Another unrevealed fact relevant to the creation of gothic literature is being the presence of any pandemic or mis-happening on a larger geographical level. The most recent pandemic, Covid-19, allowed the audience to witness the production of folk horror and tactics for encountering the weird and misconceived conceptions of the world when it was unstable and violent.

The article, "What is Acid Communism?" proposed by the philosopher, Mark Fisher, explains the salient concept of acid communism by mentioning it as an illusion and putting forth the fact that capitalism will continue to prevail till the last moment of existence correlating it with haunt-ology which believes that the future has been canceled and the society willingly or unwillingly is supposed to look back at the cultural imaginations of its forefathers. They create the sense of nostalgia which Fisher associates with the Hollywood techniques of filmmaking and simultaneously, this ill of nostalgia meaning sickness and ache does not emerge because of a personal choice but rather a pathological inability of a human to do so. Another terminology, 'capitalist realism' is of the view that capitalism is eternal and never changing. "It's easier to imagine the end of the world than the end of capitalism" (Fisher, 2019, p. 4). Capitalism to end demands the initial ways to break out of the present myopia which relies on our consciousness. Marx named it 'class consciousness' focusing on the critiques and complexities in contradictions of the capital. Capitalism refrains one from its creative and innovative side whereas, on the

other hand, creativity is profitable in capitalism. Hence, this further draws a borderline between personal creativity having no limits to one's subjective imaginations and thoughts unfamiliar to the creativity of the capital and political industry where one's creativity becomes limited to the value of his creation.

"South Asian Gothic" by Elif Sendur depicts the South Asian countries being rarely recognized internationally for the production of gothic beginning from the unattractive portrayal of Dracula in the Pakistani film, *Zindaa Laash* (1967) to the gothic emerging with romance in the tale of *Mahal* (1949), the FM radio program in Bangladesh to the comic horror series directed by Manoj Chitra Katha towards the contemporary era displaying South Asian gothic on Netflix through miniseries like *Ghoul* (2018), *Spandana* (2015), a Sinhalese horror film and *Bulbul* (2017), portraying the revival of the tormented soul progressing a great deal in exhibiting the specific genre. South Asian gothic along with mere uncanny aims at illustrating the vigorous, culturally diverse and rich presence of the supernatural, therefore, majority aims at demonstrating the localization and comparison in reference to cultural, lingual, and ethnic beliefs. Instead of only confining Gothicism to the genre of a fixed aesthetical category, rather is proposed fluidity into it through the representation of distinguished local cultural practices, historical events, traumas on regional and national levels such as that of partition 1947 and 1971, anxieties and the collective unconsciousness. An accountable amount of horror fiction originates from folklore, tales, and myths following the common superstitious belief system residing in South Asia. The monsters bestowed existence on the basis of such cultural superstitions majorly include the animist sect of beliefs evolving from the Hindu-Buddhist cosmology and Islam introducing the monster named, "*Pontianak*" also called "*Kuntilanak*" in Indonesia being a cannibal which appears at the death of a pregnant woman usually during childbirth having a large appetite for blood. Secondly, "*Toyol*" is sketched as a gremlin-like undead infant which is summoned during the rituals of black magic similar to the oily man called "*Orang Minyak*" said to be found in Malaysia who kidnaps and rapes young girls and women. Thirdly and lastly, the most freaking is "*Penanggal*" who is a female with trailing organs and a vampire head who flies terrifically to quench her thirst for menstrual blood.

The movie, *Rooh* in relevance to South Asian monsters has been kept under study as it being a chilly story of demonic possession during the time of war on the fringes of a tropical rainforest portrays a girl caked in mud and blood, welcomed by a middle-class family who, on breaking her silence, becomes the prime cause of the ancient horrifying curse upon the family. Furthermore, as the research deals more crucially with the contemporary Gothicism, a recently casted short film, *Gulabo Raani* directed by Usman Mukhtar on the YouTube channel, "Eastern terrestrial stories" also projects a middle-class college-going boy who in his boarding school encounters a witch, said to be either a courtesan killed by her lover or an ex-principal hanged by her three former students. The ghost sings an uneasy song having a verse, "Why's there fear in the air?" intricately putting forth the plight of the common layman spending a mediocre life.

Material and Methods

The paper employs the qualitative framework for the research which has been used to inculcate all the findings and their reasoning. However, descriptive methodology has also been applied by providing textual analysis and references based on highlighting insights and dissecting the narratives through the different cultural points of view focusing on two major objectives. First, will be kept under study the culturally drenched characters experiencing contact and communication with ghosts, and second, will be discussed the

concealed political agenda which incorporates itself in horror fiction through the narration and imagery depiction, simultaneously.

Revealing the Unrevealed: Monsters as Harbingers of Capitalistic Crisis

The first short story, "Jurwa Behnain" by Ayesha Muzaffar intricately takes hold over the narration by mentioning a regional and cultural belief system of the ancient times when twins were the symbol of an ill omen as the second delivered child would often be thrown away in the sea and the woman who gave birth to the twins was cursed for having sexual intercourse with *shayateen*. (Satan) However, with the passage of time, this set of ideologies began to change through the aid of scientific developments, and twenty years later, twin sisters named Noor and Areeba were born. Areeba and Noor belonged to a middle-class family and buying Walls ice cream was their greatest happiness of the day. Exploring and defining monsters as emergence of capitalism, the character depiction of Zum Zum (the monster) through the perception of the Areeba is of value: "He has buttons for eyes. You fight with me when your *guriyan* (Toy doll) goes missing. You look everywhere for them. But I can see him gambling with them. I don't tell you so that you don't snatch them from him. He won't like that. He says I'm his *gurriya* too" (Muzaffar, 2023, p. 143). Areeba being an ignorant layman is unconsciously scared of the horrors of prevailing capitalism by refraining herself from telling her sister about its presence. The verb, 'gambling' itself being derogatory, portrays how a common man being aware of the atrocities done by the capitalistic monsters still chooses to stay silent. Lastly, Areeba's saying that she is also considered to be a *gurriya* by the jinn illustrates how a mediocre man is exploited having no individual opinion and existence of his own without the entities guarding capitalism.

Fisher's vision of realistic capitalism and its resonance with the appearance of the subject which homo- sapiens do not ought to decipher but have to do so is stated as followed: "The required subject – a collective subject – does not exist, yet the crisis, like all the other global crises we're now facing, demands that it be constructed" (Fisher, 2019, p. 3). Further, the depiction of Zum Zum makes it more convulsive and highlights the difficulty of the middle class in deciphering the injustices on them due to their repressed psyche. "And yet, Noor never knew what Areeba had talked about her whole life. Zum Zum, *dispenser main rehnaay wala aadmi, ulte paoun wala painter, phanke say latki huwi chambeli* (A man living in the water cooler, a man with twisted feet, Jasmine hanging from the fan ceiling)" (Muzaffar, 2023, p. 143). Areeba's encounter with her supernatural talent of being able to see the unseen stood as a blessing but at the same time, a curse, as well. This situation of the proletariat class is critically narrated as: "Ignorance is strength" (Orwell, 1949, p. 7). The argument is further solidified through the text when both the twin sisters during their trip to Northern Pakistan perceive the surroundings differently. When Noor was enjoying the snow and the car slipped; Areeba was horrified by the sight of a long-legged bent man with a single eye on his forehead pushing their car down the road. However, the first gothic encounter of Areeba with Zum Zum was when she along with her sister was enjoying ice cream at their favorite Popsicle shop again providing another evidence of analyzing it through the perspective of gothic Marxism. It is always in the slightest of these short moments when the middle class is cherishing its temporary happiness that the horrors of capitalism strike them like a tooth of a poisonous serpent. Ayesha Muzaffar again embeds a cultural belief by discussing how Areeba's mother had always advised them to share food with the needy because there would be no *hisaab* (Computation) for it on the Day of Judgment. Areeba being innocent kept on providing portions of her food to her uninvited friends casting a reflection on the mindsets of the middle class who in the hope of a better tomorrow continue cutting their meals and luxuries of the present short. Days passed by with Noor's extreme illness finding no recovery worsening the situation further as Areeba

was able to witness a little lady with aluminum gray, popped-open eyes staring at her, who no matter how much she screamed, stayed there like before. "Noor, feverish, refused to move from her bed. Her rosy cheeks that almost narrated tales of sadness in a jar, looked like an *aam* (Mango) without *gutli* (Mango seed) lifeless" (Muzaffar, 2023, p. 146). To conclude the story, the reason behind Noor's sickness were the *Jhumka's* she had brought from Murree. The *Jhumkas* holding the symbolic significance of wealth and materialism depict that the very minor and subconscious attempts of a middle-class person instead of making his life better await more tragedies as they have never been destined to spend a comfortable life.

The short story, "Blue Khussas" begins by mentioning its time period being that of 1989 arousing the interest of the audience in ancient times and the horror related to them by cunningly deviating them from the capitalistic atrocities of life. The story being of a middle-class household consists of a grandmother, two old parents, a married son, his wife, and a single daughter whose class system is verified through the mentioning of the cultural ritual as it was for the first time that television existed in their house after receiving in the dowry of their daughter-in-law named Falak. Falak in the story has been initially portrayed as a cruel and cunning sister-in-law who would often follow her own instincts and spoil the reputation of her sister-in-law, Rimsha, by boldly speaking about her unsophistication in front of everyone. However, it does not take long for time to change, and an unexpected and unfamiliar turbulent shift comes into the life of Falak. After being adamant enough and fulfilling her desire to buy a much better *khussa* than Rimsha for *Eid*; life did not remain the same for her. Hence, the analysis will deal with Falak as a second-class citizen being a victim of the monstrosity of capitalism.

The *Khussa's* themselves in the story stand as the symbol of a minute desire of a second-class citizen; a daughter-in-law residing in a patriarchal society wishing to buy a more attractive *khussa* than the rest for the sake of some appreciation. The *khussa's* which catch the eye of Falak are described as: "It was the gem-work on the shoes- stones brighter than those she had ever laid her eyes on. They have to be real stones" (Muzaffar, 2023, p. 131). However, similar to the majority of second-class citizens, the happiness of Falak on *Eid* day after wearing the most astonishing attire and shoes was mortal and eventually came to an end. Falak started to feel dizzy with a terrible headache which the grandmother assumed to be a sign of good news but once the doctor arrived, it was clarified that there was no such reason. Everyone in the house, including Falak's husband, left her all alone subjugated in the room as a punishment for faking an illness. *Dadi* (Grandmother) advised her grandson to divorce Falak as she was a liar and a woman involved in extramarital affairs setting a perfect cultural instance of how a daughter-in-law unable to fulfill the unrealistic desires of her in-laws, gets subjected to oppression. It also consists of the pervasive cultural concern that: "Things are not only not what they seem: what they seem is what they are, not a unity of word or image and thing, but words and images without things or as things themselves, effects of narrative form and nothing else" (Mambrol, 2018, p. 3). Additionally, the condition of Falak after this incident provides further clarity to her misery. "*Kamray main chup chaap pari rehti hai. Subah jis huliye main chor kay jata houn wesay hi hoti hai*" (She lies in her room silently, all day in the same condition as I leave her daily in the morning) (Muzaffar, 2023, p. 133).

The latter half of "Blue Khussas", deals with the appearance of a monster aligning it with the criticism of McNally who defined monsters as the product of capitalism as well as a laborer or second-class body subjected to marginalization where monsters are put to work and interpreted in varying capacities. For instance, zombies are both the horse that comes to devour the empire of capitalism and simultaneously, also the laborer body that is assigned to work in the service of the same capitalist enterprise. Farooq, the husband of

Falak comes to know about an extremely disturbing fact during a conversation with his friend, Rizwan Akhtar, who mentions that his wife had appeared in the houses of other people at night. Worst of all, she did put up a show that no *khandaani* (Family oriented) woman would. The whole town was impregnated with rumors of Falak's eerie and seductive appearance at night with her prominent *Laal Hount*. On hearing this, Farooq hurried towards his home boiling in rage but on entering his room witnessed Falak drenched in menstrual blood with muddy blue *khussa* placed beside the bed. Falak was immediately divorced, and it was by throwing her out of the room that her clear representation as a vampire was witnessed. "He saw that on his back was no Falak, but a woman in his former wife's strands of hair which were thick and rough like an old *banyan* tree's roots, wrinkled *baasi tamatar* - (Rotten tomato) like ski, and a smile that showed no teeth" (Muzaffar, 2023, p. 135). This collective subjectivity of Falak can be further explained through the narrative of Deleuze who puts it: "Acid heralds a moment of the weird where time itself becomes malleable and the internal, apparently fixed realities of consciousness become unmoored - 'I find the other in me (Ligotti, 2019, p. 3)." Later, it was said that Farooq was charged with the murder of his wife as her body was discovered with an injury on her head displaying the results of being dragged across the bed. Conclusively, the description of the monster as similar to humans, marks off the text successfully in painting a monster of modern times along with the ideology that monsters can exist in the form of second-class citizens who initially being victimizers become victims themselves sooner or later. It was the innocent desire of Falak to wear the most beautiful *khussa* on *Eid* which came at the cost of her own life. As Fisher mentions: "The impression of a world which could be free' can be detected in the very structures of a capitalist realist world which makes freedom impossible" (Fisher, 2019, p. 4).

The third short story, "Mithae" placed under the heading of "Horror Stories for Children" stands as one of the strongest pillars of the misconception that gothic fiction is only for entertainment and creating amusement to Ayesha Muzaffar herself agrees by stating that anything which Pakistanis love more than December weddings and *desi* food are the *jinn* stories which are read with the intention of escaping the realistic world and satisfying one's id, ego, and curiosity intertwined. However, in this search for entertainment, one surpasses the major scrutiny of the text which deals with the horrors of capitalism on different levels. The story begins with the character depiction of Anum who had been an all-rounder in her life and had ambitions for the future. "Anum was a good girl. She got straight A's, and her long legs ensured she was a star in her aerobics class" (Muzaffar, 2023, p. 61). Anum, not having all the luxuries in life, was still lucky enough to possess a majestic beauty, a loving family, great female friends, and a great career ahead but her Achilles heel stood the secret of seeing the unknown. Anum's father owned a *mithai* shop from where Anum would order endless *rasgullahs*, *Kaju barfi*, milk *ladu* and *jalebi* (Typical South Asian Confectionary items) but yet stood there a void in her life because of the secret she carried along. "The secret made little Anum sheera-less" (Muzaffar, 2023, p. 62).

The portrayal of monster in the story, "Mithae" provides credibility to the contemporary gothic fiction blurring the lines of distinction as monsters and vampires do not appear in the form of supernatural entities but rather have traits similar to those of *Homo sapiens* as it was a family of *jinnns* consisting of a husband, a wife, and their child, described as: "The woman looked younger than any of the women seated in the shop. She was beautiful too, and her head was partially covered with a *dupatta*. Her eyes were green" (Muzaffar, 2023, p. 63). As the research aims at employing the *jinnns* with the symbolic representation of capitalism therefore, the family of *jinnns* which Anum saw stood as the harbinger of misfortune in her life. She did not remain the one who was destined to have

a progressive career due to her intellect or a renowned athlete due to her excellent skills in sports as it was soon after her recovery that she was betrothed to Yasir, a twenty-five years old, who had recently completed his Masters. The marriage preparations were in full swing, but Anum had lost the charisma that she once used to cherish. "Anum had a sinking feeling in her heart" (Muzaffar, 2023, p. 65). Franco Berardi, debating on capitalism under such circumstances mentions that: "Capitalism has brought about the colonization of the domain of time, of the mind and perception so that the future collapses" (Berardi, 2019, p. 8). The ill omens entrusted upon her did not stop here but emerged as a gigantic monster when she saw her reflection in the mirror of the sweet shop as a newly wedded bride in the most enigmatic attire. "The crimson red was redder than the blood a paper cut had given her, redder than the glowy signal outside the shop, redder than- tomatoes. Chilies" (Muzaffar, 2023, p. 67). Red here stands as an alarming signified of the utmost danger and horror of capitalism. The foreshadowing of the alarming red was revealed when Anum disappeared early in the morning on her wedding day and was never found. It is said that the family of *jinn*s she had witnessed had taken her along to make her the bride of their son. The family had been regular customers at Mr. Amir's sweetshop and had always adored Anum. Hence, the short story conveys to the readers exploring the ruthless nature of capitalism, a perfect read through the character of Anum, who being a mediocre tried her superlative to achieve the best out of the abrupt paths in her life but still, the monsters of capitalism stood stronger with their endless nets of entrapments

The last two untitled short stories under the section, "Odd Stories from the Streets of Pakistan" aim at illustrating the utter reality of capitalism where the characters will not unite with death at the end but shall start living their lives with a change after realizing that certain rules of a capitalistic society are immortal and there is no cure to them other than gulping nauseous sips from its cauldron. Ayesha Muzaffar herself pens down a line stating the nature of horror stories and the perception of humans towards them by mentioning that: "Today, we have such troubling tales that have happened in houses, *masjids*, and even *shaadi* halls. And though there is much truth to it, there is little the mind can understand" (Muzaffar, 2023, pp. 180- 181).

The first story deals with the daily routine of a South Asian housewife named Abida Shameem, who being a victim of capitalism had altered her living style by sleeping till noon every day. As a young bride, she would wake up early in the morning to make breakfast for her husband who rarely visited the kitchen on which Abida never complained. It was on one strange morning when Abida was making breakfast in the kitchen that her husband came in and helped her out but on waking him up from his sleep later in the day, he couldn't recall helping Abida. It continued for a set of following days where Abida's husband would come into the kitchen early in the morning and then with the passage of time got replaced by her actual husband who wasn't as romantic as the morning husband. Soon Abida Shameem realized that the morning husband was either her hallucination or a *jinn* who tried tempting her. The morning husband in this story stands as an emerging sign of capitalism and the miseries it brings along. The story ends with the lines: "It was then that Shameem decided that she would sleep till noon, for she was a loyal woman with good morals" (Muzaffar, 2023, p. 182). The unwilling but necessary change in married life of Abida shows how a man belonging to the middle class must give up on even his very microscopic desires to spend a life with a few moments of peace. However, while doing so, the human skips many mesmerizing events because he consoles himself through the fact that all luxurious moments aren't written in his destiny as he belongs to the lower working class. For instance, Abida was not there to congratulate her *bhaabi* when she had a son at six in the morning. Hence, it provides authenticity to the fact that capitalism is not to be considered merely as a simple hedonistic indulgence but

rather is to be conceived as the rewiring of the direction of desire and the intrusion of the abnormal and uncanny into our daily life experiences.

The second short story deals with the similar subject matter by narrating the life of a poor young boy named Suleman Feroz, who always felt disgusted at the profession of his father, who was a *samosa* seller in Old Lahore. Although the *samosas* were quite popular and famous among the people of that locale and it took his father a calculable amount of hard work while making them, Suleman was never fascinated. He ended up running away from his house in search of a better future, unlike his father who wanted him to join his small business of *samosas*. The empty pockets and starvation compelled him to look for a job and he got himself hired as the caretaker of the graves. Days passed by but there had always been this sense of uneasiness which Suleman felt in the graveyard. Out of curiosity and frustration, he decided to speculate about the uneasiness keenly and ended up digging a grave from where he could hear the uncanny rhythms. "The mud unfolded to reveal a sitting corpse, covered with blazing red serpents which no human had ever seen" (Muzaffar, 2023, p. 188). The monster, by placing its greasy hand on the leg of Suleman, interrogated him with its toothless grin: "Samosa Khao gay?" (Muzffar, 2023, p. 188), and the story eventually reaches its end.

Conclusion

The Gothic Marxist interpretation of Ayesha Muzaffar's *Jinnistan* believes in it as an expression of contemporary class struggle through the atrocities of capitalism instead of an art piece lending moments of solitude and mass entertainment. The research lends an opinion that literature is not to be considered only as a matter of personal expression or taste but its association with the social and political conditions of the era it has been produced in. Meanwhile, during the production of gothic fiction, it carries the horrors of capitalism in its structure through which a dominant hegemony is promoted which supports the interests of the bourgeois and exploits the mediocre man than be it the sickness of Noor in *Jurwa Behnein*, the death of Falak in *Blue Khussas*, abduction of Anum in *Mithae* or the unwanted and altered lifestyle of Abida and Suleman in the "Odd Stories from the Streets of Pakistan". However, this by any means does not provide an excuse to the common masses to remain completely submissive and ignorant of the cruelties being entrusted on them but instead demands a keen scrutiny of any hegemony being constructed through the interests of the bourgeois whether it be through Repressive State Apparatuses or Ideological State Apparatuses, the later including the mass media and literary arts which has been the major focus of the research.

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