# Representation of Love and Loss through Magical Realism in Leslye Walton's *The Strange and*Beautiful Sorrows of Ava Lavender

#### **A Thesis**

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Surabaya, 28<sup>th</sup> June 2018

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#### Walton's The Strange and Beautiful Sorrows of Ava Lavender

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#### **ABSTRACT**

Ishlahiyah, Hadiyatul. 2018. Representation of Love and Loss through Magical Realism in Leslye Walton's The Strange and Beautiful Sorrows of Ava Lavender. English Department, Faculty of Arts and Humanities, Sunan Ampel State Islamic University Surabaya.

Advisor: Sufi Ikrima Sa'adah, M.Hum

This research focuses on how love and loss are represented in a magical realist novel *The Strange and Beautiful Sorrows of Ava Lavender* penned by Leslye Walton. This research applies Wendy B. Faris' characteristic of magical realism in order to uncover the magical realism within the novel and further modeled the representation of love and loss with John Alan Lee's Colour Wheel of Love and Louise Hay-David Kessler's typology of loss respectively.

This research applies descriptive qualitative method. The result of this research confirms that this novel is truly a magical realist work of literature. All of the five characteristics of magical realism are found in the novel. They are: Ava's wings, Viviane and Emilienne's magical talents as the irreducible elements, their normal life as the phenomenal world, the doubts on Ava's wings and Emilienne's strangeness or the unsettling doubt, transformation and apparition in the merging realms, odd plant and seasons as the disruptions of time, space, and identity. The result also shows that the chosen main female characters are all experiencing love and loss that are all endowed and or represented by magical elements and events.

**Keywords:** Magical realism, love, loss, colour wheel of love, typology of loss.

#### **INTISARI**

Ishlahiyah, Hadiyatul. 2018. Representation of Love and Loss through Magical Realism in Leslye Walton's The Strange and Beautiful Sorrows of Ava Lavender. Sastra Inggris, Fakultas Adab dan Humaniora, Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Ampel Surabaya.

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Skripsi ini membahas tentang bagaimana cinta dan kesedihan direpresentasikan dalam sebuah novel penganut aliran realisme magis (keajaiban nyata) berjudul *The Strange and Beautiful Sorrows of Ava Lavender* karya Leslye Walton. Novel ini menceritakan tentang kehidupan seorang gadis bernama Ava yang lahir dengan sepasang sayap. Ia hidup bersama ibunya, Viviane dan neneknya, Emilienne yang sama anehnya. Sepanjang cerita, ketiga tokoh wanita tersebut melalui banyak pengalaman cinta serta kesedihan yang unik untuk di teliti.

Penelitian ini menggunakan karakterisasi menurut Wendy B. Faris dalam mengidentifikasi realisme magis dalam novel tersebut. Selanjutnya, penelitian ini memodelkan representasi cinta dan kesedihan menggunakan teori Lingkaran Warna Cinta gagasan John Alan Lee dan tipologi kesedihan gagasan Louise Hay dan David Kessler. Metode yang diterapkan dalam penelitian ini merupakan metode deskriptif kualitatif. Adapun tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mendeskripsikan realisme magis dalam novel dan bagaimana unsur magis digunakan untuk merepresentasikan cinta dan kesedihan. Hasil dari skripsi ini menegaskan bahwa novel ini benar-benar sebuah karya sastra yang menganut realisme magis dengan ditemukannya keseluruhan dari lima karakteristik didalamnya, yaitu sayap Ava serta bakat ajaib Viviane dan Emilienne yang merupakan unsur tak tereduksi, kehidupan normal mereka sebagai unsur riil, keraguan pada sayap Ava dan keanehan Emilienne yang tak terselesaikan, transformasi dan penampakan pada penyatuan dua dunia, serta tumbuhan dan musim aneh sebagai kekacauan terhadap waktu, ruang, dan identitas.

Hasil dari penelitian ini juga menunjukkan bahwa ketiga tokoh utama wanita yang terpilih dalam kasus ini memiliki pengalaman tentang cinta dan kesedihan yang diperkaya atau direpresentasikan dengan adanya elemen serta kejadian magis yang telah di temukan dalam novel ini.

**Kata kunci:** Realisme magis, cinta, kehilangan, lingkaran warna cinta, tipologi kehilangan

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#### **CHAPTER I**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

#### 1.1. **Background of the Study**

Love is an enigma (Chapman 4). It is a feeling just as much as it is an abstract thing. God granted love to all his creatures that experience it through so many different ways. Through those differences, love creates its own unique and diverse definitions. Someone's experience with love can affect how they perceive love, and further how they define love. As God's creature, every human being experiences love (Masters paragraph 5). Whether they really do believe in it or not, accept it or not, acknowledge it or not, express it or not, they have this very emotion. It is not just confined as the tie of a relationship between a male and a female, or two of the kind, neither is simply just an attraction to the things other than oneself. But love is something more meaningful. Fisher argued that it may be understood as a function to keep human beings together against menace, and also facilitating the continuation of the species (5-8).

With love, comes another one, loss. One cannot expect love without having to face the consequences of the loss (Vandider paragraph 2). Loss brings grief, or in other words, an intense sadness when something terrible happens, which is the loss itself. And just as much love creates a perspective to its bearer, loss does so too. Furthermore, loss is not only affecting the way they perceive the possibility of another love later in their lives, but also how they see the world in general can

deliberately change. And it is not only limited to human beings alive that experience love and loss, the characters in literature experience it too.

These characters in literature are somehow mirroring those of people in real life. They are sometimes, if not all the time, experience the same emotion as people in real life. It is due to fact that as we all know, literature is a mirror of life. Authors create something that readers can relate to, so that they can connect with the story even more. And as Dr. Paul Leon Masters stated that "every human being experiences love" (paragraph 5), characters created inside the literary works happen to be in the same path. No matter how many genres literature clustered into, love, and subsequently loss become the main and sometime secondary main theme of literature. It also can be found in magical realism, or some prefers the term magical realist literature.

In literature, magical realism is a term used to describe a situation or an event that is a combination between everyday realities and supernatural elements that are woven seamlessly into one single story (Barton 31). These magical realist stories seem so normal yet so strange, but the readers can still relate to them due to the realities that are still being the prominent aspect of the story itself. Part of it is that the characters also experience the same emotions such as previously stated before, love and grief caused by loss.

The term 'magic' in magical realism itself refers to the sense of newness in which the reality is exaggerated as well as endowed with something rather entirely different from what it usually is. Thus it made something entirely new from the different basic concept of this reality because of the clarity and clinical details enticed to it. Franz Roh further gives addition to his explanation that this concept of magic which is designated to oppose 'realistic' (qtd. In Hegerfeldt 13). The key to interweave the magical elements that are used to be the opposite of realistic into the reality itself lies on the scheming of the narrative on how the author represent the life his or her characters when they experience the magic in their lives, treat it as any other events that happen to them. Just like a normal person dealing with their everyday matters, characters in magical realism story deal with magical events and situation as if it is what the creator of the world will it to be. They demonstrate that those magical elements are just part of their reality (Hegerfeldt 14).

Those realities combined with the newness of magical elements inside the novel somehow create an entirely new perspective of love and loss when the characters experience them themselves throughout the novel. This makes the love and loss representation inside magical realist novels pretty much fascinating to be explored. Everyone has their own amazing stories about love, and while some characters may have pair of wings, ability to project their feeling into their cooking, or even reading every little change of weather as an omen, love could be more magical than how the author created these characters enticed with wonders. But who knows exactly what the author has in store?

This is why the researcher gets interested to further investigate the magical realism in a novel and how the author uses it to represent how love and loss is handled by the characters with those extraordinary traits. Because there had been a million and one studies regarding magical realism inside of a literary work but throughout its history, the majority of it has been more into the fact that magical

realism being used for political critiques and heavily attached it to the postcolonialism and postmodernism only. The researcher feels like those are not the only theme in magical realism. Love and loss could not be less charming than those to be explored.

In order to fulfill this study of exploration of love and loss within magical realism, the researcher found a novel entitled The Strange and Beautiful Sorrows of Ava Lavender, penned by an American debut author Leslye Walton that tells a story of titular character Ava Lavender who was born with a pair of white and brown speckled wings sprouting out of her shoulder blades. Ava lives with her mother and grandmother, both are single mothers, in fictional neighborhood called Pinnacle Lane in modern day Seattle, Washington.

Ava's mother and grandmother are no less strange and sorrowful than Ava herself. They have been through great loss of their respective loves throughout their lives just as much suffering as Ava when she was infatuated with the man next door who mistaken her, born with wings, as she being an angel sent from God above just for him. This led to the most devastating tragedy of the history of Ava Lavender's and her ancestors' strange lives, that is the attack done by Nathaniel.

This novel is written in a unique narrative style, in which the narrator, Ava Lavender haven't even born through the halfway of the novel. Ava narrates the life of her grandmother and her considered strange family as well as the life of her mother by using third person point of view up until the moment Ava Lavender was born in that novel, she starts to use the first person point of view for her own upbringings yet

still she narrates the continuity of the lives of the other main characters of this novel which is full of magical events.

With that style and Walton's ability to weave the magical elements into Ava and her ancestor's reality and the way she engrave the love and loss that they experience is the factor that making this book really captivating. The researcher thinks that it will only be fitting to choose her debut novel for this study. The researcher is in no doubt that she is interested to be able explore love and loss in her magical realism novel. Because love is as real as it is magical after all.

#### 1.2. **Statement of the Problems**

To conduct the analysis the researcher ought to do regarding the magical realism in the novel *The Strange and Beautiful Sorrows of Ava Lavender* by Leslye Walton and how the author represents the love and loss through it, she formulated the problem for this research as follows:

- 1. How is magical realism presented in Leslye Walton's *The Strange and* Beautiful Sorrows of Ava Lavender?
- 2. How are the magical elements used to represent the love and loss experienced by the female main characters in Leslye Walton's *The Strange and Beautiful* Sorrows of Ava Lavender?

#### 1.3. **Objectives of the Study**

The researcher's goal of doing research regarding the novel *The Strange and* Beautiful Sorrows of Ava Lavender by Lesliye Walton will be as the following:

1. To describe magical realism presented in Leslye Walton's *The Strange and* Beautiful Sorrows of Ava Lavender.

2. To explain the way magical elements used to represent the love and loss experienced by the female main characters in Leslye Walton's *The Strange* and Beautiful Sorrows of Ava Lavender.

#### 1.4. **Significance of the Study**

In doing this research, the researcher hopes that her writing will help other students of English Department by using it as a reference of further studies or basing it on why they get interested in literature and subsequently magical realism novels. Moreover the researcher hopes that the readers will be benefited by reading it as to get a deeper knowledge of literature and a better understanding of the concept of magical realism, especially in the novel The Strange and Beautiful Sorrows of Ava Lavender by Lesliye Walton as it is an enchanting novel worth making an example of great Magical Realism literary work to say the least.

Furthermore, the researcher hopes that this study will be able to inspire people who read this despite their non-literary background that love and loss is a common feeling as well as it is an experience to all human beings even fictionally created inside a literary work. And that it is our duty to be able to cherish love as the way God granted it to us and to also be able to cope with loss and the grief it causes along the way. We do not have to let the grief get the best of us and fogging our perspective of love later in life that we surely will meet and feel again. Because we know that love is obviously not just about the union of two personas. But love as a whole thing to itself that makes life more bearable.

Moreover, people will get the basic knowledge in order to differentiate the unique way they do love and consequently loss that maybe they are unaware of. So they will be able to handle it with the most fitting way if not the best way. And with that the researcher truly wish that people who read this will pull through their lives with a heart full of loves and make them realize that love is as real as it is magical.

#### 1.5. **Scope and Limitation**

This study will concern about magical realism in the novel *The Strange and* Beautiful Sorrows of Ava Lavender by Leslye Walton. And it will also focus on how the author, or in this case, Leslye Walton used magical realism to represent the love and loss that the characters have to experience throughout the novel. Thus the data with magical events and experiences will only be those regarding the characters regarding their phase of love and loss. The characters chosen for this particular study are the female main protagonists of the novel which are consist of the titular character, Ava Lavender, the narrator of this novel, along with her mother Viviane Lavender and also her grandmother Emilienne Roux.

In this novel, Ava Lavender, the narrator, narrates all of the characters' lives, even the minor character that only appears for several pages and only cross the main characters' life for a time. Thus the researcher will only use Ava's thought and narration that are about the chosen character for this study. Other magical events or experience that happened to other secondary character will be added to the ones that the mentioned character cross path with. Such as Gabe, the gentle giant who is involved in a complicated love situation with Viviane will be listed as the odds of

Viviane's love. And also Nathaniel Sorrows who happens to be the villainous love interest of Ava Lavender.

Due to the fact that this study focuses on the magical realism in the novel, the researcher will apply magical realism as the main theory to be able to describe it in the analysis part of this study. Furthermore, the researcher will make use of Wendy B. Faris's concept of characteristics of magical realism to help further distinguish the magical realism inside the novel. Aside from that, since the first research question will automatically reveal how the magical realism is presented, which means events that are concerning love and loss as seen through it will be retrieved, thus John Alan Lee's color wheel theory of love and Louise Hay and David Kessler's typology of loss will also be used as supporting theories to help further understanding of representation of love and loss respectively.

#### 1.6. **Method of the Study**

In this section, the researcher will discuss the methods that she will use in this study. The writer will explain the general process of collecting and analyzing the data. This section consists of research design, data source, data collection and data analysis.

#### 1. Research Design

In conducting this study, the writer adopts library research. The methodology used in this study is descriptive qualitative method. Cresswell defined Qualitative method as an approach for exploring and understanding the meaning of individuals or groups as well as a social or human problem (32). The

characteristic of this method is the analysis done inductively, focus in individual meaning through interpretation (Cresswell 32). Dev explained that The core of qualitative analysis lies in the related processes of describing phenomena, classifying it, and seeing how our concepts interconnect (31) so then it can be inferred that the data analysis will be done with words in the form of description rather than in statistic and the result of the research doesn't need hypothesis testing. Thus based on this explanation the writer feels descriptive qualitative method will be the most suitable design for this research since this study will consist a description.

Furthermore, this study applies magical realism as the main theory. This theory is used to explore how the author illustrates magical realism throughout the novel The Strange and Beautiful Sorrows of Ava Lavender. Meanwhile, the color wheel theory of love and Hay and Kessler typology of loss will be used in this study as supporting theory to help further understanding of the concept of love and loss that the author represented by using magical realism.

#### 2. Data Source

This study uses two kinds of data sources, that is primary and secondary data sources. The primary data sources of this study is the literary work itself *The* Strange and Beautiful Sorrows of Ava Lavender novel. The novel will be downloaded from the social media website, www.vk.com in the form of PDF and/or of EPUB for handy reading on the researcher's mobile phone. The data

will be in the form of Ava's narrative regarding the illustration of magical realism inside of the story and also in the form of conversation, thought, and still the narrative of Ava that contain the description of the way love and loss being perceived by other characters that Ava also narrates in the novel.

The researcher will also make use of any references such as articles, journal, fan-based websites, and also reviews as secondary data source to get a better understanding of the novel and to get any other additional information of the novel and its main character as the focus of this research with its providing the explanation relate to the statement of the problem.

#### 3. Data Collection

First, the researcher will read the novel *The Strange and Beautiful Sorrows of* Ava Lavender by Leslye Walton multiple times to get the best understanding of the novel as well as to be able to distinguish the magical realism inside the novel. After that the researcher will do highlighting and collect the phrases, sentences, and paragraphs that contains and describe the magical events of the novel and also those describing the love and loss experienced by the characters to put them together into a list. The list of selected data will be classified according to the statement of the problem.

#### 4. Data Analysis

The data collected from the previous step will then be analyzed in this step. The researcher analyzes the listed magical events and further describing how magical realism presented in the novel based on the evidences in the selected data list. Furthermore, the researcher will employ the magical realism theory in order to strengthen the argument of magical realism existed is the novel.

After that the researcher analyzed the classified data refer to the second research question regarding the representation of love and loss through magical realism. In this case, the researcher employs the color wheel theory of love and Hay and Kessler's typology of loss thus explanation of love and loss representation through magical realism in the novel is retrieved. And last, the researcher concludes the analysis in the forms of representation of love and loss as experienced by the female main protagonist through magical realism in the novel.

#### **CHAPTER II**

#### REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

#### 2.1. Theoretical Framework

In this section, the researcher discusses about the theories she uses for this study. The chosen theories are divided into two kinds. First the main theory is magical realism, along with Wendy B. Faris's concept of characteristic of it, and then there will be two supporting theories, which will be John Alan Lee's colour wheel theory of love and the typology of loss. Those theories will help the researcher further analyze the novel in the next chapter. Here, the researcher will only provide the explanations relevant to the theory used and left the unnecessary details for those branches or subtypes of theories that have nothing to do with the novel and or later with the analysis.

#### 2.1.1. Magical Realism

The term magical realism is broadly descriptive rather than critically rigorous. To put it in simple words, it can be defined as what happens when an extremely detailed, realistic humanly world is invaded by "something too strange to believe" (Strecher 267). Paul Harvey in *Oxford Companion to English Literatures* defines a strong narrative drive as a common thing within magical realist literature works. The recognizably realistic merges with the unanticipated and the inexplicable and in which elements of dreams, fairy story, or mythology combine with the everyday reality, often in mosaic or kaleidoscopic pattern of refraction and recurrence (qtd. In Drabble 20).

Angel Flores further states that in magic realism, we find the alteration of the ordinary and the everyday into the extraordinary and the unreal. It is predominantly an art of surprises. Time exists in a kind of timeless fluidity and the unreal happens as part of reality. Once the reader accepts the fait accompli, the rest follows with logical accuracy (qtd. In Zamora and Faris 113-116).

Magic realism differs from pure fantasy for the most part because it is set in a normal, modern world with genuine descriptions of humans and society. In magic realism, the magical elements are blended into a realistic atmosphere in order to access a deeper understanding of reality. These magical elements are explained like normal occurrences that are presented in a straightforward manner which allows the real and the fantastic to be acknowledged in the same stream of thought. (Shindu 210).

#### 2.1.2. Characteristics of Magical Realism

Wendy B. Faris in her book *Ordinary Enchantments: Magical Realism and Remystification of Narrative*, proposes that magical realist fiction has five characteristics in it. Those are *the irreducible elements*, *the phenomenal world*, *the unsettling doubts, merging realms*, and also *disruptions of time*, *space and identity* (Faris 7). Below are the explanations for each characteristic:

#### 1. The Irreducible Elements

The "*irreducible element*" is an occurrence that according to the laws of the universe is unexplainable by what David Young and Keith Hollaman explain as "logic, familiar knowledge, or received belief," which has been formulated in western empirically based discourse (qtd. In Faris 7).

Being that the extraordinary and magical events are recounted just as casually as the ordinary ones, the readers sometimes finding difficulties in straighten them out. Adding it that they are written in such a vivid description unlike the mysteriously transmitted traditional narratives such as myth and folklore. Tzvetan Todorov eplains that this irreducible element "goes beyond the uncanny as is it exists as an incidental element in various kinds of narrative" (qtd. In Faris 7).

The laws of the universe along with its conventional norms of reason and logic, while still being accepted as it helps understand and later describe the culture, the magical realist authors, as Amaryll Chanady puts it "abolish the antinomy between the natural and the supernatural on the level of textual representation" (qtd. In Faris 8). This led to the readers' doubts from judging this magical realist story as rational or irrational. Cooper similarly sees "the relationship between the magical and the scientific" as essential to magical realism (220). She further argues that "it is the narrative space where the educated writer's simultaneous ironic distance from and acceptance of, prescientific worldviews negotiate the magical realist stance" (Cooper 221). So textually, by bringing the irreducible element side by side with the normal happenstance, magical things "really" do happen inside the story.

Readers find themselves accepting the story to be as the as the narrators or characters' projections due the fact that these irreducible elements are seamlessly assimilated into the realistic textual environment of the story (Faris 8). The outrageousness of the reality is often underrated by the ordinary people's casual

reaction over it. The magic grows almost unnoticeably out of the real, and the narrator registers no surprise, with the result that the element of surprise is redirected onto the history we are about to witness within the story (13-14).

#### 2. The Phenomenal World

The second characteristic of magical realism is the realistic side that Faris calls it the phenomenal world. This is the realism of the magical realism, which is genuinely depicting the real. Or to put it in Faris words is the "realistic descriptions create a fictional world that resembles the one we live in, often by extensive use of detail" (14). On one hand, it renews the realistic tradition. On the other hand, in addition to including magical events or phenomena, magical realist fiction includes intriguing magical details. Fortunately, those details represent a clear distinction from realism (Faris 14-15).

Magical events are usually grounded textually in a traditionally realistic, even an explicitly factual manner. As Cooper has stated it, "the mysterious, sensuous, unknown, and unknowable are not in the subtext, as in realist writing, but rather share the fictional space with history." (36) Within the fiction, author will often do a historical anchoring in which they put some elements from history that will persist even when the fantastical element shows its colors ever so slightly (Faris 15-16),

If we focus on reference rather than on description, we may witness distinctive recreations of historical events, often alternate versions of widely known historical events (Faris 15). There are also elements that differ from the mythical components of traditional tales, though they are related to them. The combination of these implies that historical events and myths are both essential aspects of our collective memory (16).

#### 3. The Unsettling Doubts

The third characteristic of magical realism is that while reading the magical realist fiction, hesitation sometimes happen before the readers categorize the irreducible element as it is, hence they experience some unsettling doubts. It frequently stemming from the implicit clash of cultural systems within the narrative. And because belief systems differ, obviously, some readers in some cultures will hesitate less than others, depending on their beliefs and narrative traditions (Faris 17).

Todorov's formulation of hesitation of the uncanny, which will led to the existing of fantastic, is a difficult matter since there are many variations upon how an unexplainable event that requires some alteration of the laws of the universe happens. Hesitation may obscure the irreducible element, which consequently is not always so easily perceived as such. The contemporary Western reader's primary doubt is most often between understanding an event as a character's dream or hallucination and, alternatively, understanding it as a miracle (qtd. In Faris 17-18).

Readers sometimes find themselves being instructed to hesitate. It is because the dreamlike –but no dream scenes are causing the co-option and forbids it at the same time. In many instances, however, the magic in magical realism is clear and we barely hesitate, the narrator's acceptance of the magic modeling our own, creating a strategy of the narrative techniques (Faris 20). Another possible strategy for the reader is to interpret the magic inside magical realism as nothing more than allegory. Thus helps the reader to instead of hesitating, they make it up as an allegorical mode (20-21).

#### 4. Merging Realms

The fourth characteristic of magical realism is merging realms. For this particular characteristic, the reader will be able to feel the closeness or nearmerging of two realms, two worlds. The intermittent and uncertain nature of the character's metamorphosis into, say a bird, in a story is as Catherine Rodgers puts it "the tale opens a space of the in-between ["l'entre-deux"], a space of uncertainty. The character herself is captive between two worlds, the human and the animal, not belonging really to one or the other." (qtd. In Faris 21).

In terms of cultural history, magical realism often merges ancient or traditional and modern worlds. It combines realism and the fantastic. Perhaps the magical realist narrative line is analogous to the axis of the world that in many systems of thought is imagined to join the realms of the underworld, the earth, and the heavens. The magical realist vision thus exists at the intersection of two worlds, at an imaginary point inside a double-sided mirror that reflects in both

directions. Ghosts and texts, or people and words that seem ghostly, inhabit these two-sided mirrors, many times situated between the two worlds of life and death; they enlarge that space of intersection where a number of magically real fictions exist (Faris 21-22).

Fluid boundaries between the worlds of the living and the dead are traced only to be crossed in some of magical realism works. From a metafictional perspective, if fiction is exhausted in this world, then perhaps these texts create another contiguous one into which it spills over, so that it continues life beyond the grave, so to speak. The unmediated way in which these different realities are presented means that magical realism also blurs the boundary between fact and fiction, another characteristic that locates magical realism within postmodernism (Faris 22).

#### 5. Disruption of Time, Space, and Identity

Finally, in addition to merging different worlds, magical realist fictions disturb received ideas about time, space, and identity. With the example of year long occurrences, our usual sense of time is shaken. And later our sense of space is disrupted when tropical plants grow over a strange place (Faris 23).

Fredric Jameson sets out the project of realism, one thing it achieves is "the emergence of a new space and a new temporality" (qtd. In Faris 23) because realism's spatial homogeneity abolishes the older forms of sacred space. Here it can be sensed the erosion of this program by magical realist texts. Many magical realist fictions delineate near-sacred or ritual enclosures, but these sacred spaces are not watertight; they leak their magical narrative waters over the rest of the texts and the worlds they describe, just as that exterior reality permeates them (Faris 24).

Magical realism reorients not only our habits of time and space but our sense of identity as well. The multivocal nature of the narrative and the cultural hybridity that characterize magical realism extends to its characters, which tend toward a radical multiplicity. A mysterious sense of fluid identities and interconnectedness may appears. In a less multiple but similarly interchangeable manner, the merging and changing of identities is central to the magic of a magical realism work. That challenge is particularly effective because it operates from within; the magic questions individual identity from a realistically rendered historical fiction and a realistically detailed character (Faris 25-27).

#### **2.1.3.** Color Wheel Theory of Love

Color wheel theory of love is a contemporary theory of love developed by Canadian Psychologist John Alan Lee as a typology that divided each variety of love as primary and secondary color (Regan 6). The term first coined by Lee in his 1973 book *Colours of Love*.

According to Lee, there are three primary colors or styles of loving, named after the Greek words for love, which are Eros, Ludus and Stroge. And just as its' namesake, primary colors, these primary love styles can be combined to from secondary colors, or in this case, secondary styles of love (qtd. In Regan 7). Those

secondary styles identified by Lee contain features of the primary love styles but also posses their own unique characteristics. And aside from that, John Alan Lee also identifies nine tertiary colors or styles of love. Which are maniac eros, maniac ludus, maniac storge, agapic eros, agapic ludus, agapic storge, pragmatic eros, pragmatic ludus, and pragmatic storge. But for the purpose of this study, the researcher will only point out the primary and secondary colors of love with the explanations below:

#### 1. Eros

The first primary color, eros, is an intensely emotional experience that is similar to passionate love. In fact, the most typical symptom of eros is an immediate and powerful attraction to the beloved individual. The erotic lover is "turned on" by a particular physical type, is prone to fall instantly and completely in love with a stranger, heavily attached to that of love at the first sight. Erotic lover rapidly becomes preoccupied with pleasant thoughts about that individual, feels an intense need for daily contact with the beloved, and wishes the relationship to remain exclusive. Erotic love also has a strong sexual component. For example, the erotic lover desires the beloved sexually, usually seeks some form of sexual involvement fairly early in the relationship, and enjoys expressing his or her affection through sexual touch. In sum, Lee stated that the erotic lover is "eager to get to know the beloved quickly, intensely—and undressed" (qtd. In Steinberg 50).

#### 2. Ludus

The second primary color of love is ludus. Ludus means "game" in Latin (Steinberg 48). The ludic lover views love as a game to be played with skill and often with several partners simultaneously. The ludic lover has no intention of including the current partner in any future life plans or events and worries about any sign of growing involvement, need, or intense attachment from the partner. Ludic lover oftentimes avoids seeing the partner too often, believes that lies and deception are justified, and expects the partner to remain in control of his or her emotions. In addition, ludic lovers tend to prefer a wide variety of physical types and view sexual activity as an opportunity for pleasure rather than for intense emotional bonding. Steinberg further points out that the expectation may also be that the partner is also similarly minded. If a relationship materializes, it would be about having fun and indulging activities together (48).

#### 3. Storge

Storge is the third primary love color. Described by Lee in his book *Colours* of Love: an Exploration of the Ways of Loving as "love without fever or folly" (77), storge resembles C.S. Lewis's concept of Affection in that it is stable and based on a solid foundation of trust, respect, and friendship (qtd. In Regan 9). Indeed, the typical storgic lover views and treats the partner as an "old friend," does not experience the intense emotions or physical attraction to the partner associated with erotic love, prefers to talk about and engage in shared interests with the partner rather than to express direct feelings, is shy about sex, and tends to demonstrate his or her affection in nonsexual ways. To the storgic lover, love is an extension of friendship and an important part of life but is not a valuable goal in and of itself.

#### 4. Pragma

Pragma, a combination of storge and ludus, is, as Lee puts in his words "the love that goes shopping for a suitable mate" (124). The pragmatic lover has a practical outlook on love and seeks a compatible lover. He or she creates a shopping list of features or attributes desired in the partner and selects a mate based on how well that individual fulfills the requirements. And vice versa, he or she will drop a partner who fails to "measure up" to expectations. Pragmatic love is essentially a faster-acting version of storge that has been quickened by the addition of ludus.

#### 5. Mania

Mania, the combination of eros and ludus, is another secondary love style. Manic lovers lack the self-confidence associated with eros and the emotional selfcontrol associated with ludus. This obsessive, jealous love style is characterized by self-defeating emotions, desperate attempts to force affection from the beloved, and the inability to believe in or trust any affection the loved one actually does display. The manic lover is desperate to fall in love and to be loved, begins immediately to imagine a future with the partner, wants to see the partner daily, tries to force the partner to show love and commitment, distrusts the

partner's sincerity, and is extremely possessive. This love type is "irrational, extremely jealous, obsessive, and often unhappy" (Lee 15).

#### 6. Agape

Agape is similar to C.S. Lewis's concept of Charity and represents an allgiving, selfless love style that implies an obligation to love and care for others without any expectation of reciprocity or reward (Regan 10). This love style is universalistic in the sense that the typical agapic lover believes that everyone is worthy of love and that loving others is a duty of the mature person. An agapic lover believes that this love is conditional. And that he or she views their partners are blessings (Steinberg 48). With respect to personal love relationships, an agapic lover will unselfishly devote himself or herself to the partner, even stepping aside in favor of a rival who seems more likely to meet the partner's needs. Although Lee believed that many lovers respect and strive to attain the agapic ideal, he also believed that the give-and-take that characterizes most romantic relationships precludes the occurrence of purely altruistic love (Regan 11).

#### 2.1.4. Typology of Loss

Typology of Loss is a concept of differentiation in unique ways people experiencing loss and grief. It must be noted that grief is an emotion caused by loss. This Typology is first coined by Louise Hay and David Kessler in their book titled You Can Heal Your Heart which targeted to help people to "cope with their own loss and grief" (1). The typology primarily consists of three types of loss: Complicated Loss, Loss in Limbo, and Disenfranchised Grief (11-16).

Moreover, this typology is further developed by the editors and experts in "Elizz", or *Elizz.com*, a website based caregiver resources that help people, mainly the caregivers, to understand about people's behavior and the best treatment while they are experiencing loss and grief. The expanded typology includes fourteen types of grief: Anticipatory, Normal, Delayed, Complicated, Disenfranchised, Cumulative, Chronic, Masked, Distorted, Exaggerated, Inhibited, Collective, Absent, and Abbreviated grief. But for the purpose of this study, the researcher will only make use the types that match those experienced by the chosen characters. Below is the further explanation of the aforementioned types:

#### 1. Complicated Loss

Complicated loss simply means any loss that is complicated by other factors (Hay and Kessler 11). Complicated grief refers to normal grief that becomes severe in longevity and significantly impairs the ability to function. It can be difficult to judge when grief has lasted too long. Other contributing factors in diagnosing complicated or prolonged grief include looking at the nature of the loss or death, the relationship, personality, life experiences, and other social issues. Elizz editors point out some warning signs that someone is experiencing traumatic grief include: self-destructive behavior, deep and persistent feelings of guilt, low self-esteem, suicidal thoughts, violent outbursts, or radical lifestyle changes (paragraph 8).

#### 2. Loss in Limbo

Limbo refers to the situation where someone is without prior knowledge, waiting for a fate whether the loss would be truly happened or not. A person can experience loss in limbo for no certain period of time. It could be short but also long enough to finally be able to tell whether the loss is finally happened. But sometimes the truth of loss is never revealed. Thus being in the limbo of loss is, in itself, loss (Hay and Kessler 13)

#### 3. Disenfranchised Grief

Disenfranchised grief can be felt when someone experiences a loss but others do not acknowledge the importance of the loss in the person's life. Others may not understand the importance of the loss or they may minimize the significance of the loss (Hay and Kessler 14). Disenfranchised grief can take place when someone experiences the loss of an ex-spouse, a pet, or a co-worker. The other side of disenfranchised grief is when you experience a loss such as when the person you are caring for has dementia or a decline in their physical abilities. The person is physically present but they are also absent in other significant ways (*Elizz* paragraph 9).

#### 4. Absent Grief

Absent grief is when someone does not acknowledge the loss and shows no signs of grief. This can be the result of complete shock or denial of the death. It can be concerning if someone experiences absent grief for an extended period of time (*Elizz* paragraph 19). But aside from that, it can be said that the person

suffers from this grief is somehow be able to let go of loss, or simply has nothing else to do with the lost one anymore. In this case, the sufferer would not be in much of a concern (paragraph 20).

#### 5. Anticipatory Loss

Anticipatory loss often starts when the person you are caring for gets a significant diagnosis and their health begins to deteriorate. Feelings are related to the loss of what was or what you thought life was going to be like. It can be difficult to speak with others about anticipatory grief because the person you care for is still alive and you may have feelings of guilt or confusion as to why you are feeling this kind of grief (*Elizz* paragraph 5).

#### 6. Chronic Grief

This type of grief can be experienced in many ways: through feelings of hopelessness, a sense of disbelief that the loss is real, avoidance of any situation that may remind someone of the loss, or loss of meaning and value in a belief system. At times, people with chronic grief can experience intrusive thoughts. If left untreated, chronic grief can develop into severe clinical depression, suicidal or self-harming thoughts, and even substance abuse (*Elizz* paragraph 10).

#### 7. Cumulative Grief

This type of grief can occur when multiple losses are experienced, often within a short period of time. Cumulative grief can be stressful because a person doesn't have time to properly grieve one loss before experiencing the next (Elizz paragraph 11).

#### 8. Distorted Grief

Distorted grief, unfortunately, can present with extreme feelings of guilt or anger, noticeable changes in behavior, hostility towards a particular person, plus other self-destructive behaviors (*Elizz* paragraph 13).

#### 9. Collective Grief

Collective grief is felt by a group. For example, this could be experienced by a community, city, or country as a result of a natural disaster, death of a public figure, or a terrorist attack (*Elizz* paragraph 17).

#### 2.2. **Review of Related Studies**

In this section, the researcher is supposed to present the previous researches conducted upon the same subject, or in this case, the literary work analyzed. Previous researches or studies are important in conducting this research because it serves several functions. After studying previous researches, the gap of the study can be drawn to find a topic for a new research. Besides, reading and studying the previous researches prevent us from repeating the same errors or mistake while doing the present research (Blaxter, Tight and Hughess 3). By mentioning the previous researches, readers of the thesis can acknowledge the originality of the present research. The originality can be tested by comparing the previous researches with the

new one. The comparison of researches can give insights to the readers that the topic proposed in the present research is worthy of detailed exploration (4).

But because of the novel that will be analyzed in this research, *The Strange* and Beautiful Sorrows of Ava Lavender penned by Leslye Walton, was published in 2014 as her debut novel, by the time this particular research is being written, it is only in its fourth year being available in bookstores. In that time span, this novel can be considered as a newly published work in literature. The researcher tries to find other researchers' work regarding this novel, but at the time this thesis is being written, the researcher has not been able to find any work of research on this novel yet.

Aside from that, the researcher tries to find other researchers' work regarding the chosen topic of this research, which is love and loss represented through magical realism in a novel to be able to open a new possibility to find related studies. But yet, the researcher has not been able to find any of it. So instead, the researcher includes a few of the previous studies regarding magical realism. But since it will be too board regarding the vast number of conducted researches, the researcher only includes those conducted by the students of Indonesian universities.

The first of those researches would be the one conducted by Suci Sundusiah of Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia whose writing entitled Understanding Magical Realism Danarto and Marquez in which she focuses on the magical realism inside of both authors' works from different cultures, Danarto is Indonesian and Marquez is Latin American. The next one is by Rizka Septiana of *Jember University* whose writing entitled Magical Realism and the Erasure of the World in Yann Martell's Life of Pi in Postmodernism Perspective. In her research, she focuses on the erasure of the world as caused by magical realism and how the author represented postmodernism in magical realism work. And the last one that would be in this review is written by Umar Mahfuzh of State Islamic University of Syarif Hidayatullah entitled Magical Realism in A Shinagawa Monkey Short Story by Harumi Murakami: the Concept of Characteristics of Magical Realism by Wendy B. Faris in which he focuses on the characteristics of magical realism by Wendy B. Faris, which happens to be the same one the researcher employs for this research, contained in short story he chose. With those previous studies found, the researcher found the gap for conducting the research focuses on love and loss representation through magical realism.

#### **CHAPTER III**

# REPRESENTATION OF LOVE AND LOSS THROUGH MAGICAL REALISM

## 3.1. Magical Realism in the Novel

The Strange and Beautiful Sorrows of Ava Lavender is a great example of magical realist novel because right off the bat, we meet the titular character, Ava Lavender, born with a pair of white and brown speckled wings (Walton 5), lives with her family in modern day Seattle. Following Strecher, Ava's wings are the epitome of the unbelievably strange things that invade the realistic humanly world. Aside from that obvious physical oddness, Ava, whose wings become immediate groundbreaking news and confusion to the neighborhoods despite merely described as "a slight physical abnormality" on the medical reports (Walton 5), starts her quest to find a possible answer to the unasked question "is there a history of winged beings populating the family tree?" (6), by researching exactly what it suggests: her family tree (7).

A strong narrative drive, which according to Drabble is a common thing within magical realist literature works can be seen from its very first chapter where Ava narrates the story of Roux family within the course of just a single chapter, the first one the novel, which is densely packed with the majority of the magical realism found in the novel. The Roux family, whose children happen to all born in March 1<sup>st</sup> 4 years consecutively (Walton 8), moved from France to its patriarch's dream city *Manhatine* in New York, which also took place in March 1<sup>st</sup>. This particular event

serves as an example of Drabble's "recurrence in a kaleidoscopic pattern often found within magical realist works" (20). This event further led to the many strange occurrences throughout their settlement there.

The event of the settlement went out of the ordinary firstly when the patriarch himself, Beauregard Roux, was caught in an ironic mix-up with another man looks exactly like him who happened to be caught sleeping with a butcher's wife. He was, ironically, butchered and thrown to the river despite people's belief that he ran away with a Germanic woman (13). This led to the impending disappearance of Maman, Beauregard's wife, who literally grew transparent that her children could reach through her (16) as if passing through, as Emilienne describes it, "a wisp of steam" (14). Maman, with the tragedies including the deaths happened to her children, later completely disappears and leaving behind a small pile of blue ashes on her bed that Emillene keeps in throat lozenges empty tin (24).

About the deaths of her children that truly destroyed Maman, those are Margaux's suicide after giving birth to her illegitimate child with Emilienne's fiancé (19), René's murder committed by his gay lover after being caught by his wife (20), and also the youngest Pierette's magical transformation of becoming a canary to attract her bird-watcher crush (15) which all are happened consecutively. These tragedies are the example of Zamora's "alteration of the ordinary and the everyday into the extraordinary and the unreal" (113). What people see in ordinary family where they are experiencing deaths of family members, these characters went through it as well. But the deaths aren't merely 'not alive anymore' rather they are killed off by something ordinary people wouldn't expect in real life. Although those odd

occurrences are just part of the reality on how the Roux family went through the loss, this is the "art of surprises" according to Zamora and Faris (114-116) due to the fact that the readers first introduced with a family living in small town wanting to move to a bigger city but tragedies keep coming led one another happens.

Even though there are a significant number of magical events happened through the course of the first chapter regarding Ava's ancestors, this novel is not fantasy due to the fact that the family lives in aforementioned *Manhatine* or what we know as Manhattan New York as well as before moving there from France. This include a genuine description of how sometimes family don't fit well in a society that they move on to another place that they imagine as grander. It so happen with adapting with the new society that sometimes cost some elements in their life being taken away. And as Shindu stated before that magical elements are explained like normal occurrences (210), in this novel, Ava, as the narrator does the job well of presenting the story of her ancestors thus allows the reader to believe that her family and their oddness are just how they really live.

#### 3.1.1. Characteristics of Magical Realism Found in the Novel

As stated in the previous section, there are five characteristics in magical realism. This so happen to be found in the novel of this study, *The Strange and* Beautiful Sorrows of Ava Lavender, of which will be explained respectively according to each characteristic below:

#### 1. The Irreducible Elements

The "irreducible element", as stated in the previous section, is an occurrence that according to the laws of the universe is unexplainable by logic, familiar knowledge, or received belief (Faris 7). It can be seen, as already said above in previous section, in Ava Lavender's very own pair of wings. This main scheme of the novel is perhaps the only one that is widely accepted as the irreducible element since it is physically visible. Its status as being something logically unbelievable is even textually described as the only case science failed medical field (Walton 5). The confusion of logically unbelievable winged girl further expressed through various exchanges of the medical people who discuss about the devout religious masses as being jealous rather than pity and disdain because the religious belief as perceiving winged creature as divine is questioned here because the wings are possessed by a girl, not an angel (5-6).

The next irreducible element is Viviane's magical talent to smell things such as body odor. Even excessive perfume cannot mask the scent of her rival girl that she describes as "sour milk and cat urine" (Walton 43) and distinguish her lover scent as soap and turtle wax (42). Viviane, self-raised in a bakery shop, can whip up a batch of profiteroles and even calmly filling each choux with cream all by herself as a toddler. At that very young age, her uncanny smelling ability is even capable to distinguish slight variation of any bakery recipes (37). This extraordinary talent is pretty much illogical to be performed by an experienced baker just by a slight smelling, let alone a toddler. Even so, Viviane's ability stretch further to an ability to smell feeling such as happiness, which according to her smells like the sourest lime or lemon, also

surprisingly sweet smelled broken hearts, and salty, sea-like redolence of sadness and death (43). She also has the ability to find out the pregnancy of woman just by smelling a combination of brown sugar and stargazer lilies (42-43). Living in Seattle, known as the wettest part of the U.S., this magical talent of hers will later come to the point where she is able to differ seasons according to its rain smell (90), except in that one rain in which her daughter's attack took place though, this particular rain smells differently, like what she describes as "bad omen and fear" (137).

Emilienne, being the strangest of the Roux, also happens to have odd talent that granted her a nickname 'witch' by her fearful neighbor. It was all started by simply helping her insomniac neighbor with peonies garland to wear (Walton 27). Then it later developed into her strange-messages-filled dreams and reading birdcall according to the direction they are chirping. And not to forget what younger Viviane theorize as "communicate with the dead" despite being dismissed with mere "ghosts don't exist" answer (65). It was not without proof that Viviane said so. From the moment she sets her footstep on Seattle soil, the ghost of Fatima Inês who has been plaguing her former house for years prior to Lavender family's purchase was showing herself ever so slightly. And not to forget her deceased siblings who seem to never cease from existence following her around when she was pregnant and alone in the house (29). Her siblings' unfading into the afterlife is not exactly without purpose. Later in the novel, René, the only spirit capable to communicate despite his face being destroyed in his former life, was determinedly sending her a warning through her grandson Henry who apparently is the only one beside her that is capable to

communicate with the deceased about the attack that is going to happen after the *rain* falls (101).

That being said, those magical talents and oddness are recounted as simple as if Ava's possession of wings is similar to how she would possessed a mole in her skin. Or that Viviane's exceptional talent is just as common as someone who has the gene of bakers running through her veins. And also the phrenologist's daughter herself, Emilienne, having through all of the loss and tragedies, maybe some of her heart is simply couldn't let go of her siblings thus made their appearances as something quite normal to a woman who still mourning. This casual depiction will eventually led to the difficulties for the readers, just as Faris predicted, regarding the status of the events (7) whether they are true to their irreducible element characteristic or not.

Even so, it can be seen when Ava Lavender first went out with her best friend Cardigan Cooper and her brother to the reservoir, Ava had to face all of the suspicious teenagers whether she really posses wings thus forcing her to show off her cloaked wings to them. And not to forget the 'witch' whisper that has been following Emilienne around and literally floating through the window also creates a description to the culture within the society inside the novel on how they regard supernatural phenomenon just as much as reservoir kids with their signature teenagers inquisitive uncertainties over Ava's wings. By bringing out the doubts and regards as such, the author creates the illusion that those are just the reality of the story. And it truly is happened, because if it is not, they would not get reaction from other characters in the novel.

With Ava still living her teenage life normally a strict parented teenager would (Walton 123) and Viviane still getting through pregnancy without her capable of smelling it herself (65-67) and not to forget Emilienne's desperation that brings her to perform Wilhelmina Dovewolf's air cleaning ritual despite being called 'witch' herself all the time (35-36), the irreducible elements are seamlessly assimilated within the novel that the readers find themselves accepting the story to be as Ava projects. As the magic grows almost unnoticeably out of real (Faris 8), Ava registers no surprise when she recounted the story of her ancestors' lives before her. Even when her great aunt was suspiciously turning herself into an avian being just as much as her having to be born with its body parts.

#### 2. The Phenomenal World

Faris' second characteristic that she defines as "the realism of magical realism" (14) can be seen from Ava's education that Viviane modeled after their neighbor Cardigan Cooper's school books. Ava, with wings and all, worries Viviane so much that she could not let Ava went out the house, not even for school, so Viviane had to give her home-school lessons herself with Cardigan's "messy composition books" (Walton 98). This concern for education is a genuine depiction of real life in which sometimes with some reasons from the children themselves or the circumstances that force parents to home-school their kids, even though in this case, Ava's wing plays the role of the drawback. Being not allowed to go outside, Ava's nighttime wandering to the reservoir with Cardigan that stretched to the point where she went out on the night of her attack that took place after the solstice celebration she attended with her newly bleached blonde hair matched with Cardigan

(136) is another depiction of authentic teenage life that the stricter the parent's rules are, the more they are trying to break it.

Another genuine depiction of real life is the story of the inseparable Viviane and Jack, neighboring kids first met at the lawn, they both quickly become best friends that later grow into a romantic relationship. Viviane, being a curious little girl that she always is, was curious with Jack's digging works at his father's lawn that somehow showed Jack something he never get from his father: attention and approval. Being bullied by the neighborhood boys for befriending Viviane, she once again proved to be someone he can be with to get those boys approval by being able to "outrun and *outspit* any of them" (Walton 39). In return, Viviane, whose childhood is basically raised herself at the bakery shop was somehow finding Jack to be the one that gives her 'her life' that after the time Jack enrolled at Whitman College in Walla Walla, she became lifeless that "she spent her days trying to forget the sound of his voice, and her nights trying to remember. She spent hours standing by the mailbox waiting for letters that did not come, sitting by a telephone that would not ring." (51)

Realistic tale of the Roux family is another one. When we see the family at first when they are still living in the small village of Trouville-sur-Mer, we see a family with four children, which can be considered a lot, desiring to move somewhere grander or in this case the patriarch dream city *Manhatine* New York. The immigrants who move into the United States along with their American dreams often find themselves to be not in the their what so called dream city due to the fact that the skill they acquire from the previous job at their homeland could not afford those U.S. cities. In this case, Beauregard skilled phrenologist talent that became his only job at

France could not afford the city known as the most expensive in the world. In Manhattan, an expensive city where they can barely afford low quality meat and limp carrots to eat, they live in a small tenement that according to Maman smells "distinctly of cat urine" with only two rooms wherein Beauregard and Maman sleep in one and the elder girls, Emilienne and Margaux, in the other one. The only boy in the family René, sleeps under the kitchen table and the youngest Pierette is in a bureau drawer (12). Their misery of living in the big city as an immigrant family does not end there because surely as it has been explained in the previous section that tragedies keep happening to the Roux family that at the end of the first chapter, what's left of the family were Maman's blue ashes, yellow canary formed Pierette and the brokenhearted Emilienne (23).

Those vividly detailed representation of the world as we live in is definitely what set the distinction of magical realism from fantasy literature (Faris 14). Because as it has been widely known of the fantasy, it is built in the world entirely different from what we live in along with magical creatures and all. In magical realism, or in this case, The Strange and Beautiful Sorrows of Ava lavender, we see all of the main characters are living the life as we do. The details of magical events that are endowed within those realistic life depictions such as Ava's wings as the drawback of her restricted social life, Viviane's odd talent to distinguish Jack from others by his turtle wax and soap scent, and also magically strange tragedies happened to Emilienne's whole family are what makes this particular literary work as magical realism instead of just realism (14-15).

In magical realist fiction, readers often found the historical anchoring done by the author to enforce the realistic elements when the fantastic ever so slightly push through (Faris 15-16). Here, Walton also did this particular technique on her work that can be seen when she puts the story of the SS France in which the Roux family was aboard, was on its maiden voyage a week after the sinking of the *Titanic* (Walton 9) which was accurately in real life happened at April 14 1912 and SS France maiden voyage itself at April 20 1912. Another one is the Second Great War that Jack was so eagerly trying to enlist, but to Viviane's delight, he was rejected due to his flat feet and poor eyesight (48).

Aside from those histories, following Faris statement that said sometimes magical realist author made "a distinctive recreation of historical events, often alternate versions of widely known historical events" (15), Walton also includes it in her book. That is the summer solstice celebration that somehow written as a celebration for magical child inhabiting the house at the end of Pinnacle Lane, Fatima Inês de Dores per her own brother, the Captain's only request for his pioneered patronage to continue (Walton 22). This alternate version of the history of pagan holiday once pointed out by a character, a strict Catholic parishioner with such disgust saying "That they would put such effort into celebrating a pagan holiday seems only appropriate! Monsters." (140) Even so, Walton still provides a lengthy explanation of the origin of the solstice celebration from the mythology as well as different ways people around the world celebrate summer solstice, and of course the essence of the celebration at Pinnacle Lane itself:

In ancient Gaul the midsummer celebration was called the Feast of Epona, named after the goddess of abundance, sovereignty, and the harvest. She was portrayed as a woman riding a mare. The pagans celebrated solstice with bonfires believed to possess a form of earthly magic, granting maidens insight on their future husbands and banishing spirits and demons. The men of the Hopi tribe dressed in traditional masks to honor the kachinas, the dancing spirits of rain and fertility who were believed to leave the villages at midsummer to visit the dead underground and hold ceremonies on their behalf. In Russia young girls floated their flower garlands down rivers, reading one another's fortunes by the movement of the flowers on the water. In Sweden neighbors gathered to raise and dance around a huge maypole draped in greenery and flowers. They call it Litha or Vestalia in Rome, Gathering Day in Wales, All Couples' Day in Greece. It's Sonnwend, Feill-Sheathain, Thing-Tide, the feast day of John the Baptist.

For the people of Pinnacle Lane, the solstice celebration was a chance to shed their cloaks of modesty and decorum, and replace them with wildflowers woven in their hair. Only during the summer solstice did the old Moss sisters remove their crosses from between their low-hanging breasts and drink themselves silly on great pints of malt liquor. Only during solstice could Pastor Graves forgive himself for his favorite sweet, the Nipples of Venus, feasting on white chocolate from the truffle's teat. And only during solstice could Rowe Cooper arrive at the festival to find two identical winged girls waiting for him. (Walton 136-137)

This combination done by Walton about the historical events of and myths of this particular pagan holiday of summer solstice celebration implies that those are both essential aspects of our collective memory (Faris 16). It is further giving us the impression that the novel is in fact is in a realism side, since the characters within are celebrating the same thing as other people around the world, i.e. us the readers that can relate to.

#### 3. The Unsettling Doubts

For this particular characteristic that Faris describes as the hesitation of categorizing the irreducible elements as it is due to our background culture (17), it can be seen from how other characters perceive Ava's pair of white and brown speckled wings. It started from those medical people who could not place if the wings are something grander than merely "a slight physical abnormality" (Walton 5), and then Cardigan Cooper's inquisitively asking Ava to fly that eventually she could not proof that the wings are useful for her while simultaneously says that she knows she was not an angel because they have white wings (81). Here the readers are subtly made to think that Ava's wings are somehow are not some bodily parts that made her posses magical ability showcasing through physical wings thus doubting the wings itself are magical.

In the previous section, it has been explained that Emilienne is able to communicate with the dead, which throughout the novel has been seen numerous times when her siblings trying to communicate with her, even though she is able to block them, or René in particular since he is the only one of her deceased sibling able to speak, from trying to communicate with her, she realized that "the more she ignored him, the louder the ghost of René tried to speak." (Walton 100). From this depiction of the sibling communication, it somehow across our minds as the readers that perhaps it was just Emilienne's hallucination when she is alone at the house that presumably was haunted by the previous inhabitant that she herself described as "the young girl restless spirit" (29).

Being sensitive and all, Viviane also theorizes around her mother's ability to communicate with the dead, for which it was being dismissed by Emilienne's mere "ghosts don't exist" answer (Walton 65). This further indicates that we, as the readers are being instructed to hesitate (Faris 20). Perhaps with those siblings of Emilienne's still following her around even when she has already moved on with her life to a different city is somewhat an allegorical metaphor of the ghost of the past that is

following her no matter how much she tried to ignore it and letting go of it. This perceiving is somehow obscuring the element of ghost that exists within the magical realist fiction. Because as the readers move on to the next pages later on, the readers see that Henry, Emilienne's grandson, was finally be the one that the ghost of René succeed in communicating with (101), and as the narrator of the story, Ava was narrating the exchange as if it was really happening that the Sad Man, or René was a warning from beyond to warn them about the attack about to happen to Ava that ironically, was not expected by those Henry tried to warn.

Another one the readers see from Emilienne is that when she was being called 'witch' by the neighborhood, the first time the Lavender family set foot in Pinnacle Lane, or at particular time when Connor first open his bakery in Pinnacle Lane, the author made her seen as if it was one of her what so called 'natural' talent to be able to decorate the bakery when "choosing the butter-yellow paint for the bakery walls and the white lace valances for the windows" and that she "arranged wrought-iron tables and chairs across the black-white-tiled floor" somehow made the customers feel this is the perfect place to enjoy their breakfast, in which further give a huge impact of the success of the bakery, even though behind the scene (Walton 27-28). By way of saying that it is her 'natural' talent just as much as peony garland for insomnia, hearing birdcall as omen, was an implication that yet again it was somehow a magical talent of hers that somehow helps the success of the bakery. Still, the author once again makes us doubting it was her magical talent by saying that her having impeccable taste was, of course simply because "she was French" (28).

This commentary about her background culture as a French woman led to other talents of hers being doubted. Because then again, her father, Beauregard was a skillful phrenologist in his lifetime, someone who read the future by reading people's head and made money out of it. Perhaps all the supernatural talents of Emilienne that got her nickname 'witch' by the neighborhood in the first place was just her being the daughter of phrenologist and get the sensitivity to read things (other than skulls of course) just like her father before her. Yet again, this is a solid proof that unsettling doubt is no doubt found in the novel by the character Emilienne Roux's 'natural' talents.

# 4. Merging Realms

Just as Faris stated in her book that while reading magical realist fiction readers might be able to feel the closeness or nearmerging of the two realms (21), this particular novel has provided us with what Catherine Rogers calls a space of uncertainty with the intermittent and uncertain nature of the metamorphosis of Pierette Roux, Emilienne's sister and Ava's great aunt, into a bird, or a yellow canary to be exact (Walton 15). Here, Pierette is captive between two worlds, which are, according to Rogers, "captive between two worlds, the human and the animal, not belonging really to one or the other." (qtd. In Faris 21). It can be seen from the beginning of the transformation itself. When Pierette was attempting to turn herself into that particular yellow canary, her intention was to get the attention of "an older gentleman with a fondness for bird watching." So when she was finally in her bird form, she was not exactly being a bird with its free life and wings to bring it everywhere it wants. Pierette was still burdened by her desire to get the

ornithologist's attention, despite the end result being that "the bird-watcher never noticed Pierette's drastic at gaining his affection and instead moved to Louisiana, drawn by its large population of *Pelecanus occidentalis*" (Walton 15) thus failing her humanly feeling while still trapped in animal world.

Being still in the bird form, Pierette was not belonged in the human world either, since her transformation, she can only communicated with her family by chirping, which can be seen the day Margaux giving birth to Emilienne's fiancée, Satin Lush's yet another son with mismatched blue and green eyes (Walton 19). At this particular time, Emilenne was just arriving at the family apartment when Pierette was waiting for her outside with "such a twitter that Emilienne had to stuff her poor sister-bird into the pocket of her jacket" (15) indicating that she was in a humanly excitement or panic that she could not show it as how a human (in a human form) would do. Eventually her family "became accustomed to Pierette's cheery morning songs and to the tiny yellow feathers that gathered in the corners of the rooms and stuck to their clothes" (15) when she was in her bird, which lasted for the rest of her lifetime.

Upon Emilienne's moving from Manhattan to Seattle with her newly wedded husband, Pierette, still in her yellow canary form, was one of the only remains of the family along with Maman's blue ashes. So when Emilienne decided to move, she had to bring Pierette along with her (Walton 25), although as it turns out that "Pierette, who'd never been emotionally stable even in human form, hadn't survived the weary cross-country train ride" from New York state to Washington state. In the end, Pierette, who was brought to Seattle inside a shoe box, at last was buried along with

their mother's blue ashes "in the empty garden bed behind the new house marked only by a large river stone" (26). The burial marked the end of her captivity in both animal and human worlds, because after she became a ghost that along with her siblings, following Emilienne everywhere, eventually at one point was able to transform herself once again from her canary form to the girl she was even as a ghost (161).

The ghost of Pierette, along with both of her deceased siblings Margaux and René, in which they are playing pivotal role in the development of Emilienne supernatural talent, also provide us with a vivid representation of the magical realist vision that particularly exists at the intersection of two worlds, or as Faris define as the "double-sided mirror that reflects in both direction" in which she said is inhabited by "ghosts and texts, or people and words that seem ghostly" (21-22).

Emilienne, strange talents and all, sometimes found herself in a daydream that she was "back in that dilapidated tenement in Beauregard's Manhatine — when the high notes of Pierette's effervescent laugh still echoed through the hallways, when René's beauty still rivaled her own, before Margaux had betrayed her" (29) that somehow later when she grew older gets more intense that she was within her contemplation of which if she never married Connor and never left *Manhatine*.

She reached up and touched the belled lip of her old cloche hat — the one painted with red poppies — and the house on Pinnacle Lane fell away, replaced by the crumbling plaster walls of that derelict apartment: the kitchen sink, with its cracked porcelain and lines of rust circling the drain; the oldfashioned icebox, with its metal hinges and the square block of ice that made them feel rich even when the cupboards were bare; the bureau with the drawer where Pierette slept and the corners where her feathers gathered; the sofa René balanced on his forearms.

And though she still wouldn't converse with her ghostly siblings, Emilienne could, in a fashion, communicate with them as they might have been. She started with an inquiry after Margaux's child. When Margaux showed off her infant, Emilienne at first smiled, then turned away when she saw his eyes — one green, the other blue. Margaux held her son protectively against the hole where her heart used to be. She was exceedingly proud of her offspring; he was the greatest thing she'd accomplished in her life. And in her death.

Where was Maman? Beauregard? They didn't know. There was only ever the three of them and the baby — and sometimes a young black-eyed girl. What was death like? she wondered. They did not seem able to answer, nor could they tell her why, in the afterlife, they would continue to carry the evidence of their sins in such a gruesome way.

"Maybe you are in purgatory," Emilienne offered. René shrugged. Maybe.

Sometimes Margaux would motion to the harpsichord in the corner of the parlor, a request for Emilienne to play. That's when the walls of the Manhatine apartment would melt away — along with the warbling voices of her siblings — and the walls of the house at the end of Pinnacle Lane would spring back up around her, the harpsichord unused, yellowing in the corner. (Walton 127-128)

This is the double sided mirror that Faris described before. Emilienne was temporarily inhabiting that of ghost and human worlds intersection in which she was able to feel the way she felt back in *Manhatine* but with everything in their state of being at the time, Margaux with her infant son and heartless hollow chest, René with his face in a gruesome shape, and of course the canary Pierette.

According to Faris, fluid boundaries between the worlds of the living and the dead are traced only to be crossed (22) which also happens in *The Strange and* Beautiful Sorrows that clearly can be seen when Emilienne's siblings are trying to communicate with her. Earlier of Emilienne's settlement in Pinnacle Lane, the ghost of her siblings are described as "always there" even on the day she married Connor Lavender and those spent in a cramped sleeper car while traveling cross-country,

"him with his urge to speak despite his face having been shot off, and her with a cavern in the place where her heart once beat, sometimes with that child on her hip that phantom child with mismatched eyes" always following her around and later were joined by the ghost of Pierette, or in this case she was still the "canary" (Walton 28).

Somehow their presence in Emilienne's life after their respective deaths was resemblance of Faris description of contiguous one that continues life beyond the grave (22). Their behavior as ghosts where they determinedly trying to make Emilienne listen to them that goes as far as making "frantic gestures" that unfortunately, Emilienne, who was trying so hard to move on from her past life was "never stopped long enough to make sense of the silent words that poured from their lips." And "no matter how desperately they tried, she was determined not to listen." (Walton 28-29). This particular manner of them implies that they are still feeling the need to live along with Emilienne that as long as she was still being the only surviving Roux in the world, the rest will stick together with her even in the ghost forms.

# 5. Disruption of Time, Space, and Identity

The example of disruption of time within magical realist fictions are some kind of year long occurrences that make our usual sense of time is shaken (Faris 23). For this particular example in Walton's *The Strange and Beautiful Sorrows of Ava* Lavender can be seen when the spring came early at the time of Viviane's pregnancy, in which she would only eat cherries all the time, which oddly enough was picked from their cherry tree along the side of their house that "had bloomed a season earlier than any other on the block." These strange cherry trees at the end of Pinnacle lane were started to springs its blossoms at winter that caused "the pink blooms scatter across the snow-covered lawn." And by the time of that aforementioned early-coming spring, those cherry trees were literally "bursting with cherries so red they were purple, and so large and ripe their skins were cracked, the juice leaking down the tree's branches and soaking into the ground." Those seemingly magical fruits were surely growing out of hand that "all the jars of cherry jam Emilienne made, all the cherry pie they sold at the bakery, barely made a dent in the amount of fruit falling from the tree." (Walton 68)

This particular example can also serve as the example of the disruption of space, because as it has been known, the soil of winter season would not be suitable for a tree to continue growing or *living* with their leaves still intact on their branches, they will hibernate and shed every single leave at the fall and keep their bald form through the winter season. Thus here, our sense of space is also shaken by the impossibility of tree growing their leaves, let alone blossoming at January.

Disruption of space is also presented at the very end of the rain disappearance that led to the infamous Ava's attack once again. At that time, Viviane was able to smell the rain hours before the water began to fall as if the rain was somehow in mere distant of the sky even though that particular day had been "a beautiful day, all clear blue skies and warm sunshine" and that "there had been no indication that it would be anything but a picturesque midsummer's night, except for the smell" (138) indicating that the cumulonimbus responsible for that night's rain was not near enough that is able to be seen the hours before.

For the disruption of identity, it only exists within the background story of Gabe, the gentle giant, later became Viviane's lover prior to his arrival at the Lavender house doorstep. He was the only child of a presumably royal blooded hooker who was killed by her client one night. Being only ten years old, he curled up beside his dead mother on her bed for days until the corpse began to decompose, then he finally decided to leave the apartment (Walton 53). For the next years, Gabe moves around a lot. "His incredible height made people believe he was fifteen when he was ten and eighteen when he was twelve." This helped him to find jobs to the point where he worked as a carpenter assistant and lived with his family. His identity as a young kind was disrupted by his height that one night, the carpenter wife "entered his room and climbed on top of him" and doing something sexual to him that he "burst into tears, crying, "I'm thirteen!" and run out of the house, his pajama pants wrapped around his ankles." (54)

Gabe false identity caused by his height later also helped him to lie about his age when he was being the first male to enlist to the Second Great War in Hawaii beaches. He was, of course without question, allowed to join as a soldier, even though in the end, he was not seen fitting to fight in a battle due to his sensitive nature as a teenager growing up all by himself. He "served canned meat and soluble coffee" in the mess and mourning every death of his fellow soldiers thus led him to be discharged with fatigue as it "proved too exhausting to mourn so many lives" (Walton 54) especially when you just found the family you never had growing up.

## 3.2. Representation of Love and Loss in the Novel

This particular section deals with how the author, Leslye Walton represent the love and loss through her magical realist literature work *The Strange and Beautiful Sorrows of Ava Lavender* as experienced by its main female characters, Ava, Viviane, and Emilienne through the course of the novel with multiple love coming to them. The analysis below is divided into the respective characters' experiences including what type of love they went through as well as the love projected toward them by others. The representation of loss then will follow suit in the list of explanations below.

#### 3.2.1. Ava Lavender

Had been said again and again, Ava Lavender was born with a pair of white and brown speckled wings that provide a great deal for her experience of love later in her life. Her mother, Viviane, being a commonly worried mother about her daughter's wellbeing and all, would not let Ava get out of the house at the end of Pinnacle Lane for the most part of her life within the novel. She would not let Ava to go to a public school, let alone letting her to have her social life with neighborhood teenagers. This led to Ava's inexperience with male human species that later when Nathaniel Sorrows first set his foot at Widow Pie's doorstep and spotted her through the rhododendron bush (Walton 97), Nathaniel was not the only one feeling the sparks of the upcoming complicated and scandalous love between them.

As mentioned many times in the previous sections, Ava Lavender is the narrator of this novel, but with its unique narrative style, the novel provides us with Nathaniel's personal diary that gives us the first hand look of how he perceived Ava

as his lover and his whole plan and intention to get hold of Ava. Inexperienced Ava on the other hand, perceived Nathaniel with such pure feeling of how a girl met her first guy in her teenage years. How Nathaniel shows his desire for Ava through his personal journals and Ava's own descriptions of her daydream about Nathaniel is the way the author, Leslye Walton represents love, which according to John Alan Lee's typology falls under the type of eros and mania (Steinberg 50).

Eros, according to Steinberg, as the first primary color on John Alan Lee's colour wheel of love is mainly known as an immediate and powerful attraction (50). This can be seen immediately from the very first time Nathaniel arrived at Pinnacle Lane when he first "spotted a pair of white and brown speckled wings behind the parched lilac bush in the next yard over" that he instantly attracted to it described with "entirely new and unfamiliar feeling stirred inside him" (Walton 96-97). Nathaniel is clearly depicting the eros lover whom according to Lee is turned on by a particular physical type (Steinberg 50), which in this case, is Ava's wings, a product of the irreducible element of magical realism. It should be noted that before setting foot at Pinnacle Lane, Nathaniel is characterized as a pious man who never done anything sexual even touching his own genital when peeing (96). He obviously is not prone to fall in love with a stranger unless that stranger has wings that according to this religious man is attached to an Angel or "an agent of God" that he blindly thought was sent for him as "his most reverent follower" with her "beautiful angelic face". Thus he soon becomes obsessed with her to the point of asking to touch her wings and later pleasuring himself with holed feather pillow.

I smiled and took a few steps toward her. "I was wondering if I could touch them."

She hesitated at first. Perhaps she didn't know what I meant. But then she nodded. I ran my hand across her wings, felt the softness of the feathers course through the tips of my fingers to settle magnificently in my groin. When she broke away from me, she did so with a curt "Good night." I watched her make her way up the hill. I raised my hands in exaltation to the Lord for granting me a visit of supreme ecstasy as only ever experienced by Saint Teresa of Ávila herself, I'm sure. (Walton 116)

I took a knife to one of my bed pillows and pleasured myself with the feathers inside. Because that's what I believe an angel will feel like: like slipping into a pillow of downy feathers. So soft, so light. Nightly I watch as she preens her feathers in front of her open window. Light illuminates her from behind, making her glow like the holy being that only I know her to be. (Walton 122)

While Ava's wings being the physical attraction to Nathaniel's eros love style, those wings become the very own bodily parts that led to Ava's lacking of selfconfidence common to manic lovers. And just as the mania love style characterized by Lee, Ava often make attempts to get the affection such as going to the reservoir at the same time each night just to see him at his nightly prayers and even once left one of her "feathers on Marigold Pie's front step, intending for him to find it." She began to imagine the future as Nathaniel's wife, in which she ironically always omitted her wings, something he later literally did when he raped her. With these imaginations, her infatuation grew and the more she mourned it for the wings that still a part of her body. Until the point of getting "deliriously sick" that her "waking moments were spent in dreams — nightmares in which infants turned into bloody animal bits, hallucinations in which the night sky fell into a burning ocean." (Walton 124)

Ava's fever in fact led to another one of her desperate attempt to gain Nathaniel's affection that actually can be said as a magical event. It started when the ghost of Fatima Inês made an apparition at her window at the night of the Pentecost.

Fatima Inês led her to the church where Nathaniel, who was the head of the altar guild, was there. Ava oddly showcased some strange demonstration of her fever that later falsely become the reason that Nathaniel, with his eros love style, abandoned his post at the church obsessing over Ava whom he now utterly believe as an angel.

He turned and saw me, my wings exposed. He paled. For reasons even I remain unsure of, I dropped to my knees, raised my chin, and opened my mouth. For a moment he stood unmoving, possibly awestruck by the close proximity of the blooms of my lips. Then he held up a paper-thin wafer and brought it to my mouth. I reached up and touched it with my tongue.

A strange pink fire sparked and jumped from my parted lips. A sharp gasp came from the doorway of the nave where the rest of the parishioners now stood.

The fire was still dancing on my tongue when Nathaniel, regaining his senses, dropped the flaming host from his singed fingers. He stamped the flames out with his foot, instantly immortalizing the incident with a black mark on the carpet. I blinked as though emerging from a trance, then scrambled to my feet and stumbled from the church. (Walton 125)

Aside for being the main reason of Nathaniel's infatuation and Ava's lack of confidence, her magical body parts, a pair of white and brown speckled wings also served as the loss that present the grief for Ava as well as the grief to Ava for other people heard her attack.

After his eros love get the best of him, Nathaniel decided to invite Ava to his house and made love with her only to find out that she was just a girl, not an angel as how he had believed it all the time. It angered him and ultimately caused him to chop off her wings that later led to her distorted grief for the loss she experienced that night. This particular grief that is characterized with changing behavior can be seen with her confine herself within her room, barely speak any words and grew hostility towards Rowe that reminded her with tragic love before him. Another thing that came with distorted grief is self-destructive behaviors that unfortunately also present to

Ava after the attack. Ava always thought about death and ultimately wanted to end her life but still being traumatized with her experience, she was afraid that her body would not give up and die instead of hurting herself all over again (Walton 174).

The grief for the loss this girl has to go through is not only felt by Ava herself. In fact, it caused a collective grief, or the grief experienced by a community, city or country. The whole Pinnacle Lane neighborhood was drawn to the scene by the flashing lights of the ambulance and the police. When Ava was carried out to the ambulance, "it was said that the entire block fell silent in reverence." And after that the crowd around the Pinnacle Lane grew larger, people "felt compelled to pay their respects." And as the heavy rain from the night still pouring, their prayers "were sent to the sky." (Walton 165-166)

Those prayers, just as much as it is for the collective grief they had for the attack happened to Ava the night before, were not "for forgiveness or salvation. They were not sent in gratitude for the angel walking among the wretched human race. They were not for the soul of a deformed and cursed half-human creature who lived at the end of Pinnacle Lane. They were, quite simply, prayers said for a girl." (Walton 166). They are for Ava Lavender.

#### 3.2.2. Viviane Lavender

Being a strict mother for Ava, Viviane's own childhood is a completely different situation. While Viviane always worries about Ava and not letting her out of the house, her mother Emilienne has no similar worries she has when it comes to her well beings. As it has been stated in the previous section, Viviane was basically raising herself throughout her childhood. So when Viviane started her friendship with Jack it was all with freedom as it is the beginning of the storge love style that according to Lee is based on friendship (77). Emilienne's granting freedom for Viviane further shown when she sense the arrival of a good love at Gabe's arrival, she did not force it upon her daughter and let the agape love of Gabe to find its own way to Viviane's heart.

Viviane's and Jack's love is best described as storge love style because they are both each other's best friends, which is a main characteristic of storgic lover that their love is not based on physical attraction (Lee 77). In fact Viviane was described within the book that her facial features "were nothing special—just a pair of brown eyes, a nose, a set of lips" while Jack, though attractive, was somehow the scent of his, described as "the light scent of soap and Turtle Wax" (Walton 42) that caught Viviane's keen sense of smell, mentioned three times throughout the book.

Another characteristic of storge lover is that they are shy about sex (Lee 77), which can be seen when they spent the night together at the reservoir in which most of the time abruptly stopped when Jack's body "hovering a few inches above hers" and that particular night after the theater grand opening, Viviane stopped Jack when he "reached for her waist" that later turned it into a battle of whose scar is more hideous than the other (Walton 46). Aside from that, as storgic lovers tend to demonstrate their affection in nonsexual ways (Lee 77), Viviane, with her bubbly personality, declaring while racing up the hill to her house yelled "We're in love! We're in love!" for which her neighbor awakened and smiled at that (Walton 50). Unfortunately for Viviane, with storgic love style that sees no importance of this friendship extension love as a valuable goal of life (Lee 77), Jack

in the end left her for another girl he met at college Laura Lovelorn that deemed fit to his father's expectation of him to be 'useful'.

And that separation from Jack when he enrolled to college is the time when Gabe, the gentle giant, came to Viviane's life with his agape love for her, which tragically is one-sided for a significant amount of time since Viviane is still mourning the loss of Jack. According to Lee, agape is a selfless love style that represents an all-giving that implies an obligation to love and care for others without any expectation of reciprocity or reward (qtd. In Regan 10). This can be easily distinguished through Gabe's early years as Emillinne's new house guest. When Gabe first arrived at Pinnacle Lane, he took a glimpse of Viviane in front of the bakery and after finding out her residence, he decided that he went straight to the house with "every intention of offering up his soul in return for a room" under the same roof with Viviane. Emilienne then willfully took Gabe in as a carpenter who basically made every improvement in the house for Viviane, whom he barely managed to be in the same room without accidentally doing awkward things (Walton 52).

And just fitting perfectly to agape characteristic that the agapic lover will step aside in favor of a rival who seems more likely to meet the partner's needs (Regan 11), Gabe, with his gentle heart, could only watched when Viviane left him at the solstice festivities to go to the reservoir with Jack (Walton 61). Even at Viviane's flight scene after they went back to the celebration to introduce her to Laura Lovelorn, Gabe only went back home later in the evening when he came across Jack with his clothes go all wrong after their affair at the dahlia bush. Gabe held his urge to fetch Viviane, laid half naked on the yard instead only spied her from the bathroom

window (62). Ultimately, Gabe was always there despite Viviane never noticed him the whole time while mourning Jack through the loss in limbo and her disenfranchised grief.

Throughout the time span Viviane spent waiting for Jack's letter while he was away at the Whitman College, Viviane was experiencing what is called loss in limbo. Limbo refers to the situation where someone is without prior knowledge, waiting for a fate whether the loss would be truly happened or not, which according to Hay and Kessler actually has no certain period of time, which can take months or years even (13). At the time when Viviane was waiting for the letter that Jack promised to send daily, which sadly "falter to three a week, and then two, and then none at all" in a matter of two dismal months (Walton 51), she was in state of uncertainty whether or not he truly had left her. She was promised, so she hold on to the promise, not daring to speculate things because Jack had not given her any information about his wellbeing, so she waited until the night of the solstice when the truth of the loss is finally revealed, she truly lost Jack to Laura Lovelorn, the loss within the limbo turns into the disenfranchised grief.

According to Hay and Kessler, Disenfranchised grief can be felt when someone experiences a loss but others do not acknowledge the importance of the loss in the person's life. Others may not understand the importance of the loss or they may minimize the significance of the loss (14). Other people in Viviane's life, or in particular her mother Emilienne, did not acknowledge the importance of the loss of Jack Griffith to Viviane's life due to the fact that she was the one who heard a "birdsong announcing good love's arrival" upon welcoming Gabe to their household

(Walton 154). The loss itself initially happened months before it was revealed the night of the solstice, so others would expect Viviane to be able to cope with the life without Jack. But unfortunately for Viviane, even how hard she tried to conceal her grief, it reflects through how she behave throughout her pregnancy with Jack's children. She even screamed his name and hoping he would be waiting on the other side of the room when she goes into labor (72). In the end, Gabe with his agape love was the only one who always been there for her children, add up to other reason why Viviane's loss for Jack is merely disenfranchised.

After conceiving a twin as a single mother, Viviane grew as a woman to not only succumbs within her grief of the loss of her former lover, but also worried about her children. And to that, with the attack happened to her daughter Ava, Viviane once again experience such a loss with a grief that fits best with the description of a chronic grief. While experiencing this particular grief after Ava's attack, Viviane took the path of the avoidance of any situation that may remind her of the loss. It is also happened to the fact that Viviane as described previously that she has a keen sense of smell as her 'magical' talent, is able to smell Ava's misery while at home, so she decided to take Emilienne's place as the baker at the bakery.

It shamed her to admit it, but Viviane relished her hours in the bakery, away from the awful odor of misery and despair that wafted through the hallways of our house. It was so strong that my mother often covered her nose with a handkerchief just to walk by my room. They had to hire a nurse to change my bandages. What happened to me was so horrible, Viviane tried not to think about it, often tried not to think at all. Instead, she filled her time with menial tasks, like baking bread and pastries, which she always brought home to serve after my lunch. (Walton 171)

By coping with her chronic grief with spending time away at the bakery, Viviane managed to treat her grief with her own ways, thus omitted the possibility of the development of severe clinical depression, suicidal or self-harming thoughts, and even substance abuse that often present to the sufferer left untreated.

#### 3.2.3. **Emilienne Roux**

Emilienne, on the very first sentence of the very first chapter of *The Strange* and Beautiful Sorrows of Ava Lavender was written that she "fell in love three times before the eve of her nineteenth birthday". All of those three loves she fell into are best fitting into the description of ludus love style and they are all happened when she was still the residence of a cramped Manhatine apartment along with the loss and grief she experienced through her time living there. And then at the age of twenty she met Connor Lavender to whom she decided to marry and later left Manhattan and her previous life there. For this love she has for Connor, it is most likely the pragma love style being depicted through their short-lived marriage. This particular explanation for Emilienne's love life and the loss and grief she had been through is presented according to her previous life in Manhattan and later life in Seattle.

While being the residence of Beauregard's *Manhatine*, still young and foolish, at the tender age of thirteen Emilienne fell in love with the first love of her life, a poor boy of the neighborhood named Levi Blythe who got repeatedly called faggot by the gang boys. Emilienne took pity of him and "let him touch her bare bottom" while admitting to her sister that "love can make us such fools". After the event took place, the boy went missing without anybody knowing where he went and that was the end of their life. The same thing happened to the second love of her life to whom she fell

hopelessly in love with at the age of sixteen. This other boy, dubiously named Dublin, was just like the one before him. He left Emilienne after giving this girl her first kiss to run off with another girl name Carmelita Hermosa (Walton 15). Both of them resembles what ludus love style stands for; game, having fun together, and no intention of including the current partner in any future life plans or events (Steinberg 48)

Heartbroken with those first attempts at love, two years later at the age of eighteen, a man named Satin Lush came into her life. After the two of them fight their way through the rain under Satin's umbrella, Emilienne brought him home and "introduced Satin to her family as her betrothed". Even though Satin has the intention of including Emilinne in his future, his revealed true identity and intentions are heavily attributed to ludus love style in which they are known as having several partners simultaneously. It was first discovered when Emilienne's sister, Margaux was pregnant with a mysterious guy in which at the day of her labor Emilienne came across seventeen children with mismatched eyes resembling those of Satin's scattered throughout twelve blocks she raced by only to find out that her newborn nephew also happened to have those eyes, indicating that he was fathered by Satin Lush as his eighteenth illegitimate child.

The betrayal of Satin Lush and Margaux led to complicated loss and a cumulative grief for Emilienne. Because after all, Margaux was still her sister, the one who followed her around like her own shadows. So when Margaux carved her own heart that eventually killed herself, Emilienne went through a great loss that gets complicated by the fact that she is also losing someone she thought she loved by the

betrayal from both of them. It was also a cumulative grief because it was occurred right after Pierette's transformation into a canary and followed close by with René's murder by William Peyton.

With the loss of all her siblings all happened in the span of two years, the cumulative grief is certainly stressful for her because she "doesn't have time to properly grieve one loss before experiencing the next" (Elizz paragraph 11). It gets severed by the fact that complicated loss is severe in longevity that in Emilienne's case lasted throughout her entire life due to the fact that the ghosts of her siblings still followed her around as her unwelcome guests that tirelessly make frantic gestures to get Emilienne's attention (Walton 29). Fortunately for Emilienne, the only warning sign of complicated loss that happened to her is that she went through a radical lifestyle changes that she gave up everything related to beauty and music. She was once took up the harpsichord and sang every night with her siblings, but after the death of her siblings, she would not even touch the harpsichord both in real life and or when she visited *Manhatine* in her daydream (127).

What may adds up to Emilienne's cumulative grief is also the death of her mother, Maman, whose "poor heart made all the more fragile by the loss of her children, soon disappeared completely". Her death was described as not being a corpse but instead she was "leaving behind only a small pile of blue ashes between the sheets of her bed". That last remain of her mother was kept by Emilienne "in an empty tin of throat lozenges." (Walton 24)

But the loss itself, however, was an anticipatory loss because Maman had been "slowly making her own disappearance" after the loss of her husband who

ironically thought to be running away with a German woman while in fact was butchered and thrown into the river. At first, Emilienne noticed that one day "on a busy street corner, she reached out to take hold of her mother's hand. Her fingers slipped right through, as if passing through a wisp of steam" (Walton 14). After that, she grew "more transparent, enough so that her children could reach right through her to place a milk bottle in the icebox" (16) that eventually led to her disappearance completely into a small pile of blue ashes. This disappearance of Maman somehow make it more bearable for Emilienne because her death is not as abrupt as her siblings and that she can get used to the fact that even though she was still alive, parts of her was not. So when she was completely gone, the grief is an anticipatory one that has little to no effect compared to the sudden death of her siblings in a small time span.

After going through those many heartbreaks from unsuccessful love and the loss of her whole family, Emilienne met a crippled man named Connor Lavender whose withered leg is the very reason that Emilienne married him (Walton 24). At first, it seems illogical from the previous statement saying that Emilienne's 'love' for Connor was pragma love style. But when we see what Emilienne has been through with all of her previous loves leaving her for someone else, Connor was practically a compatible lover whose feature, or in this case his condition, fulfills the requirements of the essential part of pragmatic lover 'shopping for a suitable mate' (Lee 124) for Emilienne at the time. Surely having been left by her previous loves had been traumatized her that the first time she met Connor, she "decided that such a man would have trouble leaving anywhere, or anyone for that matter." And it should also be noted that Connor "agreed to take her far away from Manhattan" for exchange of

giving him one child. Moving, as it turns out, is the very thing that Emilienne was needed the most with all of the tragedies happened to her while she was living there, even though she "would close her eyes as he made love to her so that she wouldn't have to look at his misshapen leg." (Walton 24)

Emilienne and Connor Lavender's marriage lasted for only a year, give or take. Connor Lavender died suddenly after getting "a sharp twinge shot down his left arm" while locking the bakery door one evening. And then the next morning, "in shocked disappointment, and stunned horror, Connor Lavender realized he was dead". And that left Emilienne with another loss that somehow, experienced with her little to no feeling towards Connor, was best suited the description of absent grief, which is happened when someone does not acknowledge the loss and shows no signs of grief (*Elizz* paragraph 20). Emilienne was in fact, upon finding out that her husband had been dead, calmly called the ambulance while whispering to the operator that they don't need to hurry (Walton 31). It is simply because Emilienne has nothing else to do with her husband, thinking that she had been a good wife for Connor that even on his death, she would still dress him herself, fulfilling her silent promise. After that, as if any of it did not just happened, Emilienne went to the bakery carrying her daughter Viviane and started her life as a single mother and a baker (Walton 32).

#### **CHAPTER IV**

#### CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

#### 4.1. Conclusion

In this particular section, the researcher concludes her research regarding her finding of magical realism characteristics in Leslye Walton's The Strange and Beautiful Sorrows of Ava Lavender as well as the representation of love and loss through it within the book.

The researcher found that this novel lives up to Wendy B. Faris' characterization of magical realism. In fact, all of the characteristics can be found within the novel. The first characteristic is the irreducible elements, those are: Ava's wings, Viviane's magical talent to smell things, and also Emilienne's strangeness. The second one is the phenomenal world. That is Ava's teenage struggle for having strict parent, Viviane's earlier years spent with Jack, and also the depiction of the Roux family, including Emilienne, while they were immigrants in Manhattan. The phenomenal world that often use historical anchoring can also be found in this novel by the story of SS France and the pagan holiday, Summer Solstice.

The third one, the unsettling doubts are apparent at how other character perceives and questions Ava's wings and Emilienne's ability to communicate with her deceased siblings and her other natural talents. These doubts shape the readers' thinking and categorization of the irreducible elements. The fourth one is merging realms. It can be clearly seen in Pierette Roux's transformation into a yellow canary that merges the realms of human and animal. Other than that, the apparition of

Emilienne's deceased siblings is somehow invading the realm as if in a double sided mirror that can also be accessed by Emilienne through her daydreams.

The fifth characteristic is the disruption of time, space, and identity. The disruption of time can be seen by the early coming seasons. The disruption of space can be seen in the growing of the strange cherry tree that started blossoming in winter. Also, Pierette's drawer bedroom is also an example for that. Another one can be seen from the seemingly nonexistent distance of the cumulonimbus cloud and the smell of the upcoming rain. And as for the disruption of identity, it can be seen from the character Gabe, known as the gentle giant whose body always bigger and taller than his actual age that helped him lied about it.

With these findings, the researcher then found the representation of love, as in John Alan Lee's colour wheel of love, and also loss, which is Hay and Kessler's typology of loss. For the first main female character, Ava Lavender, the love she went through was the eros love style projected by Nathaniel Sorrows to her with the attraction of her wings, which is the irreducible element of this magical realist novel. She herself fell in love with Nathaniel in which she went through the mania love style that later contributed to the extraordinary fever. That fever led to the magical event of "fire dancing" on her tongue. Ava's wings also serve as the loss for Ava when Nathaniel attacked her, thus later became her distorted grief and the people around Pinnacle Lane's collective grief.

The second main female character is Viviane Lavender. She experienced storge love style when she was with Jack, a friend since childhood. Her ability to smell his distinguishable scent is the pivotal point of the depiction of their

relationship. Later, broken and left for another woman by Jack, Viviane was loved deeply in an agape love style by Gabe, known for his disruption of identity in this novel. Gabe had loved her when Viviane was still battling with her loss in limbo at the time she was waiting for Jack to come back to her. Until that loss turned into disenfranchised grief when Jack introduced Laura Lovelorn as a new lover. Viviane also went through a chronic grief at the event of her daughter's attack that forced her to avoid the house due to her magical talent of smelling the misery.

The third and the last of the main female character is Emilienne Roux. Before marrying Connor Lavender, Emilienne fell in love three times, all the ludus love style. For Connor, it was the pragma love style that suits her preferences of mate that would not leave her. Among the female characters, Emilienne experienced the most loss and heartbreaks. She went though the complicated loss that happened when her sister died carving her own heart out but it is the impact of her betrayal along with Emilienne's fiancée. Cumulative grief also happened to her because all the deaths of her family members are back to back events in a span of two years. Anticipatory loss also experienced by Emilienne when her mother slowly disappearing into blue ashes. Absent grief is also apparent when Connor Lavender died on their bed, Emilienne calmly called the ambulance and accepted her status as a single mother.

All in all, with the characteristics of the magical realism are found within the novel, the depictions of love and loss follow suit with the findings. The love and loss representations are all endowed if not caused by the magical things and events within the story, making the love and loss on their own are extraordinary events.

#### **Suggestions** 4.2.

The researcher is fully aware that this research is not a finish line for this field of study. There are still a lot more to be explored in magical realism. It is currently still rarely be found within the studies done by English Department students in this university. So it opens to possibilities of how it can be explored further while still maintaining the uniqueness of one's research.

The same goes to the literature work itself. The Strange and Beautiful Sorrows of Ava lavender by Leslye Walton. As previously stated, this novel is a relatively new in being published. There are a lot more interesting subject can be found within the novel. In fact, the researcher's chosen subject of the representation of love and loss is actually opening up a new question regarding the role of women within the novel. As it clearly was the case in this research that it focuses on those female main characters. Other than that, having been through a lot of love and loss, it would also be an interesting subject to study how psychological condition of the female main characters affects their lives respectively.

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