

An Analysis of the Darkest Part of the Forest by Holy Black in Light of Wendy B. Faris' Model of Narrative Techniques in Magical Realism

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Abstract

*This research study focuses on the analysis of the narrative techniques of the text *The Darkest Part of the Forest* by Holy Black, an American novelist, in light of Wendy B. Faris' theory of narrative techniques in magical realism proposed in *Ordinary Enchantment: Magical Realism and the Remystification of Narrative* (2004) that serves as theoretical framework. In this context, the present research is a post-modernist analysis of the text since magical realism is mode of writing under Post Modernism. The study negotiates that text appears as a magical realist text because it shows several instances, settings, plot and characters which present it more than a fantasy. The plot revolves around the horned boy, a faerie prince, faeries, their encounter with human beings, magic, spell, and pastoral settings. The analysis of juxtaposition of realistic elements with fantasy or unrealistic happenings is the focus of this research. Wendy B. Faris has proposed five primary elements as the narrative building blocks of the binary opposition between realism and fantasy: the irreducible element, unsettling doubts, the phenomenal world, merging realms and, the distortion of time, space and identity. The researchers' aim is to investigate whether Faris' five elements may be successfully applied to the text under analysis. The findings of this research study amplify that this text is a post-modernist piece of writing and it truly exhibits the amalgamation of fantasy and real word occurrences. By discerning narrative elements in the text through discussion and textual references, the researchers have negotiated how these narrative elements served as building blocks of magical realism in the selected text. This research is qualitative and descriptive and adds to the body of Fantasy, American and Post-Modernist literature.*

Keywords: Magical Realism, Fantasy Literature, Realism, Pastoral, Narrative Techniques, Romance and Faeries.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Holly Black is a well-recognized American novelist. Her literary genre is based on child fantasy and horror fiction presenting her as one of the best contemporary American fiction writers. She has penned down trilogies and series for youngsters. Her novel *The Darkest Part of the Forest* is her debut novel and tells an adventurous story of a brave she-knight, who embarks on her journey to save her town Fairfold. Hazel appears as a human knight during the course of the narration but also serves as a fairy knight.

The present research is an attempt to apply magical realism as the theoretical background on the selected text *The Darkest Part of the Forest* by Holly Black in light of Wendy B. Faris' model of Narrative Techniques. The text is about magic, fairies and human world where strange things happen, and people are fascinated by presence of fairies. Mundie Moms and Mundie Kids have written about holly Black as: "Holy Black's writing is appealing, and easily lured into this enchanting, dark world, where humans and faeries exist. No one can write about faeries like she can! Holly Black has this ability to make them fascinating" [Moms and Kids (2015)].

The reason for selecting this text is its falling into a fantasy genre; the twists and turns of the plot, the diverse and she-hero cum protagonist Hazel who is willing to take risks to end the enslavement, and it is thrilling narrative. The researchers intend to explore this text as a magical realist romance by investigating its narrative techniques. Magical realism is a mixture of realism and nonrealistic happenings, events, and objects. The concept is defined by Simhachalam Thamarana in an article entitled *Magical Realism in English Literature and Its Significant Contribution*, (2015) in the following words:

The term 'magic realism' extensively refers to the style of writing or technique which includes magical as well as supernatural events narrated realistically without any doubt about improbability of the events. It questions the nature of reality and draws attention to the act of creation by using a new combination of fact and fancy (263).

First used in 1955, Magical realism is incorporation of the imaginative elements and happenings into the real settings. It is a blend of romantic, imaginary, and unrealistic ideas. A German art critic Franz Roh was the first one who introduced this term in 1925. It is based on the idea of the presence of fantasy elements in the real world where magical happenings are presented as

if they are a part of the real world. They contribute to the normalcy of the situation.

Moreover, Magical events are presented in narratives as ordinary things. In magical realism literature, the readers are expected to believe in the happenings as not extraordinary but as part of routine occurrences. Contrary to the belief of the critics that a piece of literature should belong to one particular genre, the magical realistic text belongs to two genres, i.e., realism and fantasy. Besides, magical realism is the feature of Post-Modernism because of its tendency to incorporate text in two genres.

The present study sets to analyze plot of this text as a magical realist romance by analyzing narrative techniques. This is a new perspective that presents this text as not only fantasy but an amalgamation of fantasy and reality. The researchers will analyze the text in the light of Wendy B. Faris' theoretical model of narrative techniques in magical realism. This research would add to the study of Fantasy Literature on the one hand and Literary theory and modern American Literature on the other.

1.1. Research Methodology

Qualitative descriptive research method has been employed by the researchers in the present study. Wendy B. Faris' definition of magical realism is incorporated exclusively in this study to interpret this text as a magical realist text. Moreover, Faris' model of narrative techniques in magical realism has been applied to the framework of this research. Faris introduces five building blocks to classify a narrative as a magical realist text; the same elements serve as unit of analysis to design an interpretive web for the selected text. The researchers have attempted to negotiate that events in the plot of the text fall into the categories of realism and Fantasy. The arguments have been supported by textual references and plot twists.

1.2. Research Questions

This research study incorporates the following research questions:

- What are the elements, characters, plot twists, and narrative techniques in the text *The Darkest Part of the Forest* by Holly Black that classify it as a magical realist text?
- How far the text understudy is analyzed in the theoretical framework of Wendy B. Faris' model of narrative techniques in magical realism by applying the proposed five elements proposed by her on the text?

1.3. Objectives of the Study

This research paper has the following objectives:

- To negotiate that *The Darkest Part of the Forest* by Holly Black is a magical realist text by discerning those elements that classify it more than a fantasy.
- To analyze the text according to the theoretical framework of Wendy B. Faris' model of narrative techniques in magical realism by applying the five elements proposed by her on the plot and characters.

1.4. Literature Review

This section will present a brief introduction to Wendy B. Faris' theoretical model of narrative techniques in magical realism as applied by her to contemporary adult fiction and explore her definitions of the five elements. In this context, this section presents the answer to the question: How does Faris' theoretical model of narrative techniques define magical realism?

The term magical realism was coined by art historian Franz Roh to describe post-expressionist painting, in his essay in 1925, who describes techniques of art "achieving the miraculous and the mundane" (qtd in Faris 65). Roh further states that "the point is not to discover the spirit beginning with objects but, on the contrary, to discover objects beginning with the spirit." (qtd in Faris 65). Later on, in the 1950s influenced by the essay written by Cuban writer Alejo Carpentier, Latin American authors adopted this style and combined it with French Surreal concepts. Since 1960s, magical realism has emerged as a distinct literary genre. Magical realism creates sense of wonder, strangeness and element of magic to the text. It can present symbols and metaphors used in the text in an elaborated and suggestive way by taking an idea from the world of romance or fantasy world, it can give it new idea by transferring that. Magical Realism is defined by Lindsay Moore in the article entitled *Magical Realism* in the following words:

A literary mode rather than distinguishable genre, magical realism aims to seek the paradox of the union of opposites. It challenges polar opposites like life and death...Magical Realism is characterized by two conflicting perspectives, one based on a rational view of reality and the other on the acceptance of supernatural as prosaic reality (Moore n. p).

Another academic researcher defines Magical Realism by relating it to Expressionism, in the research paper entitled, *Magical Realism and Latin America*, in the following words:

Magical Realism: To some it is Expressionism which may be defined as "the free expression by objective means of the subjective feelings of an individual or group, as through art, music, poetry, dancing etc. painting where real forms are combined in a way that does not conform to daily reality (06).

The first techniques employed in magical realism, is juxtaposition of two worlds. Fantasy takes the reader into the altogether different world by changing the experience of the reader. Magical realist writers utilize much techniques from post-colonialism. Hybridity is the prime focus of major magical realism writers since such texts incorporated opposite worlds such as urban and rural, and western and oriental. Likewise, the themes introduced in magical realists' texts are of almost recessing nature such as time, cyclic instead of linear time, and the idea of mystery and horror. Carnavalesque is another important theme in magical realists' texts. Since the concept of carnival is related to the idea of body, the senses, and the relations between human beings, hence there are references to participation in dance, music, and folklore in such texts.

Magical realism has been defined by Faris as a mode "that takes the narrative beyond mimesis (reproduction) to a representation of reality" (151). In *Ordinary Enchantment* (2004), Faris has proposed five primary elements as the narrative building blocks of the binary opposition realism and fantasy-based plot: *the irreducible element, unsettling doubts, the phenomenal world, merging realms and, the distortion of time, space and identity*. The first element Faris suggests is *the Irreducible Element*, in which "the text contains an irreducible element of magic". In other words, an event occurs that cannot be explained "according to the laws of the universe as they are formulated in empirically based discourse" (07). According to Faris, "magical images or events, glowing alluringly from within the realistic matrix, often highlight central issues in a text" (qtd in Rainer 19).

Next, Faris has presented the element of *unsettling doubts*, in which "the reader may experience some hesitation in the effort to reconcile two contradictory understandings of events", (the magical and the real) (07). Then, there is an element of the *phenomenal world* in the narratives in which, "descriptions in magical realism detail a strong presence of the phenomenal

world.” (07). According to Faris’ the phenomenal world generally refers to ghosts, spirits, and other worldly bodies (14). Furthermore, Faris presents the element of *merging realms* in which “the narrative merges different realms” (07). A mixing of two worlds exists in such narratives with magical realism as the underlying technique. These elements will be elaborated in discussion section of the paper.

Furthermore, Rosemary. J. Rainer in her thesis *an Exploratory Study into Magical Realist Narrative Techniques in Contemporary Young Adult Literary Fiction* (2002) has taken Faris’ theory of Narrative Techniques to analyze few contemporary adult Fiction. She opines:

Faris’ theory of five elements offers a useful framework by which to better understand magical realism narrative techniques. Faris’ formulation of the five elements also furthers our understanding of the unique technical characteristics of the mode and its cross-over position between realist narrative and fantasy (Rainer,n.p).

She has quoted Faris who states about magical realism as:

Magical realism’s multi-cultural perspectives originated in the peripheral and colonized regions of the East: Latin America and the Carribean, India, Eastern Europe, Africa. But the mode is becoming less and less marginalized, even though it retains the charm of the marginal position. (qtd in Rainer 14).

She has further shed light on the particular use of words by Faris as:

Faris use of the term ‘marginal position’ here, needs to be read alongside her other terms ‘submerged traditions’ and ‘emergent literatures’, which she uses to describe any community, group or person who does not have a voice in the mainstream thinking of the dominant group. Faris’ ‘charm of the marginal position’.... she uses the term emotionally to evoke the expression of ‘other voices’ in magical realism 15 which consequently implies voices that offer something different to Western empirical ideas. However, according to Faris, in contemporary magical realism other marginalized voices, other than post-colonial,

neo-colonial and emerging cultures, are using magical realism to express their discontent. (14-15).

Regarding the research done on this text, there are just few reviews available. Besides, Sheeza Mehmood, a researcher has done the valuable research on this text. In her research work, *Hazel as an Archetype Knight in The Darkest Part of the Forest* (2016) she has analyzed the character of the protagonist Hazel and established her role. Firstly, as a knight, then proceeding further, as an archetype knight, hereby proving how Hazel fulfills the demands of being an ideal and traditional knight. In her research she has focused on the valor and bravery of Hazel in saving her town's people. She argues that Hazel is a traditional archetype hero and a knight. In this research paper, the researcher has taken a different perspective of this text for the research study.

2. DISCUSSION

This section of this research study focuses on an analysis of the text of the selected novel as a magical realist romance. Frequent references reflect realistic descriptions of life, i.e., settings, characters, plots, and everyday occurrences. The researcher has made an attempt to prove the presence of realistic elements within this fantasy as magical realism. Furthermore, this section will analyze the text in the light of Wendy B. Faris' model of narrative techniques in magical realism in which he has focused on five elements which according to her any magical realist text has. Faris' refers to five characteristics as "Chinese boxes, ideas within ideas or 'the magical realist rooms in the house of fiction'" (122).

The Darkest Part of the Forest is a pastoral romance centering on a town named Fairfold. "Fairfold is the kookiest town" (12) where faeries and human beings live together rather it is an abode of faeries where human beings too have attributes of faeries. Tourists enjoy visiting Fairfold because of its enchanting faeries and the darkest forest surrounding it. "Fairfold is actually a strange town, the kookiest place ever where inhuman creatures live freely along with humans" (04). Fairfold also covers the area of forest, hunting forest and Hazel, the protagonist, lives in Fairfold with her parents and her brother Ben. Her parents are artists and paint pictures for tourists and sell their paintings and work at studio. "Everyone in Fairfold left food out for the faeries, to show them respect, to gain their favor" (17).

Analyzing from the perspective of Faris' model, the first element by Faris *The irreducible element* is applicable here. *The irreducible element* according to Faris is "in which the text contains an irreducible element of magic. In other words, an event occurs that cannot be explained according to the laws of the universe as they are formulated according to empirically based discourse" (07). Therefore, "Faris explains, "the reader has difficulty marshalling evidence to settle questions about the status of events and characters in such fictions" (07). The reality that Fairfold is a place where faeries and human beings live together is the irreducible element according to the researcher. The presence of magic and faeries in this place can be argued time and again in the text.

The detailed realistic narrative form is also a technique utilized by the writer who writes in magical realism narrative mode. Faris explains, "magical realism uses text to disrupt what at first appears to be a realist representation. In fact, "one of the most immediately striking ways in which magical realism imbricates the extraordinary within the ordinary" (20). Faris suggests that exaggerated details is used by the writer to tether the incredible within the real world. Actually this irreducible event is born out of detailed narrative realism presented in the text.

The detailed realistic descriptions have been provided to the readers in the opening pages of the text understudy and the readers do not have this clue that they are going to read something unbelievable. The details about Fairfold have been presented as:

Fairfold was a strange place. Dead in the center of the Carling forest, full of what Hazel's grandfather called greenies and what her mother called they themselves or the folk of the Air. Every autumn, a portion of the harvest apples was left out for the cruel and capricious Aldeking. Flowers garlands were threaded for him. Townsfolk knew to fear the monster coiled in the heart of the forest, who lured tourists with a cry. ... (03)

This detail familiarizes readers with what they are reading about, to experience the gradual transfer from ordinary to extraordinary as Fraiss opines that "the marvelous seems to grow organically within the ordinary, blurring the distinction between them" (qtd in 20).

The next element in narrative in magical realism is the element of unsettling doubt. "The element of unsettling doubt is one where the reader may experience some unsettling doubts in the effort to reconcile two contradictory

understandings of events, the magical and the real” (25). The introduction of the horned boy causes “the reader to experience unsettling doubts” (25). The reader experiences doubt here in understanding this amalgamation of the magical and the real. The character of horned boy demands discussion who causes the reader to experience doubts. In the center of Fairfold, down a wood there is a glass coffin, it rests right on the ground and in it sleeps a fairy prince with horns on his head and the pointed ears. His coffin looks much like prison casket, where he has been sleeping from centuries and generations. People in Fairfold believe that whosoever try to harm that glass casket, will be badly punished as the people who do so fall ill or fall victim to evil curse. This glass coffin has been originally made up of tears and blood. He seems a character which is half real and half fantasy character. The readers hesitate to believe that he is such a humanly and faerie figure which seems to be the part of the real world and the magical world at the same time and the writer has given much detail in the text regarding the views of the people about his presence in the casket.

The whole town is in love with horned boy, Hazel herself is! She considers him as her prince. Hazel and Ben are in love with the horned boy and have made up many stories about him. Hazel’s parents are artists so, Ben and Hazel used their dad’s markers, mom’s charcoals and their own crayons to draw endless pictures of this horned boy. The readers are told at the very start:

“He didn’t wake up during the long summers...he didn’t wake up when tourists came to gape and debunkers came to swear, he wasn’t real. He didn’t wake up on autumn weekends, when girls danced right on top of him, gyrating to the tiny sounds coming from nearby ipod speakers, no matter how many parties had been held around the horned boy- generations of parties, so that glass sparked with decades of broken bottles in green and amber” (01).

This description provides the graphic picture about horned boy and his resting place. Hazel is the only one who believes that she can awake the horned boy. She is a very kind, mysterious, simple, and innocent girl. During the course of the narrative, we see Ben and Hazel making various plans off and on to wake him up but every time they fail. The whole town makes different stories about horned boy. They always keep his coffin shiny and clean to show their love towards him. Hazel’s mother paints many pictures of horned boy using different type of oil paints as she announces that “I did a big painting of him, too, in oils” (17).

The youngsters are found making their selfies around his glass coffin. Their charm has been broken when one day he wakes up and Hazel hates him for waking up and breaking her dreams as well, because she considers him her prince. Holly Black has given his pen picture to her readers in this way:

If Hazel closed her eyes, she could conjure the image of him...his of midnight-blue doublet stitched with dark gold thread picking out phoenixes, griffins, and dragons; nails unusually long and stubble; boots of ivory leather that came to her calves; and a face so beautiful, with features so perfectly shaped. (11)

And “Hazel was sure she would be the one to wake him up” (12) and the rest of the narrative centers around Hazel’s this mission of waking her dream prince up during which she proves herself as a traditional knight...a kind of brave she- knight. Black has informed the readers that “The horned boy-the prince is free...and he could be anywhere. We have to find him before anyone else does” (21). That was a surprising moment for Hazel when she heard the news about glass coffin. “Someone finally broke the coffin, smashed it, coffin was empty, body of prince was missing” (21). The description of horned boy has been given as:

His skin was pale seemingly bleached by the chill. He was still wearing the fine embroidered blue tunic he’d had on for generation, the fabric darkened by rain, ivory boots spattered by mud. His horns rose up over his temples and curved back behind his sharp ears, close to his head and ending in points just past his jaw line, so that, to someone at a distance, they might appear like thick braids. (45).

The sentence “his horns rose up over his temples and curved back behind his sharp ears” inculcate his faerie image in the minds of the readers but he has human attributes. When he was found drinking coffee, Hazel asks; “And drinking the drip coffee of our modern age? It’s a nice thought. I hope so” (45). The reference to modern age has been given consciously to comment and to contrast his medieval dress and appearance. Hazel is in love with him no matter, “even if he’s the villainous prince from your stories” (40). The character of horn boy is also an appropriate element in discussion of elements of magical realism in this text. The presence of such a fairy prince who has been sleeping since centuries, then his sudden awakening and he, being dressed up like medieval knight in human world and drinking coffee of modern world are

elements which strengthen the idea of this fantasy classed as a magical realist romance. The horned boy serves “to create the world that figures a sense of the mysterious within the ordinary” (163). His presence with two horns is the element of irreducible in the text and he is the cause of unsettling doubt to the readers by his belonging to two different worlds: real and fantasy world.

Besides, Ben and Jack are as important characters as the character of horned boy and Hazel. Ben Hazel’s brother is the person whom she trusts the most as her other half, her second self. Ben and Jack being best friends also lend their hands in magical realist setting of this fantasy. Ben is blessed by the elf faerie about playing the incredible music by giving a mark near his forehead. Being a gifted child with acute auditory sense, he appears as a Hazel’s disciple many times.

Hazel always wishes her brother’s music to be strong enough to defeat all evil forces. So, the readers are informed that how often his playing can stop monsters from their evil actions and Hazel can continue showing her brave acts being a knight. His music has such powerful impact which forces to make everyone cry while he, himself, feels sick inside to play music in front of dead beings. This point is relevant in discussion of magical realism since he is a human child but he can allure the faeries into his trap by playing constant music. When she-monster comes to attack, she calls for Ben to stop her.

The discussion of Jack ‘s parenthood and *his half faerie and half human self* is also an important point to discuss in case of magical realism. There is no exaggeration if it is stated that jack’s ability serves as an irreducible element with her faerie background. Jack belongs to the folks, while living with his human family. But he possesses some heroic qualities being a human being because Jack is also the part of revel where human beings are not allowed to come. He is different even by his looks as he has pointed ears and sometimes his eye shine like silver. This shows he is a child of faeries. His comradeship for Hazel and his participation in his battle against faeries actually make them partners in his role as a human child. He is the one who stands by her side and guides her well in every required situation where Hazel is confronted by danger. But the readers are told that he is the child of faerie who wants to take him away. It means he belongs to realistic and fantasy, both worlds at the same time. But the readers are introduced to the fact that he has to go to attend the Alderking, the chief of all faeries. Jack, a fairy man among human beings takes Hazel as: “*the first time he met Hazel Evans, he thought that she might be a creature like him. She looked wild enough, her hair clumped with mud and face smeared with berry juice, running through the woods in bare feet*” (62). *His being a faerie self-contributing to an irreducible element also proceeds further*

for the researcher to propose the element of unsettling doubt. The readers, with the passage of time start believing about his half faerie self and his place in Fairfold though the unsettling notion is still there since it is often unbelievable.

The text has many instances which can be cited to argue that the text abounds in magical realist situations and happenings. Where unrealistic and fantasy occurrences occur in juxtaposition of realistic things. Sometimes characters are realistic, they take part in realistic everyday occurrences but certain incidents relate them to the world of fantasy and faeries.

Fairfold is a place where faeries and folks live under the authority of Alderking, who conducts the carnival every full moon night. In the revel no mortals are allowed to join them in celebration. It is not odd to see the monstrous creature in the woods as Fairfold is the town in which faeries and human live side by side. Strange happenings appear daily in Fairfold confirming the notion of unsettling doubt such as told by Black:

Occasionally one would wake up with his or her hair in knots. Things they'd been sure were in their pockets went missing; strange new things were discovered. Butter was eaten right off a dish, licked up by invisible tongues. Money turned into leaves. Laces wouldn't untie, shadows looked a bit ragged, as though they had slipped away for some fun. Back then it was rare for someone to die because of the Folk (13).

Next elements proposed by Faris are the phenomenal world and the merging realms. Both can also be applied on the text. The phenomenal world actually is the world of spirits. This phenomenal world as Faris explains is "grounded textually in a traditionally realistic, even explicitly factual, manner" (14): the phenomenal world in which, "descriptions in magical realism detail a strong presence of the phenomenal world" (14). Furthermore, Faris writes, "[magical realism] may include magic and folk wisdom...but real history is a weight that tethers the balloon of magic as if to warn against too great a lightness of mythical or magical being" (58).

The discussion of character of Hazel is another important point in deciphering the relevance of these two elements in the text. The character of Hazel encourages the readers to believe that she belongs to *the phenomenal* and *the real world* at the same time. According to Faris, *the phenomenal events*, like Beloved returning from the dead or the butterflies that never go away are examples of the, "the incursion of several varieties of *otherness*, of personal, historical, culture, or literary pasts, and of different kinds of virtual realities,

including textual ones” (74). The idea of *otherness* is important in this statement since it is the case of *otherness* which the things from *the phenomenal* and *the real world* carry. Faris has cited *Midnight’s Children* in which Rushdie “carefully situates his narrative in the events surrounding India’s independence and in which the main character, Saleem Sinai, is born at the stroke of the midnight on August 15, 1947, the very moment of India’s independence” (139). Sinai carries in his head “voices that traverse his head like the operations of a radio transmitter, so that the resulting text is not only linked to the world of spirits but also to history” (74). Those voices are actually *phenomenal events*.

Continuing with discussion of Hazel, events happening to Hazel are also *phenomenal events*. Like Saleem Sinai, Hazel considers herself as a knight and performs her duty as a knight throughout the text to protect her town from inhuman creatures. Hazel is simply a brave knight who confronts every accidental happening bravely. Her interaction with the faeries and other inhuman creatures is an element of *magical realism*. During these encounters we find her as a heroic knight. For that Hazel used to work in an old store; she gets a second hand coat for her from the store. Hazel’s journey as a knight starts from her childhood. She spends all her childhood in imagining herself as a knight, to save the strange town from the monstrous creature and the people living in it. So, she resolute to be savior at any cost, to free that *horned boy ... the prince of all hearts*, the actual prince of Hazel from that casket where he has been sleeping from generations. Imagining her-self as she- knight, Hazel reads much books related to knights and she also has been dressed up like a knight. Black’s argument that “Hazel had been dressed up like a knight: a blue dishrag tied around neck for a cloak and a scarf for a sash around her waist, her red hair whipped behind her as she ran, shinning with gold in the lazy, late-afternoon sun” (21) is apt in presenting her knighthood image. Hazel believes that she and her brother are designed to be a knight and a bard who fights against evil.

First of all, Hazel has a pact with faeries. This notion of having a pact is an unrealistic element in her human character connecting her to the idea of the *phenomenal world*. She settled a bond with faeries when she was eleven years old. “She had crept down to the hawthorn tree on a full-moon night, just before dawn” (37). It was decided that on the behalf of Alder king, the forest creature will give her anything she desires. Hazel wishes for her brother to go to school of music in Philadelphia as one of her wishes before the faeries.

I want my brother to go to music school in Philadelphia.
The creature laughed. “You ‘re bold; I like that. But, no,
I’m afraid that is no sufficient price for what you want.

Promise me ten years of your life.” “Ten years?” Hazel echoed, stunned (18).

Consequently, she will have to obey the faeries and Alder king in return. The deal has been done with the seven years of Hazel given in service of Alder king. She has been told by the faeries that “Seven years to pay your debts. Much too late for regrets.” (97). So Hazel ties a strip of her favourite cloth to the hawthorn tree as a reminder of the pact. Once, something fell from her coat’s pocket, a walnut with a thin bow of grass tied around it. That was a Hazelnut which was her name sake nut...a reminder of her vow with faeries. Some immortal being tries to give her a reminder through the piece of paper inside the walnut and statement written in spidery letters; “time to pay your debts, much late for regrets” (89). Hazel’s state of mind has been presented by Black by stating, “unfurling the thin piece of parchment, a shiver went up her spine as she read the spidery lettering, seven years to pay your debts. Too much late for regrets (44)”. The human self of Hazel and her pact with faeries is an amalgamation of elements from two different words. For this she has dual selves...her real *human world inner self and her faerie self* that contributes to her belonging to *phenomenal world*.

Her knighthood is related to her dual self as she has dual selves. In researcher’s point of view, she has been presented as a day time Hazel and also as a night time Hazel. Hazel herself has a complete control over her day self but not over her night self. Her day self does not consider her as a night hazel and she also does not have an idea about her night time hazel who was in the service of the Alderking. Hazel serves him without knowing it. Her bewildered state can be analyzed from her series of thinking: “Had she been taken last night and returned? Is that why she woke up muddled? But then why did they return her? Were they going to take her again? Had seven years passed in a single mortal night?” (19).

The researchers have tried to bring this fact into focus that two selves of Hazel actually belong to two worlds: *the phenomenal world and the real world*. Pursuing her both selves she appears as a knight but in different situations in two different ways before the readers...*her human self and her faerie self* (realistic and fantasy self). She feels that she does not know her-self, because she has no idea about her other strange hidden self. In response to her bargain, she goes to Alderking in his rival with Jack on night full of moon. This event accounts for the presence of the next element in the text, i.e. *the merging realms*. Black informs the reader about the rival of faeries (the full moon gathering of faeries) as,

Growing up in Fairfold, everyone knew to stay out of the forest on full-moon nights-and, to be on the safe side, on the nights surrounding them. That was when the Alderking had his revel, and every nixie, and sprite, every hobgoblin, water hag, phooke, and tree spirit would come from near and far to dance their circle dances and feast until dawn (31).

The revel of Alderking on full moon with faeries: a celebration to dance, to drink wine, to worship their king, is actually the presence of element of *phenomenal world*. It is also a reference to the element of *merging realms*. Faris sheds light on the element of magical realism by stating:

The magical realism vision exists at the intersection of two worlds, at an imaginary point inside a double-sided mirror that reflects in both directions. Ghosts and text, or people and words that seem ghostly, inhabit these two-sided mirrors, many time situated between two worlds of life and death; they enlarge the space of intersection where a number of magically real fictions exist (21-22).

During her visits to revel, Alderking asks her by looking at her: “You’re not my Hazel, are you? Not my knight. You are the Hazel Evans who lives by day.” (83). Here for the first time, readers get the inkling about Hazel’s dual selves. In these sentences, Alder king talks to Hazel why does she come there without his permission. At that time, she is neither awarded of what he is talking about nor does she know about her where about at every night? She seems to be conscious that whether she is a day Hazel (human Hazel) who is going to search for the answers about those strange things happening to her and to the people of Fairfold (her waking up with mud and all the warnings she receives at day time and the removal of horn boy from the casket) ...or any other Hazel. Alderking’s confession that she is not *his Hazel* not his knight but she is a Hazel Evans who lives by day...*a human self*-ignites the doubts of the readers. Here, the reader takes this clue that Hazel has dual selves; one as *a night self* and other as *a day self*. Her night self, *her faerie self* is in complete command of Alder king, as his words confirm this:

Am I not generous to take those memories from you?
Every night, from the moment you fall into slumber until
your head touches your pillow again near dawn, you’re
mine. You are my knight to command, and your own

daylight is unaffected. You always had potential—and I have guided that potential. I have made you into one of my number (84).

As has been informed by the writer that “Seven years in faerie might be the rest of her life in the mortal world” (19). During day she serves herself for her town Fairfold and at night time she serves herself for Alderking being a *fairy knight* at his commands. But she could not even dream of being a knight of king. Her actual dream is to become a knight who would kill all the monsters abiding in the woods, to end every evil force which harms her people, family, friends and (above all of them) her brother Ben. She feels an intense affiliation with them so she dreams her dream of being a knight. The readers are told by Black as: “Her night self might have been trained by the Alderking but her day self didn’t know how to fight any better than she had at twelve” (105). Faris provides an example from *Pig Tales* by Marie Darrieussec, this is a story in which the narrator is a captive between two worlds, the human and the animal, experiencing in-betweens of both worlds. The same is the case with Hazel she belongs to both worlds, the inhabitant of neither.

In faeries court, which can be called a climax event of this fantasy, Alderking showers his blessing towards her but she never remembers her faerie self. At each night when she lays down on her bed, she is no earthlier *human Hazel* rather a *transferred self* into a fairy knight an Alderking’s knight. The description about that Hazel has been given as: “Hazel had been dressed up like a knight, a blue dishrag tied around her neck for a clock and a scarf for a sash around her waist. Her red hair whipped behind her as she ran, shining with gold in the lazy, late-afternoon sun” (21).

Her day light self-suffers from nothing because she does not know her night self, she is now, one among all the other knights of Alderking. Hazel’s human self presents before the readers a brave, an innocent Hazel, who is ready to sort out problems of people in Fairfold related to mischievous doings of monsters. She is the one who is quite flirty, young enthusiastic, madly in love with her friend Jack and her horned boy. The discussion about her this self needs no elaboration as the above discussion has dealt with status of Hazel as a knight...her day self but here the focus would be on faerie self of Hazel that was an unconscious projection of Hazel as a knight about which she used to dream.

Her night time actions and their memories are hidden from her real self so it was Hazel being a *night knight* freed the horned boy who used to sleep in the casket for generations. Her night-self has broken the coffin (freed the horn boy by the curse of Alderking) made up of tears and blood and has actually

been broken by the use of magical sword; Hazel's sword (the magical sword that she hides somewhere) under her serving as an Alderking's knight.

He must not know that she'd been the one to smash Severin's coffin. Since she'd been awake all the night before, following Ben through the woods, her other self wouldn't have shown up, couldn't have been interrogated, couldn't have revealed anything. And since the Alderking hadn't wanted her to know about her night self, he wasn't the mysterious Ainsel. Which meant her knight self might have an ally in his court, someone whom she was working with (84-85).

This is also unbelievable for her to ponder about her training as a knight under the protection of Alderking. She thinks that her mind likely forgets everything at daytime but her body remembers everything that is why she fights skillfully with her knight sword on command of Alderking proving that her body is in tuned with her training as a knight. Here, the question arises here how it is possible to take her away: Alderking's magic has a great spell in reality thereby they take her by the force of air and she never feels even once that she is being transported to king's court, to serve there as *night Knight*.

Alderking demands Severin, his son, (faerie prince) from Hazel, who was punished by his own self and was cursed for not obeying him. It is as difficult for her to give him horn boy as it is the demand for the sun or stars. If she does not, Alderking warns her to bid his command then he will destroy Fairfold by the help of monstrous Sorrow. If she brings him Severin, then in return, he would not use the monster against Fairfold. In his very words "Bring me Severin and I wouldn't use her might against Fairfold. I will even keep my people in check. Things will return to the way they once were" (85). According to Alderking, mortals are the best creatures for the task. He said to Hazel: "But you've only served me half that time," said Alderking, "You owe me all your daylight hours yet" (86).

These sentences show Hazel's argumentation with Alderking. She reminded him that she made a bargain when she was only eleven, she is sixteen now and she served throughout the five years of her life. Every night she served him as his knight under his command. Alderking also offers her repeatedly if she brings sword along with Severin, he surely will forgive her debt.

While talking about the element of *phenomenal world*, after discussion of her two selves, the mentioning of her dream is also crucial that presents Hazel's *faerie self*. There are Alderking, faeries and knights in her dream, and

among them all, in the revel only Hazel is to be found as a human being. Actually, *phenomenal world* (her dream) is an indication to her second self; her knight self-functioning through commands of Alderking.

Faris is of the view that the merging realm exists actually in textual spaces. According to Faris, the textual space can be any element from a secret garden, heaven, the underworld, or such places. The space lies somewhere between reality and fantasy. The presence of Alderking revel is that space in the text. This is the space that merges the known world with the magical world blurring the boundaries between the two. The elaborated discussion about Hazel's *faerie and human self* and about Alderking's court has been negotiated on the premises of analysis of the *element of merging realms*.

Hazel's encounters with monsters can also be quoted in discussion of the notion of *merging realms* in magical realism. She has an encounter with monsters thrice, with an ugly creature and Ainsel, faerie prince monster sister. The presence of monsters belonging to fairy world and being the inhabitant of the real world, strengthens this idea of *the element of merging realm*. It was actually monster Ainsel, the horned princess sister who is taking revenge from her brother and father. The demand of horn boy from Alderking led Hazel to know about the secret or real cause of his entrapping into glass casement. It is Ainsel, who unveils this truth by talking about her lost lover:

I loved him and I loved him and he's dead and gone and bones. I loved him and they took him away from me. Where is he? Where is he? Dead and gone and bones. Dead and gone and bones. My father took him. My brother killed him. Where is he? (67).

The monster utters these sentences repeatedly during her attack on school. Hazel heard the sounds of crying inside the classrooms and shrieks from outside. At that time, she could not figure out what had happened there, she stands totally blank and confused. Hazel heard the sound of hitting something on the floor which was the sound of Molly (Hazel's best friend) and the other students hitting badly on the floor by Ainsel, she-monster. That monster who is "made of old, knotted branches grown over with moss, and it has these horrible black eyes... It was huge easily over seven feet in height, and looked roughly human in shape, if a human could be made from branch and vine and soil" (68-72) evokes a sense of terror and sinister presence in the hearts of the readers. During her attack, she creates a miserable and alarming situation for school and for the rest of Fairfold. Hazel tries to protect the people inside the school and prepares herself for a fight against the monster. Her fight with she-monster with

twin daggers (prepared from a pair of heavy scissors) and the notion that physicality of that she-monster can be felt, led the researcher to argue about the element of merging realms in magical realism in the text being studied.

The element of *disruptions of time, space and identity* is the last element of narration in magical realism in Faris terminology, in which, “magical realism disturbs the accepted ideas about time, space and identity” (07). In magical realism, it is often difficult to locate the origins and the time. For example, magical realist texts often amalgamate the historical and current events into the one description; transfer reality into a spiritual space. It is unclear whose point of view the reader is hearing in the narrative. It seems to be the author’s voice from another realm or a voice from history (07). Within this element; he has also presented a notion of defocalization. According to Faris, “In magical realism, the focalization-the perspective from which events are present-is indeterminate; the kind of perceptions it presents are indefinable and the origins of these perceptions are un-locatable” (43). Faris calls this ‘defocalisation’ (45) Faris’ refers to *Midnight’s Children*, where Saleem is carried across India in a flying laundry basket in his own words: “I was in the basket, but not in the basket...I was tossed with, the basket but also not tossed. Afterwards, Picture Sing said, “No, Captain, I couldn’t feel your weight” (25).

For example, in *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, “Four years, eleven months and two days of rain, an insomnia plague that erases the past and the meaning of words, and a room where it is always March and always Monday.” Such description disrupts our sense of time, space and identity (23). According to Faris, “in [magical realism] we wonder what kind of beings we are seeing; it is not so much a question of how but of what” (31). Faris cites another example from *Perfume* in which the author, Suskind presents a man whose perfumed body has the ability to appeal to everyone. “In this instance, Grenouille is able to smell a virgin cross town. The disruption of time, space and identity is apparent in Grenouille’s ability to do this” (117).

He has drawn on a few masterpieces to support his point, i.e., Toni Morrison’s *Beloved*, Gabriel Garcia Marquez’s novel, *One Hundred Years of Solitude* and *The Very Old Man with Enormous Wings*, Salman Rushdie’s *Midnight’s Children*, Patrick Suskind’s *Perfume*, Laura Esquivel’s *Like Water for Chocolate*. In Faris’ view magical realism is a ‘demystification’ of Western thinking. He argues that “Magical realism is a narrative that is imbued with a visionary power...suggests the existence of forces that are not encompassed by reference to ordinary human perceptions of a purely material reality, or to empirical explanations” (46).

In the text under discussion, the getting up of horn boy (a faerie prince) after centuries is the reference towards this *disruption of time and space element*. No one knows for how long this prince has been sleeping and when he will finally wake up, thus the element of timelessness has been introduced through the idea of his immortality. This idea of *disruption of time, space and identity* can also be spotted in the presence of horn-boy (prince). The readers are told that “the horned boy—the prince is free. He’s loose and he could be anywhere. We have to find him before anyone else does” (21). He stands for the idea of *disruption of time and space* as he belongs to nowhere and has no identity to hold; a medieval knight wakes up in modern age.

3. CONCLUSION

The researcher has tried to analyze the text *The Darkest Part of the Forest* as a magical realist text. Furthermore, the text has also been analyzed in the light of Wendy B. Faris’ theoretical model of *narrative techniques in magical realism* as applied by Faris to contemporary adult fiction. The researchers argue that the text holds the elements that classify it a magical realist text. Besides, the world of fantasy and realism have been juxtaposed by Black for her American readers to wayward the complete impression of its belonging to merely a fantasy world. Furthermore, the researchers have tried to discern the five elements of narration in magical realism in the selected text proposed by Faris: an *irreducible element, unsettling doubts, the phenomenal world, merging realms and, the distortion of time, space and identity*. Faris’ refers to five characteristics as “Chinese boxes, ideas within ideas or ‘the magical realist rooms in the house of fiction’” (154). Hence, the present research is the post-modernist analysis of the text and would be a positive addition to the Fantasy Literature and Post Modernism.

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