Ewa Wiśniewska

Magical Realist Traits
in the Early Works by Jonathan Carroll

Piotrków
Trybunalski
2022

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Wydawnictwo
Uniwersytetu Jana Kochanowskiego

Piotrków Trybunalski 2022

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Grafika na okładce
Designed by rawpixel.com/Freepik

ISBN 978-83-7133-999-8
DOI 10.25951/4874

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To Andrzej and Łucja
with endless love

Contents

Abbreviations used in this work 7
Introduction 9

Chapter I
The history of magical realism 11

1. Magical realism in painting 11
2. Magical realism in literature 15

Chapter II
Magical realism in Latin America 19

1. Origins 19
2. Postcolonialism 25
3. Gabriel Garcia Márquez' *One Hundred Years of Solitude* 28
   3.1. Introduction 28
   3.2. Magical realist traits according to Faris 32
   3.3. Magical realist traits according to Angulo 40
   3.4. The role of the narrator 42
   3.5. Authorial Reticence 43
4. Magic 44
5. The process of defamiliarization 46
6. Conclusion 46

Chapter III
Magical realism outside Latin America 49

1. Introduction 49
2. Magical realism in Angela Carter's *Nights at the Circus* 50
3. Magical realism in Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* 59
4. Conclusion 64

Chapter IV
Magical realism in the form of *The Land of Laughs, Bones of the Moon* and *Sleeping in Flame*.....67

1. Introduction 67
   1.1. Biography of Jonathan Carroll 67
   1.2. Literary output 68
      1.2.1. Early works.....68
      1.2.2. Later works.....71
2. Magical realist elements in the form 71
   2.1. The narrator 71
   2.2. Language 74
   2.3. Metafiction 79
   2.4. Linguistic magic 80
   2.5. Detailed descriptions 82
3. Conclusion.....89

Chaper V
Magical realist elements in the contents of *The Land of Laughs, Bones of the Moon* and *Sleeping in Flame*.....91

1. The time and place of action 91
2. The characters.....97
   2.1. Main characters 97
   2.2. Episodic characters.....106
3. The events.....111
4. The objects.....120
5. Biblical and mythical motifs 123
6. Conclusion.....126

Conclusion.....129
Works Cited.....131

Abbreviations used in this work

BM – *Bones of the Moon* by Jonathan Carroll
LL – *The Land of Laughs* by Jonathan Carroll
SF – *Sleeping in Flame* by Jonathan Carroll

Introduction

The writings of Jonathan Carroll, an American-born writer living in Vienna, are highly popular among Polish readers. All of them have been translated into Polish and are readily available in bookstores. Interestingly, it is in Poland that the author publishes his newly completed works first, and where *Eye of the Day* ("Oko dnia"), a printed version of Carroll's blog, was issued. What is more, the plot of one of his novels, *White Apples*, is set in Kraków, a place in which the author feels at home.

The immense popularity of the writings, especially among young adults, may be linked with the themes and motifs that appear in Carroll's novels and short stories. Love, passion, magic and fairy tale elements seem alluring and fascinating. They appeal to the imagination and add colour to everyday life. The amalgamation of magical with realistic elements, so typical of Jonathan Carroll's style, is the most common feature of magical realist literature, present in the canon. The presence of the familiar in magical realism entails introducing elements that seem probable to readers and which resemble the world they live in. The *real* in magical realist writing responds to the readers' expectations and knowledge of the world and the laws governing it. Even though the *real* of the story resembles the *reality* of the readers, it is only a means of literary fiction. Apart from this trait, the books published by Jonathan Carroll share other characteristics typical of magical realism, both in their form and their content.

The aim of this book is to trace how Jonathan Carroll's earliest novels, *The Land of Laughs*, *Bones of the Moon*, *Sleeping in Flame*, *A Child Across the Sky* and *From the Teeth of Angels*, share some magical realist features and can be thus classified as belonging to the genre. They have been carefully selected due to strong presence of the elements in question.

There exists no one and precise definition of magical realism, nor any cohesive description of its characteristic features. However, various critical

materials covering magical realist traits in painting and in the literature are available, and these concentrate mainly on the beginnings of the genre and its most significant representatives, especially those from Latin America.

Despite their presence, there is no clear definition of magical realism in literature. As such, identifying the common magical realist traits in Jonathan Carroll's works may be challenging. One suitable way of analyzing the novels would be to compare them to the most popular and highly acclaimed magical realist texts, that is, to Gabriel Garcia Márquez' *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, Angela Carter's *Nights at the Circus* and Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children.* These three novels were written in different years by authors hailing from diverse backgrounds, and by analyzing their works, it is less demanding to grasp the magical realist features that are present in all of them and are of great significance. Carter's story adds much to the discourse, offering a postmodern perspective, and Rushdie's novel definitely contributes with its postcolonial features.

Jonathan Carroll's stories clearly differ from the earlier magical realist novels and short stories, as the genre has evolved much over the course of time. As Langford points out, Carroll's books can be called "psychological – fantasy mystery – horror stories, with an elusive magic in the writing and vivid characters reminiscent of the larger-than-life creations" (qtd. in Gillespie). They undeniably belong to postmodernism.

In spite of the immense popularity of Carroll's novels, there is hardly any academic analysis of his work. This may be linked with classification of the author's oeuvre as mass culture. Jonathan Carroll is most commonly known to be an author of fantasy literature with elements of horror, or as a "horror writer", even though "Carroll consciously avoids the characters, architecture, and format of traditional horror stories and disavows the fantasy and horror genres for his work" (Nevins 155). The vast majority of materials covering Jonathan Carroll's books are reviews and interviews. Most of the recent materials can be found on the Internet.

Chapter I

THE HISTORY OF MAGICAL REALISM

1. Magical realism in painting

Defining the term *magical realism* (or: *magic realism*) in one precise way seems troublesome. Scholars have often written about the label, and "the very poetics of writing about magic realism seems to have become standardized," as Klonowska writes (10). Critics agree on the chronology of magic realism, though they still dispute on the precise meaning of the term.

According to the standard sources, the term *magical realism*, or *magic realism*, was coined by the art critic Franz Roh in 1925 in his essay, "Magic Realism: Post Expressionism" (Klonowska 10). However, Roh referred to a new style in painting, not writing, and his definition visibly differed from contemporary understanding. Gazda suggests that Roh's idea could be based on "magischer Idealismus," a theory created by the German romanticist Novalis, that depicted the spiritual world together with the physical and life with death (544). For Roh, magical realism meant a "return to Realism after Expressionism's more abstract style" (qtd. in Zamora 15), so a view contrary to the common contemporary belief that magical realism means introducing magical elements into the otherwise realistic surrounding. According to Irene Guenther, even "Roh never gave a concise definition of magic realism", and this is the reason the term seems so problematic (34). Chanady writes that Roh understood magical realism "as an aesthetic category" (17). Magical realism meant the return to the realistic way of depicting reality after several years of the popularity of abstract painting, and styles such as futurism and cubism. When writing about post-expressionist painters, Franz Roh had in mind German artists such as Max Beckmann, Otto Dix, George Grosz, Christian Schad, Franz Radziwill and also the Italian Giorgio de Chirico, and the Frenchman Henri Rousseau

(Berger). The most representative for magical realism are the works of Franz Radziwill, the author of *The Object and Morning*; Christian Schad, the author of *Portrait of the Composer Josef Matthias Hauer* and *Portrait of an English Lady*; and Otto Dix, the author of *Portrait of the Journalist Sylvia von Harden* and *Portrait of the Painter Franz Radziwill*. The new painting style depicted the mundane, real world from an utterly new perspective. The artists did not present any supernatural elements, characters or magical objects in their works (Klonowska 15). The reality in the paintings was described as magical because it "revealed the mysterious elements hidden in everyday reality" (Alstrum). In European society, there was a strong need to promote realistic paintings, since the audience, especially art critics, felt that Expressionist painters tended to produce superficial works, not much related to the postwar reality.

What needs to be mentioned is that the genre was given two names in relatively the same time, the first of them being magical realism and the other being Neue Sachlichkeit (new objectivity). The latter was coined by the German Gustav Harlaub, the director of the museum in Mannheim, who in 1925 organized an exhibition and presented paintings by Otto Dix, George Gross and many others (Guenther 33). According to Dennis Crockett, the exhibition was immensly popular, and soon "moved on to Chemnitz and Dresden" (1). From there it continued on to other German cities. The term 'Neue Sachlichkeit' can be traced even earlier, to 1923, when Harlaub first mentioned the idea of organizing an art exhibition in a letter to his friend. By 1927, Neue Sachlichkeit was "a popular slogan in Germany" (Crockett 1). Despite the fact that those two classifications give different names, they describe the same new genre, more or less the same painters and the same features of the paintings.

The painters who created works in the genre of magical realism came mainly from Germany, probably because the sober vision of reality that was present in their paintings was a reflection of the disillusionment that people in Europe, and especially in Germany, felt after World War I. Artists became interested in the arts of old German and Flemish masters from the 15th and 16th century, such as Albrecht Durer and Jan Van Eyck (Ten Dreams).

Despite the fact that they were using similar painting techniques as the Old Masters, they did not take up the same subjects. They mainly painted portraits, still lifes and scenes from everyday life, often naturalistic or socially critical, sometimes with dreamlike elements. Thus they clearly belonged to Modernism. In his article, Michael Cook proves that some features of magical realist paintings can be traced in much earlier pieces of art, for instance, in the works of Hieronymus Bosch, the author of *The Garden of Earthly Delights* and *Christ Carrying the Cross*. Even though his paintings are of religious connotation, he "painted wid(e)ly hallucinogenic imagery" (Cook). Cook draws attention to such nineteenth-century Symbolists as Odilon Redon and Gustave Moreau, who "included 'Magic realist' fantasy elements in their work". Cook also mentions the Pre-Raphaelite brotherhood, with William Holman Hunt, John Everett Millais and Dante Gabriel Rossetti as its members, artists who incorporated oneiric elements in their works. Pre-Raphaelites used to paint realistic works with some hidden messages.

In his essay from 1925, Franz Roh wrote about twenty two factors that defined the paintings of magic realism (Berger). In his later paper *Geschichte der Deutschen Kunst von 1900 bis zur Gegenwart* (*German Art in the Twentieth Century)*, written in 1958, he cut them to fifteen main points (Guenther 35). For him, the new paintings were representational and revealed "the spiritual and magical in an object by faithfully portraying its visibility and making it *more* than real", static, quiet, cold and severe. In contrast to Expressionist paintings, they were covered with a thin painted surface. The objects were clarified and the works were not only close-ups, but also distant views. The presence of aerial perspective was very limited. The painting process was not crucial, as what mattered were only the paintings themselves (Berger). Irene Guenther says that "over-exposed, isolated, rendered from an uncustomary angle, the familiar became unusual, endowed with *Unheimlichkeit* (uncanniness) which elicited fear and wonder" (36). This means that by showing realistic objects from a dreamlike perspective, the artists achieved a feeling of the uncanny. In his article, Berger writes that "Roh insisted on a clarification and purification of the painted

object" and the choice of sober, not ecstatic subjects. Unlike Expressionist paintings, the works were miniature, not monumental, but presented thorough views, not summaries of the visions (Berger).

Crockett believes that it is wrong to say that magical realism was "the antithesis of Expressionism" (2). According to him, Post Expressionism was closely connected to Expressionism, from which it borrowed "themes and concerns" (Crockett 2). On the other hand, Cook believes that magical realism "defies categorization as a formal 'style' in visual art because it carries no dogma or unified voice", mainly because it "assumes a wide range of forms and attributes, yet adheres to no consistent visual language".

Magical realism is sometimes confused with another artistic genre of the first half of the twentieth century, that is, surrealism. The paintings of that genre are said to have been created mainly from 1919 to 1939. In contrast to magical realism, surrealism was based on *The Surrealist Manifesto,* written by the art critic André Breton in 1924. Its leading painters were often close in their views to socialism. Surrealists believed in the hidden power of the human subconscious. Breton knew Sigmund Freud's psychoanalysis and incorporated it into art. He believed that the human subconscious should be freed from cultural ties and the voice of reason (Zwolińska 565). The works of Salvador Dali, Enrico Donati, Man Ray and Joan Miró were dreamlike visions, often painted in the mode of automatic painting (Zwolińska 565). In 1925, the first surrealism exhibition was organized in Paris. Among the painters whose works were presented there were Pablo Picasso, Paul Klee, Joan Miró and Giorgio de Chirico.

According to Maggie Ann Bowers, "surrealism is most distinct from magical realism" because it is based on our imagination and the secrets of our minds and not on an objective vision of reality (24). Surrealism meant the amalgamation of the conscious with the unconscious, fantastic elements were blended with realistic ones to create a completely new, surreal or hyper-real world. Even though the painters of those two genres used similar painting techniques, it is odd to confuse them, since they differ in the way they present the world. Surrealist paintings do not even try to show reality. They depict visions, dreams or nightmares and not the real world

that surrounds the painters. Hence, I cannot agree with those critics who claim that magical realism and surrealism in fact mean the same.. Cook states that similarly to surrealism, magical realism "questions the very nature of reality". The painters seem to ask the audience what reality means. Comparing those two genres, Berger states that "Magic realism is far more 'organic' (i.e., less structured, more adaptable) than Surrealism, which also makes it much more difficult to give the style a clear and final definition. "Surrealist paintings seem to be more 'bizarre' and 'grotesque'" (Cook). Magical realism paintings do have supernatural elements , but their subject is always realistic. The details are more visible and "sharper", "with the elements of composition being of critical importance" (Ten Dreams). According to the painter Michael Cook, "Magic Realism knows no boundaries of time, culture, geography, or consistent appearance", which makes it different from surrealism. It has never been appreciated as a "school" of painting, but rather as a mode. Cook proves that magical realism does not try to "fool us into believing we are seeing something that *could* be", but to "re-create the awe itself". According to Cook, magical art is "shamanistic" and "childlike".

2. Magical realism in literature

Pindel suggests that the first to use the term magical realism to describe literary works was the Italian art critic, Massimo Bontempelli (216). He published his ideas in the popular journal *Novecento* in 1926, claiming that there ought to be a literary return to classical ideas. He suggested that the aim of new literature should be to discover magic in everyday life and typical, mundane events (Pindel 216). Bontempelli's writing had an influence on many other literary critics, both in Europe and beyond.

This new genre of magical realism originated in Europe, mainly in Germany, but the mass emigration from that region of the world, connected with the outbreak of World War II in 1939, moved the ideas of the genre to other parts of the world. Magical realism paintings were seen by the Nazis

as “degenerate art”, so most of them were removed from the galleries and destroyed (Ten Dreams). The artists, sometimes of Jewish origin, had to leave Germany. “Over one-fifth of the 500,000 exiles who fled Germany, Czechoslovakia, and Austria between 1933 and 1941 settled in Central and South America”, as Irene Guenther has shown (61). That part of the globe was thought to be a safe haven for all persecuted artists. Moving to both Americas, the painters and other artists brought the new genre with them. That is how the theory behind magical realism arrived there.

In her book *Magic Realism: Social context and Discourse*, Maria-Elena Angulo states that “in Spanish America in the forties the term was used to express a new literature inherent to the mentality and attitude of its writers” (3). This understanding of the idea behind the term means that magical realism is more than just a new genre in the world’s literature, but rather a new way of perceiving reality. Bjorn J. Berger suggests in his article that the popularity of the genre in Latin America and the strong relations between magical realism and this part of the globe may come from the fact that accomplished magical realism writers such as Gabriel Garcia Márquez or Miguel Angel Asturias are truly popular across the world.

The term *magical realism* was incorporated into Latin America owing to a Venezuelan writer and journalist Arturo Uslar Pietri, who is known to have used the notion to picture the writing of Venezuelan artists of the thirties and forties. Critics say that Pietri travelled to Paris in the 1920s, so he must have been familiar with the former understanding of the term magical realism, even though he never mentions Franz Roh in his texts (Angulo 4). During his trip to Europe in 1929, Uslar Pietri met Bontempelli who had a great influence on him (Pindel 217). Pietri’s understanding of the term was similar to that of Roh’s. He used it to describe “a few Venezuelan short stories that contained strange characters and themes based on real life situations and were written in a poetic prose style” (Alstrum). Uslar Pietri understood magical realism as writing in which “man is a mystery among realistic data” (Angulo 4). “Uslar Pietri centers the importance of magical realism in the creative act, and he does not address the linguistic representation of the same in the text”, as Maria-Elena Angulo puts it (4). In his

essay “El cuento venezolano”, which was part of the book *Letras y hombres de Venezuela* from 1948, Uslar Pietri described the writing of authors such as José Salazar Dominguez, Guillermo Meneses and Gustavo Diaz Solis, who opposed the features of modernism in their works (Pindel 217). Thanks to him, the term magical realism started to describe literary works from Latin America, but it need be stressed that Uslar Pietri did not give any clear definitions of the genre, nor did he classify its authors. He idealized the American reality and tried to prove that magical realism was not linked with its European roots, even though he used Roh’s terminology to describe Latin American writing (Pindel 218).

Chapter II

MAGICAL REALISM IN LATIN AMERICA

1. Origins

Franz Roh's essay was translated into Spanish as early as in 1927 by Fernando Vela and published by José Ortega y Gasset in the journal *Revista de Occidente* (Aszyk 75). Soon the term was used to describe the writing of authors like Franz Kafka and Jean Cocteau. The former European artists "in the literary circles of Buenos Aires became inspired" (Berger).

In 1948 Alejo Carpentier, a Cuban novelist, essay writer and musicologist wrote an essay called "De lo real maravilloso americano" ("On the Marvelous Real in America"), which was published in the newspaper *El National*. One year later this essay reappeared in his book *El reino de este mundo (The Kingdom of this World)* (Angulo 4). It was meant to be a prologue to the book itself. According to Zamora, Alejo Carepentier was a member of the surrealist movement himself (75). Klonowska agrees with that, but she suggests that Carpentier was highly dissatisfied with surrealism, because it was not related to the mentality of Latin American people (16). For him, surrealists in Europe had to resort to plain tricks, adding the magical elements into their works. But the lives of the people of the Caribbean and Cuba were filled with extraordinary events, spirits and beliefs (16). On the other hand, the indigenous people were made to look at their traditions from a new, rational perspective (Klonowska 16). Combining the old, traditional beliefs with a cool-minded attitude resulted in the "marvelous American reality" ("lo real maravilloso americano"), as Carpentier dubbed it (Angulo 4). Klonowska calls it "a hybrid world in which magic and reason, voodoo and logic existed side by side without any apparent conflicts or contradictions" (16). In his essay, Alejo Carpentier writes about his trip to Haiti and about "the reign of Henri Christophe, the first black

king in America (1807–1820)" (Angulo 4). Alejo Carpentier understands that belief in the marvellous is essential in depicting the world of the Indians. Any magical realist writer should try to "accept the world view of a culture in order to describe it", as Chanady puts it (25). She means that even though the author is educated and knows the differences between real and supernatural, he/she must not moralize or explain extraordinary, improbable elements of writing. Angulo states that "Carpentier's novel addresses in particular the historical problem in Haiti from the time of the French colonists to the Republican mulattoes by emphasizing the myth, religion, and cultural syncretisms" (46). Carpentier's essay gained popularity and it was undoubtedly a springboard for further studies. Carpentier claimed that European folklore lost its magical aspect, but Latin America was still full of magical elements. He claimed that both nature and the people living there were full of magic and thus supernatural events are likely to happen (Pindel 220).

Alejo Carpentier did not use the exact term *magic realism*. He transformed it into *marvelous reality* and changed the original meaning of the term. He used it to describe the mixture of both magical and realistic, and thus changed the understanding of magic realism for future generations. According to Angulo, Carpentier's essay was so popular because his call "to look to the American continent as a source of inspiration rather than to Europe" was stated at the same as "the peak moment of the definition of a Latin American identity" (Angulo 5). Rodriguez Monegal said even that this writing became a "manifesto for the new Latin American fiction" (qtd. in Angulo 5). Carpentier suggested looking at American reality through the eyes of the sailors that discovered the new land and were amazed when seeing the miracles of that area (Pindel 220).

The discussion on what is magical realism went on. Angel Flores from Queens College, New York held views that differed from those of Carpentier. During the Modern Language Association conference in 1954, he stated that magical realism is "the amalgamation of realism and fantasy" (qtd. in Angulo 5). In his paper called "Magical realism in Spanish American Fiction" he wrote that both the supernatural and real world coexisted in

people's minds without any troubles in America, making society in that part of the world unique. According to Flores, Latin American novels were full of relevant examples. Flores mentions several authors who influenced magical realist writing, including Dario, Palma and Quiroga (Pindel 223). As the first and the most important magical realist novel in Latin America, Flores chose *Historia universal de la infamia*, written in 1935 by the Argentinian writer, Jorge Luis Borges. It is strange that, even though he mentioned many authors, like Joe Bianco, Juan Rulfo and Ernesto Sabato, he omitted Alejo Carpentier and refused to call him a magical realist author (Angulo 5). Flores called magical realism an "authentic expression" of Latin America, but then he writes about the works of Franz Kafka and his impact on developing the genre (qtd. in Angulo 5). He writes about the nineteenth-century artists Nikolai Gogol, Fiodor Dostoevsky and Edgar Allan Poe among them, who had great influence on the future generations of magical realist writers (Pindel 223). Similarly to Carpentier, Flores suggests looking at the lands of American through the eyes of the invaders, and to prove the usefulness of that perspective he suggests reading through the chronicles of the Spanish and Portuguese explorers. Flores' idea was to link the term magical realism with "authors who adopted certain themes and techniques in their writing (Chanady 17). In his essay Flores made no distinction between magical realism and new Latin America writing. He labeled magical realism writers almost all prominent and brilliant writers (Pindel 224). That made his classification unreliable.

In 1967 Luis Leal wrote his famous essay "Magical Realism in Spanish American Literature" in which he opposed Flores' views (Klonowska 16). In his writing, he objects to Flores' theses by stating that magical realism should be linked mainly with Franz Roh and Arturo Uslar Pietri. He is in favour of going back to the former understanding of the genre. He does not agree with the list of authors and the chronology of the genre included in Flores' article (Angulo 6). Contrary to Flores, Leal does not believe in Borges as the originator of magical realist literature. He makes a clear division between realistic and fantastic writing, saying that magical realism is meant to present reality from a new perspective, without putting any su-

pernatural elements into the writing. He also writes that magical realist literature can be linked with neither surrealism nor psychological writing, since it does not include psychoanalysis of the characters or the motivation of their deeds nor with surrealism (Pindel 226). In his essay, Leal omits Angel Flores and his understanding of the genre. He makes no distinction between magical realism and *lo real maravilloso* and states that magical realism is definitely not related to fantastic literature, since it does not create new imaginary worlds (Pindel 226). Unfortunately, Leal's writing does not say what magical realism is, rather it states what the genre cannot be identified with. But his influence on the future discussion on magical realism cannot be overestimated, since Leal limited Fores' classification of magical realist writings into the most proper names and titles.

The emergence of those critical essays and the discussion about what magical realism is resulted in *el boom* of Latin American fiction (Klonowska 16). This simply means that the rest of the world discovered the works of authors such as Carlos Fuentes, Julio Cortazar, Mario Vargas Llosa and Gabriel Garcia Márquez and found them interesting and original. "It is true that Latin Americanists have been prime movers in developing the critical concept of magical realism and are still primary voices in its discussion", Lois Parkinson Zamora claimed (2). The Latin American Boom cannot be identified only with magical realism. The new genre was clearly a part of *la nueva narrativa hispanoamericana* (new Latin American narrative) which was the new tendency of writing among Latin American writers. Critics claim that the Latin American Boom was in fact a publishing phenomenon, not a literature phenomenon (Pindel 265). Critics still dispute which book launched the Latin American Boom. Some claim that it was started by the publication of Mario Vargas Llosa's *La ciudad y los perros (The City and the Dogs)* in 1963 (Pindel 264).

The reason why the term magical realism evolved so much can be traced in Franz Roh's "abdication in 1958", which tells why "the task of defining the fields of Magic Realism fell almost exclusively to literary critics" (Berger). It is plainly seen that Latin American writers and critics totally changed the original concept of magical realism as a presentation of

reality. This was clearly linked with the traditions and mentality of the Latin American people and their postcolonial experience. The inhabitants of that part of the world had to combine the new traditions brought from Europe, Christianity and the old beliefs, myths of the past. The clash between rational and fantastic is presented in the depiction of time. For magical realism writers, time is not linear.

It is quite obvious that magical realism criticism is not limited to those few names that appear above. For decades, literary critics and authors have continued the discussion, though they have yet to reach one clear definition of the genre and one precise list of the authors that can be classified as writers using the techniques connected with magical realism. In his book, Pindel states that the publication of *One Hundred Years of Solitude* in 1967 had a great influence on literary criticism (228). The names he mentions are Fernando Alegria, who wrote about the connections between the new genre and the baroque, and Gonzales del Valle and Vincente Cabrera. New voices in the discussion used to have contrary opinions on magical realism and *lo real maravilloso*. Some, like Aimee Gonzalez believed that those two terms concern the same literary genre and saw no differences between the writing of the European and Latin American writers. Others, Suzanne Jill Levin among them, believed that the two terms depicted the same genre and shared the same features (228). Pindel writes also about the new names that were invented to describe the literature otherwise called magical realist. He gives examples of Fernando Alegria using the term “tropicalismo primitivo” (primitive tropicalism) and Gonzalez del Valle and Vicente Cabrera using the term “realismo artistico” (artistic realism) (Pindel 228). These new names did not gain popularity and caused confusion among literary critics.

It is hard to judge whether magical realism and *lo real maravilloso* (*americano*) both describe the same literary genre. Pindel seems to suggest that the latter can be ascribed only to Alejo Carpentier, making him the only representative of the genre (260). On the other hand, *lo real maravilloso* and magical realism differ in depicting fantastic elements. In the former, magic is linked with the “primitive” mentality of the particular society

and not with the narrator, but in magical realism magic cannot be explained rationally. It is perceived by the narrator and the readers as real and plausible (Pindel 259). According to that classification, *lo real maravilloso* does not necessarily mean depicting "primitive" cultures of Latin America, but rather uncivilized societies still believing in myths and very old traditions around the world.

The term *magical realism* changed its original meaning over time. First of all, the genre no longer involved presenting the world as *real*, but it turned into a mixture of reality and fantastic elements. According to Klonowska, the difficulty in understanding the term magical realism is inextricably linked with the different understandings of the word magic itself (29). For Franz Roh it means "implicit mystery" and for Alejo Carpentier, who was one of the first to apply Roh's terminology to new literary forms, magic means "supernatural power" (Klonowska 29). The difference between these two attitudes towards magical elements in magical realism are visibly seen when incorporating the term into another form of art, that is, literature. The reasons why the term was applied to something totally different, or even opposite, are quite simple. The writers of Latin America used to describe their world, but had no proper name for the genre. According to James Alstrum "before Spanish American critics began labeling the prose works of certain authors as magic realist, there was a coalescence of diverse cultural perspectives and conceptions in Latin America, which foreshadowed the inventions, and use of this literary expression". They incorporated the new idea that emerged in Europe, changing it to make it more useful. Thanks to the writers and critics of Latin America, the painting style of the beginning of the 20th century (which was not extremely popular) gained new life. The new literary mode was very useful for Latin America writers. Since they had an old tradition of storytelling, their stories were not free from lapses or mistakes, from examples in time. For the writer, Latin America presented a clash between the traditions and superstitions of "the Hispanic conqueror, his criollo (creole) descendants, the native peoples, and the African slaves" (Alstrum). Klonowska states that magic was something that was normal to Latin American people. She writes that to them "magic was not

merely a part of reality: it was the reality as such and the dichotomy between these realms did not exist" (13). That is why the stories passed from generation to generation were full of extraordinary events, heroes and supernatural forces.

The adequacy of the genre, its appliance in various culture around the world is still discussed. Some scholars link it with the idea of postcolonialism, but others allude to "its ability to express 'a world fissured, distorted, and made incredible by cultural displacement'" (Boehmer in Hart 6). According to Aldea any attempt at defining magical realism should be preoccupied with the way of presenting reality (8). But surely the genre "is not just a postcolonial style, for it expresses novelty and the return of sunken narrative traditions in urban centers" (Faris in Asayesh 27).

2. Postcolonialism

The term *magical realism* when speaking about literature was formerly used when describing the works of the authors that were of Latin American origin only. Postcolonial societies seem prone to understand the problems dealt with in the literature of this genre. Faris writes that the mixture of "realistic and fantastic narrative, together with the inclusion of different cultural traditions means that magical realism reflects, in both its narrative mode and its cultural environment the hybrid nature of much of postcolonial society" (1). On the other hand, she mentions that magical realism cannot be classified only as a postcolonial style (2). Klonowska agrees with the former, saying that magical realism is one of the most important "postcolonial forms of discourse" (17). She suggests that the "duality of magic realism is a perfect tool for expressing the duality of the experience of postcolonial people (17). By duality of magical realisms, she understands the mixture of reality and the fantastic elements. Chanady states that magical realism combines the rational attitude of the Europeans with the irrational characteristics of "primitive America". For the inhabitants of America, especially Latin America, their American-African-European roots

made them open to different beliefs and attitudes. What distinguishes magical realist literature is thus not style or structure, but rather the themes that the writings deal with (Chanady 19). Chanady also writes that magical realism books are "based on reality, or a world with which the author is familiar, while expressing the myths and superstitions of the American Indians". Klonowska suggests that magical realism is most commonly represented by Latin American novels and "presents two seemingly conflicting views of the world: one described from the rational point of view, and, the other, introducing elements of magic" (17). Robert Wilson is the author of the term "dual spatiality", which for him means a "space in which the spatial effects of canonical realism and those of axiomatic fantasy are interwoven" (qtd. in Baker). He dubs space a "hybrid" because it is a mixture of two juxtaposed elements. Dual spatiality means that different attitudes and perceptions of reality can be found in one piece of writing. It does not mean the presence of any "imaginary worlds" (Baker). The idea of dual spatiality is rooted in the problems with religion and traditions in Latin America. On the one hand, Christianity is said to be the dominant religion in Latin America, but American folklore is full of superstitions and old traditions.

Among the most important Latin American books of the magical realist genre, *El reino de este mundo (The Kingdom of this World)*, written in 1948 by the Cuban Alejo Carpentier, is mentioned as the first one (all the English titles of the books come from Internet sources). This is the book in which he places his most important essay on magical realism, or rather "real maravilloso", as he translates the term into Spanish, as the prologue. According to Gazda, Carpentier's next two books: *Los pasos perdidos (The Lost Steps)* from 1953 and *El siglo de las luces (Explosion in a Cathedral)* from 1958 seem to follow the ideas of the genre (548).

Other names of prominent Latin American writers of magical realism include the Nobel Prize winner from 1967, the Guatemalan Miguel Angel Asturias, the author of *Leyendas de Guatemala (Legends of Guatemala)* from 1930, which critics claim to be "a retelling of traditional stories",

Hombre del maiz (Men of Maize) from 1949 and *Los ojos de los enterrados (The eyes of the Interred)* from 1960 (Franco 311).

Another author worth mentioning is José Donoso, the Chilean writer, author of *El obsceno pajaro de la noche (The Obscene Bird of Night)* written in 1970, and Juan Carlos Onetti, the Uruguayan author of *La vida breve (A Brief Life)* from 1950 (Gazda 548–9). Speaking about magical realism in Latin America, one cannot omit Ernesto Sabato, the Argentinian writer and the author of *Sobre heroes y tumbas (On heroes and tombs)*, the book he wrote in 1961, but also José Lezana Lima, the author of *Paradiso* from 1960 and *Oppiano Licario* written by the Cuban writer in 1978, and the Mexican Carlos Fuentes who in 1976 wrote *Terra Nostra* (Gazda 549). Carlos Fuentes became famous in 1959, after he wrote his first novel *La región más transparente* (*Where the Air Is Clear*). This book was very innovative and provided a deep look into life in a metropolis, making Mexico City its main character.

Mario Vargas Llosa, the Peruvian writer and the author of *La Guerra del fin del mundo (The War of the End of the World)* from 1981, who also had an impact on magical realism writing, was, similarly to Fuentes, a politician and a journalist. Angulo believes that the Latin American books of magical realism by authors such as Miguel Angel Asturias or Alejo Carpentier gave way for a new type of literature that broke with the old (20).

According to Chanady, the most striking feature of "the discourse of *realismo maravilloso* is the juxtaposition of natural and supernatural elements without conflict, the intersection of myth and history to find 'another sense' of reality" (20). The authors also questioned the idea of what is real and called for the involvement of the reader in the process of decoding the text. What needs to be clarified is that the term magical realism has no single equivalent in Spanish. The most common term is *realismo maravilloso*, but other labels, like *real maravilloso*, are used by the critics. As the sources claim, there are hardly any counterdefinitions to Chanady's understanding of the genre (Warnes in Aldea 16).

Clearly the 1960s is the most important decade in Latin American writing. These are the years of the growing popularity of the novel in that part

of the globe. As has been already mentioned, since the 1930s, many new and interesting books from Latin America have appeared, but it is the decade of 1960s that produced the most acknowledged writings. What is new in the novels are: "new forms of representation aiming to draw a multivalent image of reality, a complex linguistic structure, and a broad variety of subjects and forms" (Chanady 33).

3. Gabriel Garcia Márquez' *One Hundred Years of Solitude*

3.1. Introduction

As the most important and influential story of the magical realism genre the critics choose *Cien años de soledad (One Hundred Years of Solitude)*, written in 1967 by the Nobel Prize Winner from 1982, Gabriel Garcia Márquez. The book is regarded by many as the "mother-book" of magical realism and it surely started *el boom* in Latin America. During the next decades, it was translated into thirty-five languages and sold more than eight million copies around the world, which proves its huge impact on world literature and also its great popularity among not only readers, but also literary critics. *One Hundred Years of Solitude* is a story of the Buendia family, in the fictional village Macondo. The destination is said to be modeled on the author's home town, Columbia's Aracataca, situated near the Caribbean coast of Columbia. The readers are told the story of one hundred years of the lives of seven generations of the Buendia family. The novel touches upon many contemporary social, political and historical problems. It shows a seemingly real world with some fantastic elements. Many critics see Macondo as symbolic. Brotherson states that "Macondo might be exemplary of Latin America as a whole, a luminous chronicle of a special condition", saying that the one hundred years of solitude that the Buendia family members are to suffer is an allegory of the century of uncertainty for the Latin America countries after they gained independence in the 19th century up to the contemporary times (125). Angulo claims that the history of the Buendia family can be read as an allegory of Latin America,

"its myths and prejudices, its dreams and failures" (43). What makes *One Hundred Years of Solitude* magical realist is still disputed. Obviously the more critics write about it, the more visions and interpretations appear. In many interviews Márquez says that magical realism is the way his grandmother used to tell stories. In a witty way, he describes magical realism as being modelled on a chaotic way of distributing oral stories popular among Latin American people.

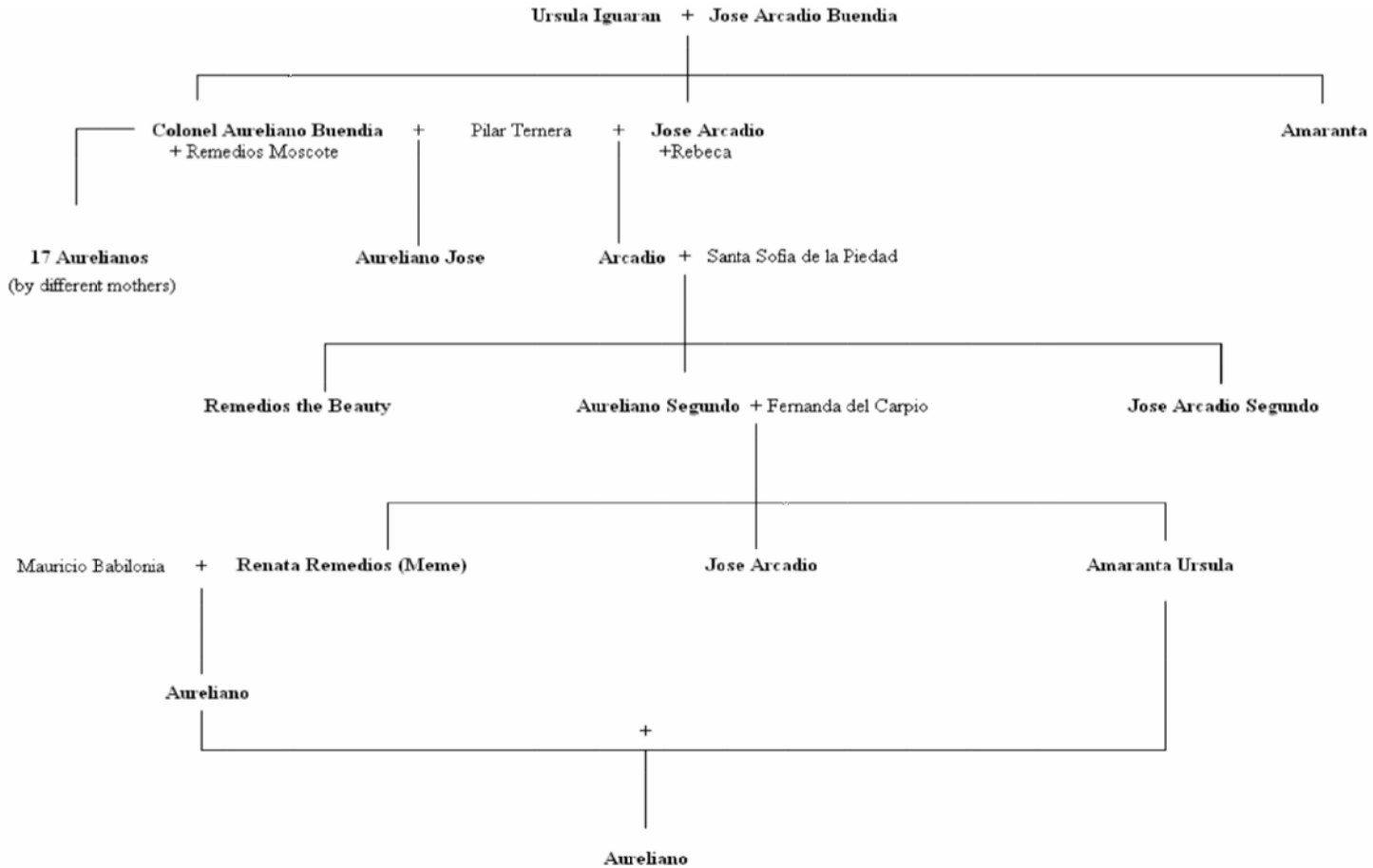
One Hundred Years of Solitude by Gabriel Garcia Márquez tells the story of Ursula Iguaran and her husband José Arcadio Buendia and their descendants living in Macondo, "in a region of impenetrable swamp and jungle" (Franco 345). Ursula and José get married even though they are cousins and as a result their descendants are doomed to suffer one hundred years of solitude and then all the members of the family will die. At the beginning of the book, the Buendias with their one child travel from their former place of living, that is Riocha, to find a new safe haven. They have to leave Riocha because José Arcadio killed Prudencio Aguilar and since then he has been visited by Prudencio's ghost several times. The Buendias establish Macondo and their second son is born there. Macondo seems to be a peaceful area, without much interference from the outside world. Angulo states that the readers are shown "the whole cycle of its existence, from its foundation to its destruction" (35). Several times the inhabitants of the village are visited by gypsies and their leader Melquiades. Soon after that José Arcadio Buendia goes insane and is tied to a chestnut tree. Franco claims that in Macondo "the Buendias behave as if the Christian moral code had never existed" (345). The male representatives of the Buendia family marry young girls, have sexual intercourse with their cousins and aunts. Even though they seem to cherish family life and religion, they are guided by their instincts and needs.

In the second part of the book, the inhabitants of Macondo, after several years of its existence, get involved in a civil war. The second son of Ursula, Colonel Aureliano Buendia is sentenced to death. Luckily, he survives, but loses interest in politics and works at home till death, producing figures of fish in gold. This is also the part of the novel in which Macondo is invaded

by “governmental and religious authorities coming from the exterior world” (Angulo 35).

The next phase of the story is strictly connected with the development of technology. Aureliano Triste, one of the sons of Colonel Aureliano Buendia opens an ice factory in Macondo and then leaves it to his brother Aureliano Centena so he can travel. Aureliano Triste returns home after fulfilling his dream of building a railway station in Macondo. Because of the great technological development, new citizens come to Macondo. They establish a banana plantation, which enriches the village and makes it an attractive destination. Unfortunately, one day there is a strike on the plantation and all the people who rebel against the owners are killed. That event is a visible sign of Macondo’s decline.

The novel ends with the birth of the last of the Buendia family – Aureliano. The boy is born with a pig tail because his parents Amaranta Ursula and Aureliano Babilonia were close relatives, although they were not aware of the fact. What needs to be mentioned is that they were the only truly loving couple in the story and Aureliano was a child born from great love, not lust. Amaranta Ursula dies soon after giving birth to her son. Despairing, Aureliano Babilonia gets drunk and fails to protect his child from being attacked and eaten by ants. He is then able to decipher Melquiades’ writings and finds out that the prophecies were in fact the history of the Buendia family. After he ends reading, Macondo is “wiped out by the wind and exiled from the memory of men” because “races condemned to one hundred years of solitude” are refused to “have a second opportunity on earth” (Márquez 383).



The genealogical tree of the Buendia family

3.2. Magical realist traits according to Faris

"Although critics do not agree on which characteristics are essential to magical realism, certain traits are mentioned frequently", as Chanady says (18). One of them is the presence of supernatural elements. The discussion about the traits that are present in magical realism writing, and especially in *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, needs to begin with the five elements that distinguish magical realism books that are mentioned by Wendy Faris. In her book *Ordinary Enchantments: Magical Realism and the Remystification of Narrative*, she writes:

> I suggest five primary characteristics of the mode. First, the text contains an "irreducible element" of magic, second, the descriptions in magical realism detail a strong presence of the phenomenal world; third, the reader may experience some unsettling doubts in the effort to reconcile two contradictory understandings of events; fourth, the narrative merges different realms; and, finally, magical realism disturbs received ideas about time, space and identity (7).

The first of them, **an "irreducible element"**, is something that cannot be understood by any law known to the people of the West. It usually means magical elements, which are visible and normal to the characters. Similarly, the narrator usually makes no effort explaining them to the reader, who should not find them unrealistic or extraordinary. According to Faris "magical images or events, glowing alluringly from within the realistic matrix, often highlight central issues in the text" (9). She mentions that the blood ties between the members of the Buendia family in Gabriel Garcia Márquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude* are so extraordinarily strong that "Colonel Aureliano predicts from a distance his father's death, announcing on his arrival home that he has come for 'the obsequies of the king'" (9). Obviously the magical elements belong to the world presented in the novel and the characters do not consider them unusual or impossible. Angulo calls this "the supernaturalization of the ordinary," saying that fantastic, supernatural elements are seen by the characters as natural or ordinary (37). Extraordinary events, for instance levitation, are treated as normal and everyday. An example is the scene when Remedios the Beauty

ascends into heaven and nobody questions it. The Buendia family accepted the miracle and thought about it in practical way. Since Remedios ascends into the sky with some laundry in her hands, Fernanda "kept on praying to God to send her back her sheets" (Márquez 223). On the other hand, the inhabitants of Macondo are amazed when seeing new inventions offered to them by the gypsies, for instance, the magnet, the false teeth of Melquiades or ice and consider them to be extraordinary and magical. Common, ordinary objects like the telephone are described as extraordinary. This is visible in the scene when José Arcadio Buendia takes his sons to the gypsies and show them new inventions. "The ice is presented as a spectacle to be admired", as Angulo puts it (36). In the third part of the book, which shows the technological development, inventions like electricity, the cinema or the train astonish the citizens. The above-mentioned rising into heaven of Remedios the Beauty is obviously modelled on the Assumption of the Virgin Mary (Angulo 39). Because of the scene's similarity to a religious dogma, the reader should not be much surprised by the fact that the inhabitants of Macondo believe in it, but rather that they treat it as a common, everyday event.

In her book, Wendy Faris admits that "irreducible magic frequently disrupts the ordinary logic of cause and effect" (10). Because of the presence of the supernatural elements, the rational attitude is no longer valid and useful. Probable or even historical events gain new life, as the readers start to wonder whether they could really happen. "The magical is factual and the historical is impossible", according to Faris (11). The supernatural events are never questioned by the inhabitants of Macondo, but they seem unrealistic to foreigners.

The second trait in magic realism writing is that "the descriptions in magical realism detail a strong presence of the phenomenal world" (Faris 7). It means that in the novels there is a presence of **the common world**. Klonowska understands this as the "realistic descriptions of the 'real' world with historical anchorage" (21). The great number of descriptions seem to prove that the world depicted in the writing is real, not fictitious and continues the tradition of realistic writing. The main idea of this kind

of writing is to make the reader believe that the world depicted in the story is the world he/she lives in. The author does not create any fictitious and fantastic world. There are many characteristics of the world that the person reading should consider common. In *One Hundred Years of Solitude* this effect is gained thanks to Ursula and her domestic chores. Faris writes that "realistic descriptions create a fictional world that resembles the one we live in, often by extensive use of detail" (14). "Not only is the story set in a normal, contemporary world, but it also contains many realistic descriptions of man and society", as Chanady puts it (46).

The third characteristic of magic realism is connected with the person of the reader and the possibility of his experiencing the feeling of **uncertainty** about the text and the events depicted there. The reader needs to choose which elements of the text are realistic. Faris states that the readers' ability to name the fantastic elements is due to their background and the traditions they know and appreciate. For the contemporary reader it is hard to think of the supernatural elements as possible or probable, he /she would surely chose to call it one's dream or imagination. At some point, the reader has difficulty judging whether the ghost of Prudencio Aguilar is really seen by Ursula and José Arcadio or whether their remorse prevents them from forgetting about the murdered man. Sometimes the reader has difficulty in distinguishing between the real and the supernatural as the fantastic elements are presented as common (Chanady 114).

Another characteristic of magical realism writing mentioned by Wendy Faris is merging different "realms", locations and traditions, presenting the **worlds combined.** According to Faris, the writers of that literary genre put elements of contrary worlds together, creating a new reality, new world, gaining both from the real world, putting proper names and locations together with imaginary lands. Even though the inhabitants of Macondo seem to be ordinary people, their deeds and the fantastic situations happening to them prevent us from considering them to be just like the readers and identifying with them. Angulo writes that the clash between "real and marvellous isotopes without conflict and the non-disjunction of contradictory term" is one of the main and visible feature of magical realism (35).

She shows that “the unusual is the norm” there (35). Gonzalez Echevarria holds the opinion that the world presented in magical realism writing “is not based on objective reality” and is not related to any “natural or physical laws” known to humans (qtd. in Chanady 19). The supernatural elements are not a threat to the real world. Chanady claims that “the rational and the irrational are not presented as antinomious”, on the contrary, they coexist in the magical realist writing, making the vision of the world full (101). The characters do not see the distinction between the real and the fantastic. Their dreams and imagination seem realistic to them.

The last of the five primary characteristics of magical realism writing concerns the **disruptions in time, space and identity**. The length of the lives of the characters is not limited, nor does the globe seems limited by size, either. Wendy Faris shows that magical realism disrupts “not only our habits of time and space but our sense of identity as well” (25). The fact that it was raining five years without any let-up places Macondo outside the processes underway in the real world. There is a different understanding of time. Angulo states that “characters break the barriers of time and space, interacting among generations during life and after death” (35). Magical realism writers blur time and space. For them, time is not linear, but circular. Events are blurred and often it is hard to put the events in chronological sequence. Very often what happens once, is likely to happen again. Disruptions in time are most likely to happen: in some magical realist texts, time is even reversed. Chanady claims that “the laws of conventional logic can be changed” (118). The same may happen to the concept of time.

Klonowska also writes about nine secondary characteristics of magical realism that can be traced in Faris’ work. She enumerates:

> metafictional foregrounding, linguistic magic (literalization of metaphors), fresh or childlike perception of events overfamiliar to the readers, mirroring of the characters and the plots, metamorphoses, the use of magic against the established social or political order, ancient systems of belief and local lore, Jungianrather than Freudian perspective, and finally a ‘carnivalesque spirit”, an extravagant, baroque style (qtd. in Klonowska 21).

Metafictional foregrounding means that there are narrative comments about the story and its construction inside the text. The role of the narrator is often questioned and the whole process of writing or simply building the story is mentioned (Pindel 241). This characteristic is not so visible in *One Hundred Years of Solitude*. But the final scene when Aureliano Babilonia is finally able to decipher Melquiades's writings and he realizes that the family's story had been written down years before, can be called metafictional. Faris comments on this, saying: "Melquiades' manuscript turns out to be a prediction as well as recording of events" (10).

Linguistic magic describes how the events are linked or sometimes provoked by their descriptions. The devices used by the author to achieve this effect are metaphors which make some of the events not real, but rather symbolic. One of the scenes that proves that best is the one describing the blood of the son going back to his mother's home (Pindel 241). Another example is the plague of rain sent by Mr Brown who says that the agreement between the workers of the banana company and the authorities will be announced after the rain stops. "It had not rained for three months and there had been a drought", so his words seem strange, but after his speech, the rain starts falling (Márquez 287).

The childlike perception is visible in *One Hundred Years of Solitude* in the scenes when the new inventions are presented to the characters. José Arcadio Buendia believes that he can find gold thanks to the magnet. Even though the characters of the book are not primitive, but civilized men, they seem to be naive. Pindel suggests that the childlike naivety of the characters of Márquez's most appreciated novel is inextricably linked with the fact that while writing *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, he was influenced by the stories he had heard from his grandparents and other members of his family when living with them as a small child (296). Indeed, the ability to look through everything and see the core is a child's (Chrobak 35).

The motif of the mirror is best exemplified by the names of the characters. The names of José Arcadio, Aureliano, Arcadio are repeated in the next generations, which creates chaos and makes reading the book without a genealogical tree really challenging. Brotherson states that "there are no

fewer than four José Arcadios" (124). Franco calls them "introvert dreamers and impulsive men of action" (345). Some events are repeated in the story, as well. Because of that "the novel … retains an episodic feeling" (Brotherston 124). One of the examples is the fact that the members of the family seem to be doomed by the act of incest. The main protagonists of the book, Ursula and her husband José Arcadio Buendia, are in fact cousins and they should not marry or have children. They are aware of that fact and Ursula is afraid that her children will be born with pig tails, just as in the case of her and José Arcadio's ancestors, who were also close cousins. In the second generation, their son José Arcadio marries Rebeca, a girl that his parents adopted when she was very young, and whom he should treat like a sister. Aureliano José, the grandson of Ursula and José Arcadio Buendia falls in love with his own aunt, but fortunately she refuses to marry him. Yet the most tragic relationship is between Aureliano, the son of Meme and Mauricio Babilonia, and his aunt Amaranta Ursula. They fall in love and are not aware of the fact that they are relatives. Amaranta Ursula gives birth to Aureliano, the last member of the Buendia family, who is born with a pig tail. The above-mentioned examples of incest in the Buendia family show that the characters are doomed to copy their ancestors' sins and mistakes. The plot seems to be spiral-like, not linear. Brotherston claims that "events in Macondo seem often to repeat themselves, in apparent defiance of historical sequence" (123). Márquez seems to be obsessed by the motif of incest, which appears in almost all the generations of the Buendia family. It may be rooted in the problems of civilization that consists of tribes or clans. The distance between small groups of people makes it hard to find a spouse that would not be of the same group or family. That is often the situation of the provincial regions of the country like Macondo from *One Hundred Years of Solitude.*

Despite the fact that the author presents the family history in a very detailed way, the reader may come to the conclusion that what he is familiar with is only the most important episodes from the lives of the Buendia family, not the whole detailed history (Brotherson 124). New characters appear, but the reader can hardly distinguish between them and realizes

that the misfortunes happening to the Buendia family members are universal. Angulo comments that the "repetition of names, circumstances, facts, people is a constant" in the story (35). At some point Ursula, the main protagonist of the story, realizes that the plot is circular. "It's as if the world were repeating itself", she states (Márquez 276).

The metamorphoses of the characters are frequent in magical realist writing. In *One Hundred Years of Solitude* the metamorphoses do not include totally unrealistic changing into other creatures, like animals, but are linked with the inner metamorphoses of the people. The changes are connected with different phases in the characters' lives. One of the best examples is the person of José Arcadio Buendia, who changes from an energetic and lively man into a ghost-like, mad figure who ends up chained to a tree. One of his sons, Colonel Aurealian Buendia, from a strong and strict soldier turns into a calm and quiet man, spending the rest of his life on producing fish from gold. His metamorphosis is caused by his experiences during the war and the great pain he suffered.

When it comes to **politics**, it needs to be mentioned that magical realism novels were not written to be revolutionary. They depict everyday life, most commonly in Latin America, and were mostly written during the period of political and social changes. Brotherston suggests that "Macondo might be exemplary of Latin America as a whole, a luminous chronicle of a special condition" (125). That is the reason why Márquez decided to put some political issues into *One Hundred Years of Solitude*. The action takes place during the times of small fights and civil wars, so there was no use omitting important elements of the life of common people. The book is not free from historical elements that are of political importance. Brotherston recounts "the fifteenth-century Spanish copper locket opened by José Arcadio, with the hair of a distant woman inside it" and a Spanish galleon (125) that remind the readers of the colonial past of Latin America. Márquez described finding the ship as follows:

> Before them, surrounded by ferns and palm trees, white and powdery in the silent morning light, was an enormous Spanish galleon. Tilted slightly to the

> starboard, it had hanging from its intact masts the dirty rags of its sails in the midst of its rigging, which adorned with orchids (20).

When being shown the ship, the reader keeps wondering how the galleon could get inland. His/her confusion is similar to the confusion of the native American people when seeing the imperial Europeans arriving in their land.

The one hundred years of loneliness that the members of the Buendia family are doomed to suffer are in fact a symbol of the period from gaining independence by Latin American states in the nineteenth century up to "modern times" (Brotherston 125). In his book, Márquez describes the meetings of the Macondo inhabitants with different nations and races. He presents the gypsies who are responsible for bringing new inventions to Macondo, native Indians, African-American slaves and businessmen of Anglo-Saxon origin, with the banana plantation owners. The latter are responsible for the massacre of the banana plantation workers. Even though *One Hundred Years of Solitude* is a novel of historical importance, it is not written to "chronicle the past" because of the author's "disregard of precise ages and dates" (Brotherston 127).

Another important trait Faris mentions is **the use of folklore and old beliefs**. In *One Hundred Years of Solitude* the action takes place in a rural environment, where old traditions are cherished among the inhabitants. The character of Ursula, the mother and grandmother of the next generations is called by Brotherston "the guardian" (128). He explains that Ursula "decides who is legitimate and who is not among her progeny" (128). This shows that the Buendia family can be dubbed matriarchal like the old tribes.

The Jungian perspective in the narration of magical realist writing is connected with his idea of "the collective unconscious" (Angulo 40). According to Pindel, magic is inextricably linked with a group of people and not with one's psyche (241). People are not aware of many features that have influence on their psyche. The collective unconscious is realized in myths, traditions and religious beliefs and it is common for everyone.

The Baroque style of language is not so visible in *One Hundred Years of Solitude* as the emphasis is put rather on the plot, not on the style of writing. Pindel writes that the baroque style is realized in magical realist books by the presence of long sentences, metaphors and other linguistic devices (260). The purpose of putting so much attention to language is to show the complicated and rich reality of the American continent (Pindel 260). However, *One Hundred Years of Solitude* is full of rhetorical devices such as metaphors, similes, juxtapositions, oxymorons and anaphors.

However, the above list of characteristics is rather conventional. It is based on features that are commonly found in texts classified as magical realist, without explaining why they were chosen and if they are correct (Klonowska 21). The characteristics chosen by Faris are useful when describing the features of the most commonly known and appreciated magical realist book, that is *One Hundred Years of Solitude*.

3.3. Magical realist traits according to Angulo

Angulo agrees with Faris when speaking about the most important traits of magical realism, but her classification includes some changes. She states that the most frequent characteristics of the genre are :

> recurrence of the archetypes of death and rebirth; psychological "mestizaje" as a result of an ethnic-cultural historical plurality forced to adopt a unique language and to fight against an exterior reality; facility to accept the marvellous; European, semi-Oriental, African and autochthonous mythical-religious heritage, which enrich the archetype of the collective consciousness and tend to a more affectiveparticipation of the symbols and myths intertwined in literary and extraliterary reality (14).

The above characteristics that Angulo treats as primary when writing about magical realism are typical of *One Hundred Years of Solitude*. **The presence of the archetype of death and rebirth** is present throughout the novel. Death is treated as a normal and common part of human lives. After her death, Ursula seems to be unaware of the fact that she is no longer alive

(Márquez 316). On the other hand, the continuity of the Buendia family realized by the existence of the new generations proves that there is something after one's death and that parts of oneself can be traced in future generations. It is worth mentioning that at the beginning death was not present in Macondo. When the town was established, all the inhabitants were young, all of them being younger than thirty, and there was not even a cemetery there. But death found its way to Macondo even though the inhabitants of the town, especially the Buendias, thought they were able to escape it.

Mestizaje, or miscegenation, is the process of mixing the races. It is the name for interracial marriage or sexual intercourse. Angulo uses the term of psychological mestizaje to prove that there is a need among Latin American people of different cultural origins to create a unified group that could stand up to the outside world. The process is not visible in *One Hundred Years of Solitude*. The story depicts the Buendia family, which is culturally and racially unified. There is an African-American girl, Negromanta, but the question of fighting against the exterior danger is not mentioned.

The facility to accept the marvellous, as Angulo calls it, is inextricably linked with what Faris calls "the childlike perception" and the presence of the old myths in magical realism writing. For the inhabitants of Macondo, supernatural elements are common and believable.

Similarly to Faris, Angulo chooses the **presence of myths** as an important feature of magical realism. The myths are of different origins though, and come from different parts of the globe, for instance from the Caribbean, Europe and Africa, just as the people living in Latin America do.

Contrary to Faris, Angulo uses the term of **collective consciousness** and not Jungian collective consciousnes as the trait that can be distinguishable when dealing with magical realist novel. Collective consciousness means traditions and beliefs shared by the representatives of the same tribe or family. In *One Hundred Years of Solitude* it is realized when speaking about moral code or beliefs of the representatives of the Buendia family.

As one more characteristic of magical realism, Angulo chooses **Biblical motifs** (38). *One Hundred Years of Solitude* is full of proper examples. The trip to establish a new town is similar to the exodus of the Jewish nation

that is depicted in the Bible. Another example is the new village, Macondo, which is described as almost Eden-like, as a fresh and pure place with its inhabitants being very young and healthy. Angulo proves that the banana company can be treated as one of the plagues (42). The plague of insomnia, amnesia or of "dead birds raining from the sky" are examples (Brotherston 127). The final plague is the rain that starts in strange conditions, which lasts "four years, eleven months, and two days" (Márquez 291) and causes a great flood. Angulo writes that after the rain "Macondo has turned to its primal stage of the beginning because the flood washed away all vestiges of civilization" (46). The destruction of Macondo seems to be modelled on the Biblical Apocalypse. Even the name of one of the last members of the Buendia family, Mauricio Babilonia, has Biblical connotations. Even though Mauricio Babilonia is not responsible for the end of the Buendia family, it is his son, Aureliano, who marries his own aunt and fathers a pig-tailed boy.

The story of a boy found in the river like Moses, Aureliano (who is the son of Meme and the above Mauricio Babilonia), is obviously modelled on the Biblical story (Márquez 272). But contrary to that story, Aureliano is not a savior and leader. Unawares, he turns out to be responsible for the Buendias' demise.

3.4. The role of the narrator

What distinguishes magical realist writing is no doubt the specific role of the narrator. The narrator is passive and objective, distanced from the story he/she tells[1]. According to Chanady, the narrator presents the supernatural events as real (33). She calls the situation when an otherwise educated and rational person describes the fantastic elements as common "a dual world view" (33). "No matter how much the narrator tries to remain in the background, the characters and actions are presented to the reader from a certain point of view" (Chanady 33-4). What is important, the narrator needs to be consistent throughout the whole story to make it more believa-

[1] It does not seem valid for Carter and Rushdie.

ble. The narrator in magical realist writings can be one of the characters or "an invisible spectator" (Chanady 34). In *One Hundred Years of Solitude* the readers are presented the story through the eyes of an "invisible spectator" who perceives the world similarly to the characters (Chanady 35). The narrator presents the supernatural elements as common, treating the fantastic elements as the characters of the novel do, that is, perceiving them as possible and believable. By doing so, one eliminates the contrast between the real and the fantastic "on the level of the text, and therefore also resolves it on the level of the implied reader" (Chanady 36). What is more, the narrator needs to accept the vision of the world of the characters, even though it is different from his/her own. Readers are to distinguish between the realistic and fantastic by making use of their education and cultural background. "The problem arises when the fictitious world can be neither clearly rejected, nor accepted" by the readers, as Chanady puts it (50).

In *One Hundred Years of* Solitude the narrator perceives the world through the perspective of the "'primitive' inhabitants of a small Latin American community", presenting the unified world in which "the real, the imaginary and the mythical are fused" (Chanady 111). The narrator does not make any clear distinction between the real and the fantastic because the inhabitants do not do that. It is hard to judge whether the narrator is reliable or not. According to Chanady, the narrator's reliability cannot be judged since the reader's observations and beliefs are not relevant with the rules of the world the characters from the story live in (114). The view of the world presented by the narrator has to be accepted by readers, even though the narrator may be a mentally-ill human, an animal, or an object. The narrator does not give any comments to the story, making it hard to distinguish between the fantastic and the real. The reader should accept the narrator's views.

3.5. Authorial Reticence

Chanady claims there is no story absolutely free from the signs of its author's presence (121). Every narrative is somehow linked with its author. But what distinguished magical realist literature is Authorial Reticence,

which means the absence of the author's opinions about the characters and events of the story. The technique enables the reader to follow the story through their perspective, judge whether the events shown are plausible and real. The credibility of the characters and the events is not judged. Authorial Reticence in *One Hundred Years of Solitude* is visibly seen in the scene of Remedios the Beauty ascending into heaven when the supernatural event is naturalized. The fantastic elements of the world depicted in the story are not explained and thus are not suspicious to the reader. There is not a trace of surprise or explanation when the fantastic is depicted. That is why the reader gets used to the supernatural.

4. Magic

For decades, Roh's original concept of magical realism has undergone change. Nowadays, critics and readers pay attention to the "magical element, so that the expression achieves a more fantastic and dreamlike glimmer" (Berger). Contrary to Roh, contemporary critics focus on the magical, not the realistic aspect of magical realism (Berger). Klonowska suggests that interest in magic is normal and can be traced to prehistoric times and is a natural part of human existence (13). She states that "magic was not merely a part of reality: it was the reality as such and the dichotomy between those realms did not exist" (13). Nonetheless, the question of magic is very problematic. The characters of magical realism do not distinguish between the realistic and the supernatural, although the narrator sometimes does. According to Chanady, the narrator makes the readers aware of that by using learnt phrases and difficult vocabulary, using logical explanations (22). The narrator can avoid that by gaining the perspective of the society he/she presents.

Magic is of course the domain of the fantastic, but according to Chanady, "everything can become real" in the world where magic is present (117). To Faris, magical realism is a combination of the realistic and the fantastic, to show that the supernatural comes from the ordinary (1) and that there

are no boundaries between these two realms. Even though the reader understands that some of the events or characteristics of the writing are totally impossible, he/she must accept them. Chanady writes that supernatural should not be considered problematic (23). On the other hand, Baker suggests that magical realism belongs entirely neither to reality nor to fantasy. Although the genre is full of supernatural elements, magical realism has its roots in "the 'real' world" (Baker). According to Chanady, the supernatural elements existing in magical realism writing are "juxtaposed" with the real, with probable scenes from everyday life, so as to present a "more complete picture of the world" (27). It suggests that some fantastic characters or events can make the reader view reality better, more clearly, thanks to the contrast between fantasy and reality. This is a controversial idea. Fantastic elements such as dreams, nightmares or old beliefs do not necessarily mean that a given story belongs to the genre of magical realism unless they are presented as real and probable and the characters believe in them. They should not be explained in a rational way. The narrator should not be surprised by the supernatural elements or try to rationalize them. Chanady explains that in works of magical realism the fantastic events, objects or characters are "accepted as part of reality" (30). Zamora goes even further in her explanation of what magic is. She writes:

> the supernatural is not a simple or obvious matter, but it is an ordinary matter, an everyday occurrence admitted, accepted, and integrated into the rationality and materiality of literary realism. Magic is no longer quixotic madness, but normative and normalizing (62).

Chanady goes even further, saying "In the world of magic, there is no boundary between the real and the unreal, because everything can become real. The impossible can be done, and the preposterous becomes ordinary" (117).

5. The process of defamiliarization

To literary critics it is quite obvious that magical realism belongs neither to fantasy nor to realism alone (Chanady 27). It cannot be classified as belonging to realism only, because it distorts reality to a high degree. However, on the other hand, magical realism is not a variant of fantasy writing, since it presents a world we can accept as real, not imaginary. That literary mode is often linked with the idea of deautomatization, "with which the Russian Formalists referred to an inhabitual presentation of a situation or object that draws our attention to it because of its unconventionality" as Gonzales Echevarria suggests (qtd. in Chanady 27). Klonowska states that the authors of that kind of writing use defamiliarization to focus the reader's attention on the uncanny element of the otherwise "normal reality" (15). The uncanny atmosphere can be thus achieved without introducing supernatural forces or events. It is visibly seen that when using the technique of defamiliarization (or estrangement), the magical realist authors get closer to the original theory of Franz Roh. In his essay, he wrote about painters who did not put fantastic characters or spirits in their works, but tried to present reality with an unusual, sometimes grim, atmosphere.

6. Conclusion

Undeniably *One Hundred Years of Solitude* is the mother-book of magical realist literature as a genre. Márquez' novel laid the foundations for this kind of writing. All possible studies of magical realist books involve making comparison with the novel of the great Columbian. What literary critics have in mind when writing about magical realist features is clearly based on the characteristics of Márquez' *One Hundred Years of Solitude.* The mixture of magical and realistic elements and the presence of supernatural events, characters or objects make this type of writing unique. Readers may easily identify with the world presented and recognize everyday-like characteristics, but they cannot be sure if the magic is really happening.

The narrator does not help them since his/her role is to present the events without judging their probability. There are common disruptions in time and space which make the story chaotic, but also compelling.

In Márquez' novel, the magical realist traits are visible not only in their contents, but also in form. Language possesses a magical power, makes some events happen only because they are described. The language is full of rhetorical devices, such as metaphors and oxymorons.

Márquez seems to be interested in the motif of incest and its consequences. His novel touches also the politics and the history of Columbia, which has a great influence on the lives of ordinary people. One of the most important characteristics of *One Hundred Years of Solitude* is the use of old beliefs and traditions. Márquez presents the lives of people coming from the provincial part of the country, with their beliefs and superstitions.

Chapter III

MAGICAL REALISM OUTSIDE LATIN AMERICA

1. Introduction

Barbara Klonowska suggests that "despite the pessimism of some scholars, the term can, indeed, if properly defined, be successfully applied to works of fiction not only of Hispano-American provenance" (11). She states that "the mingling of a magical interpretation of the world with the rational mentality is shown as solely being a Latin American property" which, in fact, is not true as there are examples of works that can be classified as magic realist outside America. The authors she mentions are Salman Rushdie, Timothy Findley and Toni Morrison (17). In their books "magical and supernatural phenomena are described in a realistic way and as being equally important as natural phenomena" (17). They present reality in a very specific way, everyday scenes are depicted from a new, unknown perspective to create the uncanny atmosphere. Klonowska is convinced that this is just what Roh writes about in his essay (15). "The magic, if we may call it so, is rather the implicit disturbing presence of something inexplicable, yet overwhelming" as she depicts it (Klonowska 15). Among British writers, those who definitely use the mode of magical realism are Salman Rushdie and Angela Carter. Critics often label the works of Emma Tennant, Jeanette Winterson and D.M. Thomas as magical realism (Klonowska 26). Rushdie, born in 1947 author of Indian origin, centers his novels on postcolonial themes, frequently setting them on Indian subcontinent. Klonowska distinguishes between the books of Carter and Rushdie, saying that the former presents the "'fairy tale' type of magic realism" and the latter "mythical" (27). Rushdie's books are full of magic events or "explicit magic" which is connected with "the simple form of the myth" (Klonowska 29).

It needs to be added that the mother-text, that is, *One Hundred Years of Solitude* greatly inspired the two texts useful in spotting the main features of magical realism: Angela Carter's *Nights at the Circus* and Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*, which seem to go further in the development of the genre. The books adapt magical realism to the contemporary European mode of writing. They are a link in the development of magical realist literature. They had an undeniable impact on the future generations of writers, with Jonathan Carroll among them. Carter's and Rushdie's usage of myths and fantastic elements are good examples.

2. Magical realism in Angela Carter's *Nights at the Circus*

Angela Carter (born Angela Olive Stalker) was one of the most important contemporary women writers in the English-speaking world. Apart from being a writer, she also worked as an editor, a translator, a visiting professor in the USA and a part-time teacher at the University of East Anglia in Norwich (Kamionowski 5). She is said to be "Britain's fairy grandmother of magic realism" (Parker 133). Her style is characterized by "lush writing, its eroticism and its Gothic elements" (Parker 133). Carter is claimed to be a feminist and postmodern writer, but she is classified as a magical realist author as well. Her novels and short stories have become very popular since her death in 1992 (Rubinson 3). Rubinson also claims that "Carter's experiments with genres like science fiction, gothic fiction, pornography and fairy tales helped pave the way for a wider critique of gender and genre" (3).

Some critics "have suggested that her vein of fantasy, particularly evident in novels such as *Nights at the Circus*, appeals to the submerged adolescent in all of us" (Parker 134). This helps explain why people get so involved while reading any story that contains fantastic elements and why they believe in magic.

Nights at the Circus is Carter's penultimate novel, written in 1984, and the one that won the James Tait Black Memorial Prize in the same year.

Critics claim the book to be a turning point in Carter's career (Kamionowski 133), the one that proves her to be an outstanding writer. It is a story of Sophia Fevvers, an aerialiste with real wings and a journalist Jack Walser**,** who, eager to write about the girl and fascinated with her, decides to join the circus troop on its tour. The novel begins with Fevvers being interviewed by Walser and telling him the story of her life. It is only then that the readers are told that as a baby Fevvers was left in a basket outside the door of a brothel. She says that her life changed with the coming of her menstrual cycle because her wings grew then. The motif of menstruation is typical of Carter's novels. It is a symbol of a woman's development. Ma Nelson, the owner of the brothel, uses Fevvers as a living statue, who spends evenings standing in the lobby with a sword in her hands. Fevvers plays the role of "heroic antiquity posed there for the pleasure of a connoisseur's eye" (Kamionowski 134). After Ma Nelson's death, the women working in the brothel burn the place down and leave it. Fevvers is then hired by Madame Schreck in her "exotic brothel". There Fevvers meets Christian Rosencreutz who considers her to be a fallen angel and tries to sacrifice her, which Fevvers luckily escapes. Then she reunites with her adoptive mother and decides to become an aerialiste at Colonel Kearney's circus. The London part of the book ends with Walser deciding to join the circus team. The action is moved to Petersburg and the readers are presented the whole group of circus artists. Fevvers again evades being killed, this time by the Charivaris family of trapeze artists who are jealous of her. Fevvers goes to the mansion of the Grand Duke, a member of the Russian aristocracy, and though hoping to get some valuable objects, she hardly escapes his power.

The last part of the book takes place in Siberia, through which the group travels to Japan. The train crashes and Walser gets separated from the others. The group is then imprisoned by bandits who want Fevvers to convince the Queen of England to talk to her daughter's husband, the Tsar of Russia, and let the bandits come to their villages. After learning that Fevvers cannot help them, they are despaired and furious. At the same time, Walser, suffering

amnesia, meets a shaman who is willing to train him. The story ends with Fevvers and Walser getting married.

At the beginning the story is told in **a third person narration,** but the narrator does not seem to be fully omniscient and objective. The narrator makes the readers familiar with Walser's vision of the world and his perspective. At some point in the novel, Fevvers tells the story of her life, which obviously makes it hard to judge whether her words are true. She is very chaotic in telling her story, making lapses in time and not sticking to a chronological order. Walser, on the other hand, represents order. His narration is very careful and detailed. Both these narrators stand for the common world in which chaos and order are of great importance. Because the narration switches from one speaking persona to the other, the readers may get confused as to who the real narrator in the book is. The narrator does not want to find any possible explanation why Fevvers has wings. She is said to have been born with them. "Fevvers" is not her real name, in fact. It comes from the cockney pronunciation of the word "feathers". Her first name "Sophie" means "wisdom" and "hints at her wisdom and ability to use reason, even though in a streetwise manner" (Kamionowski 135).

In *Nights at the Circus* there is **a clash between two worlds**. The action takes place in otherwise realistic places, like London or Petersburg, but also at the circus, a setting considered magical and mysterious. It is there that trapeze artists and clowns find their homes. The circus seems to be a safe haven for all the outsiders. According to Umińska, it is an apotheosis and a parody of life at the same time (14). One can train one's abilities there or turn one's ideas into practice (Umińska 14). The circus is a place closely connected with magic and illusions. It is there that creatures, otherwise called abnormal, can show themselves to the audience and receive applause and the admiration of the masses.

The journey and the places it goes through are described in great details, but nineteenth-century England, France and Russia are depicted as countries from gothic stories (Ulicka 48). The scenery is very realistic and the elements of the world are plausible, but there is a clear feeling of the uncanny that is inextricably linked with magical realist writing. Ulicka calls

the journey simple, although the trip is full of adventures and strange events (48).

In the third part of the book, Siberia is presented in a realistic way, but the interior of the shaman's tent and the presence of magic and mystery there seems to coincide. Siberia is shown as a place when two visions of the world coexist. Here two opposites meet: the Eastern version of the Western order and the tribal culture connected with magic (Umińska 14). Kamionowski states that "Carter's spaces are always symbolic" (8), and that is surely the case in *Nights at the Circus.* The novel mentions certain historical figures, like the French painter Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, who is said to have painted the main protagonist of the story (Ulicka 48).

The main **fantastic element** of the book is Fevvers herself. She cannot be perceived as a common human being since she has wings. Her origins are unknown. Readers are told that when found in a basket, Fevvers was sitting on egg shells, so she must have been born from an egg. Fevvers is ironically presented in the novel as a symbolic figure. In Ma Nelson's brothel she is treated like a statue of Winged Victory or a statue of *Nike of Samothrace* (Kamionowski 134). Sophie Fevvers, or rather her wings, seem to be precisely the **"irreducible element"** mentioned by Faris. The fact that she is not a typical human, that she is attributed with the part of the bird body not a human body is very surprising an it cannot be explained by any natural law known. Despite having wings, Fevvers has some difficulty flying even though she has been learning to do so throughout her life (Umińska 14). But Lizzie is sure Fevvers will manage to acquire the ability through practice.

"Though she is a fantastic creature, with her artificially dyed wings, no navel, and a suspicion that she had been hatched out of an egg, Fevvers manages to retain full humanity – she simply acts in the same way as a male adventure novel hero does" as Kamionowski describes her (133). But even though Fevvers tries to live like a typical human being, she cannot be classified as one. She has wings on her shoulders, which makes her an outstanding and very mysterious creature. Being different, Fevvers does not feel inferior at all. The main reason is that wings are assumed to be the

attribute of angels, so of superior creatures (Oramus, "Fantastyka" 71). Fevvers is admired and look up to. Fevvers is a strong woman who likes to drink and eat (Umińska 14). She knows how to make use of her popularity. At some point of the story Fevvers manages to escape by leaping onto a toy train which turns into the circus' train. The readers cannot be sure whether that magical trick was caused by Fevvers herself, Lizzie, who tried to rescue her foster daughter, or whether the train was magical.

Nights at the Circus is full of other magical elements. One of them is surely the whole circus group with its members. Such a noteworthy fantastic element in an otherwise realistic world is the figure of the shaman. What is strange, at some point he speaks making use of his acquired knowledge. Ulicka proves that his knowledge is not from some mysterious religious origin, but is strictly from the twentieth-century (48). The figure of the shaman is linked with the idea of magic and "primitive" mentality and traditions. That is why it is so unnatural to hear the modern ideas he utters.

Pindel suggests that Carter "regarded the fantasy element of her work as 'social satire' or 'social realism of the unconscious'" (134). The magical elements in the novel seem to be inextricably linked with women and with Fevvers among them. In a way women could achieve their goals only by means of fantastic elements.

The two main characters, Fevvers and Walser, stand for the contrast between the fantastic and the real and possible. Despite her human features, her behaviour and the language she uses, Fevvers remains a fantastic creature that cannot be considered a real human being. On the other hand, Walser is a typical, sensible journalist who believes in facts only. Thanks to the contrast between Sophie and Jack, the novel can undoubtedly be classified as a magical realist. "In the world built on the rules of magic realism in which Fevvers acts, anything can happen, for fantasy and realism intertwine into a harmonious whole" as Kamionowski puts it (144).

As the most striking **disruption in time** Ulicka mentions the arms of the clock of Fevver's adoptive mother, Lizzie, and the woman's power to control them (48). Lizzie, according to Ulicka, is a witch who can control the passing of time (48). Lizzie is definitely not a juxtaposition to Fevvers, she

is similar to her "daughter" and she seems to have features that characterize Fevvers (Umińska 14). While interviewing Fevvers, Walser seems to lose time.

> Then the chimes of Big Ben came drifting towards them once again on the soundless night and all at once she was imbued with vivacity. 'Twelve o'clock already! How time does fly, when one I babbling on about oneself!' For the first time that night, Walser was seriously discomposed. 'Hey, there! didn't that clock strike midnight just a while ago, after the night watchman came around?' (Carter 42)

It is not explained whether Walser really heard the clock for the second time striking midnight or he was wrong. The narrator seems to suggest that Lizzie can control time or at least she believes time to be fluid and circular. In the envoi, Fevvers explains that she used the clock to fool Walser. She says: "we played a trick on you with the aid of Nelson's clock the first night we met" (Carter 292). These words seem to explain the situation with the time.

Umińska suggests that the passing of time is disrupted after the train crash in Siberia (14). For the characters it is the time of total chaos (Umińska 14).

Time is blurred in the novel. It seems to be fluid, passing sometimes slowly and at times very fast. *Nights at the circus* is characteristic for Carter in her depiction of space as a labyrinth (Kamionowski 134) and not as a straight line. The time Walser spends inside the shaman's tent passes faster than Fevver's time in the forest, which is visible thanks to the growth of his beard.

When it comes to spaces, it needs to be mentioned that in Carter's fiction, they are usually symbolic (Kamionowski 8). The time of action and the setting is precisely depicted in the novel. The story is set in 1899, just before the beginning of the new century, an age of dramatic social and cultural changes. Fevvers, a winged woman, seems to be a harbinger of the women's liberation movement that is to take place in the 20th century. She is strong and her wings give her the chance to free herself from the woman's typical role in the society.

Ulicka writes that magical realist writing is characterized by the presence of **metafictional elements** (48). She regrets that Carter incorporated such characteristics into *Night at the Circus*, saying that the author's explanations about the way she decided to conduct her story are totally unnecessary. The fragment chosen by Ulicka best describes the use of metafiction:

> The Shaman listened the most attentively to what Walser said after a dream because it dissolved the slender margin the Shaman apprehended between real and unreal, although the Shaman himself would not have put it that way since he noticed only the margin, shallow as a step, between one level of reality and another. He made no categorical distinction between seeing and believing. It could be said that, for all the peoples of this region, there existed no difference between fact and fiction; instead, a sort of magic realism (Carter 260).

When it comes to **language**, Ulicka states that Fevver's manner of speaking changes through the novel (48). At some point the aerialiste speaks like a prostitute, while later she uses phrases of an intellectual. Fevvers speaks in cockney, uses colloquialisms and humour (Kamionowski 151). Her language is contrary to what should be used by delicate and calm women in a society governed by men. The language in the novel suggests the idea of carnival, with its laughter and humour.

In the novel there are two main visible **metamorphoses**. The first concerns Fevvers and the growing of her wings at the time when she was a teenager. Fevvers becomes a real woman after the development of her wings. The development of her wings is a symbol of the development of full humanity (Kamionowski 140). From that point, she is no longer an abandoned child, but an angelic creature who after a few years of working as a living statue can become an artist popular with the masses and admired by ordinary people.

The other metamorphose in *Nights at the Circus* is that of Walser, who changes dramatically after the meeting with Fevvers. From a rational and sensible journalist, believing only in facts, as Ulicka describes him, he transforms into a romantic who decides to leave everything that was previously

important to him and accompany Fevvers on her tour. Ulicka states that Walser was under the strong impression of the aerialiste (48). Before the meeting with Fevvers nothing could move Walser. Earlier he seemed to be half-alive and unbeatable (Umińska 14). After meeting the shaman, Walser yet again changes his thinking. He is amazed by the extraordinary elements that he was shown and the one that he finds in himself (Umińska 14). He is no longer a "mechanical creature", as Umińska calls him, but he starts to live fully (14). Walser changes "from the daydreaming Californian lad, whose life's desire is to run away with a circus, into a man with ironic distance form himself" (Kamionowski 150).

Nights at the Circus is concerned with **politics**, like social issues, gender roles, individual roles, human rights and patriarchy. Similarly to Latin American novels, the book touches on matters connected with politics. Feminist issues and the role of women in the society are frequently mentioned. Lizzie, the mother figure, is a Marxist and a suffragist who supports women's call for rights and one of the symbols of the movement was the statue of Winged Victory (Kamionowski 150).

Miscegenation as a result of the relationship between representatives of two races does not exist in the novel. Here the problem seems to be much more complicated due to the fact that Fevvers claims to be a child born from the sexual intercourse between a woman and a bird. She suggests that the woman who gave birth to her must have been raped by a swan, which, obviously, is an allusion to the myth of Leda and the Swan. In Greek mythology, the most beautiful woman in the world was Helen of Troy. Fevvers seems to be just the opposite of Helen, especially when it comes to her looks. This allusion to the myth touches upon the problem of purity.

The "marvellous" in *Nights at the Circus* is inextricably linked with the circus itself, where the audience never questions the "magical" tricks performed by the artists. The novel is set at the end of the nineteenth century, at the time of reason and the development of technology. Despite that, the artistic circles seem to be open to new experiments and mysticism, and are characterized by **the facility to accept the marvellous**. In the time of technology, manufactures and hard work, the winged angel like Fevvers

helps people stop thinking about the burdens of simple, everyday life, and dream about magic.

Nights at the Circus is not free from **myths and old beliefs**. The Greek myth of Leda and the Swan is surely the main mythical story that appears in the novel, which has been mentioned earlier. Fevvers, a woman with wings, is sure she was born from the intercourse between a human being and a bird. Her belief is amplified by the presence of a picture presenting a scene from that myth that is hanging on the wall in the brothel.

In the novel there is also the myth of Icarus, but according to Kamionowski, it seems to be parodied (136). Lizzie, the foster mother, seems to be "a *mother*-engineer" who wants her beloved daughter not to follow Icarus' mistakes (Kamionowski 136). Fevvers is instructed to be pragmatic.

The novel includes several characters that seem to come from fairy tales, like Sleeping Beauty, a fragile and delicate girl who is a juxtaposition of Fevvers, who is a strong and big woman. "Unlike the Sleeping Beauty, the Cockney Venus refuses to become a pale, passive, fragile female-doll who "kills" herself into the porcelain immobility of the dead and obediently accepts the role of an automaton" (Kamionowski 138-39). Kamionowski claims that "the construction of the presented worlds in Carter's fictions is in fact a *deconstruction* of traditional literary symbols, images, topoi and archetypes" (7). As a postmodern writer, Carter surely plays with old myths and symbols. She uses popular fairy tales, incorporating some of the characters into her writing, drastically changing their fate or showing the popularly known stories from a completely new perspective.

Biblical motifs appear in *Nights at the* Circus with the character of Fevvers, who, because of her wings, is compared to an angelic figure. The woman compares herself to Lucifer, saying:

> Like Lucifer, I fell. Down, down, down I tumbled, bang with a bump on the Persian rug below me, flat on my face amongst those blooms and beasts that never graced no natural forest, those creatures of dream and abstraction not unlike myself, Mr Walser (Carter 30).

The comparison to Lucifer suggests that Fevvers is, in fact, a fallen angel. That motif appears yet again with the person of Christian Rosencreutz, who wants to sacrifice Fevvers. The man, having a telling first name, calls Fevvers using different names:

> Flora; Azrael; Venus Pandemos! These are but a few of the many names with which I might honour my goddess, but, tonight, I shall call you 'Flora', very often, for do you not know what night it is, Flora? (Carter 77).

He welcomes Fevvers into his house using different names and name variations:

> 'Welcome, Azrael,' he says. 'Azrael, Azrail, Ashriel, Azriel, Azaril, Gabriel; dark angel of many names. Welcome to me, from your home in the third heaven (Carter 75).

During her stay, Mr Rosencreutz calls her "Proserpine, Flora, Venus Pandemos, Arioriph, Venus Achamototh" (Kamionowski 142). He uses Biblical names, like Gabriel – the name of an angel who is the God's messenger in Christianity, Judaism and Islam, or Azrael – the name of the archangel of death in Islam and Judaism.

3. Magical realism in Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*

Salman Rushdie was born in 1947 in Bombay. At the age of thirteen, he was sent to Rugby School in England. He continued his education at the university of Cambridge, but he never considered England his home. That is why, after graduating from university, he decided to travel to Pakistan, where his family moved after leaving Bombay. He did not succeed in starting a career in Pakistan, so he chose to go to London and work as a copywriter.

In 1988 he wrote *The Satanic Verses*, which caused him a lot of trouble. Iran's Ayatollah Khomeini put a fatwa on Rushdie, stating that Rushdie should be sentenced to death for blasphemy. Since 1988 Rushdie has been

hiding under the guard of the police, most probably living in the USA. On August 12, 2022, Rushdie was brutally attacked by a man in Chautauqua, New York. Stabbed multiple times, he managed to stay alive.

Midnight's Children is Rushdie's second novel and the one that made him a very famous novelist "in the front rank of contemporary writers" (Parker 650). It also influenced the future generations of Indian authors writing in English. The novel is often compared to Márquez' *One Hundred Years of Solitude* because of its magical realist elements and because of its impact on the genre. Similarly to Carter's *Nights at the Circus*, in 1981 *Midnight's Children* won the James Tait Black Memorial Prize, but the novel was also awarded the Booker Prize in the same year.

It is said to be an "allegory of Indian history which revolves around the lives of narrator Saleem Sinai and the other 1,000 children born in the 'magic' hour immediately after the Declaration of Independence", as critics put it (Parker 650). According to Parker, the novel clearly belongs to magical realist genre and is similar to Günter Grass's *The Tin Drum* from 1959 (650). Other scholars support that claim, saying:

> It is difficult to single out individual genres for discussion but the genre category that best captures the prevailing conventions of the novel, and the genre most relevant to the kinds of historical and social conditions Rushdie portrays, is magic realism (Rubinson 31).

In *Midnight's Children*, the narrator, Saleem Sinai, tells the story of his life. The readers are told that his birth coincided in time with the beginnings of the new country, India, which gained independence from Great Britain on August 15, 1947. Because of that fact, Saleem's fate seems to be parallel to the fate of his country. Saleem has telepathic power and a serious nasal defect. After thirty-one years of living, Saleem discovers that his body seems to be falling apart, that is why he is willing to tell the story of his life to his loving caretaker and a wife-to-be, Padma.

The story is told by **a first person narrator**, Saleem, who gives details from the history of his life. The overt narrator is visible from the very first sentence of the novel. He says: "I was born in the city of Bombay … once

upon a time" (Rushdie 9).There are some intrusions, made by Padma, Saleem's future wife, and they give evidence of the existence of a third person narrator as well. The first person narration makes the whole story less plausible, since the narrator is surely subjective and not omniscient. The narrator blurs the distinction between personal history and the history of the nation. The speaker mistakes dates and places and after realizing the blunders, he does not change his version of Indian history, arguing that history is always subjective. It is not built on verifiable facts only, but it needs examination from a certain perspective as well. Klonowska points out that the way the world is presented in the novel suggests strong ties between the speaker and India. Great details in which the surrounding is depicted come from the feeling of nostalgia and other emotions shared by the narrator (Klonowska 119).

When it comes to the world presented in the novel, the narrator describes in a very detailed way 1950s Bombay. There is no questioning of the existence of the city since all the readers of the novel must have heard about it. According to Klonowska, the realism of Bombay's presentation is strengthened by the presence of many details in street names, shop names and characteristic elements of the city (Klonowska 118). Even though the readers are presented the city that does exist in reality, like in all non-documentary literary works, it is not a truthful and authentic picture of Bombay. It is Bombay from the narrator's memory and imagination. It is the speaker's "imaginary homeland"[1].

In the novel, Saleem Sinai mixes the two worlds, Eastern with Western culture. He says:

> Once upon a time there were Radha and Krishna, and Rama and Sita, and Laila and Majnu; also (because we are not unaffected by the West) Romeo and Juliet, and Spencer Tracy and Katherine Hepburn (Rushdie 259).

The narrator describes important political events like the Partition, the birth of the new country and the war in Bangladesh. Historical events are interwoven into the absolutely fictitious story.

[1] See: Rushdie, Salman. *Imaginary Homelands: Essays and Criticism 1981–1991*. Penguin Papers: 1992.

Rushdie's novel is filled with various characters coming from different social and political and national groups. Klonowska points out that they share their "extraordinary nature" (139). They differ from each other, but all of them seem extraordinary.

The **supernatural elements** in the novel are linked mostly with the existence of children with special abilities. The narrator says that "the nature of these children, every one of whom was, through some freak of biology, or perhaps owing to some preternatural power of the moment, … endowed with feature, talents or faculties which can only be described as miraculous" (Rushdie 195). Saleem has telepathic abilities which let him communicate with people despite linguistic differences, Shiva is a great warrior and other children also have supernatural features that differ them from ordinary people. All of the one hundred and one children that are born at the stroke of midnight have some magical powers which are greater the closer to midnight the child was born. When Saleem loses his telepathic abilities, he gains a great sense of smell, thanks to which he can recognize people's emotions and feelings. Saleem seems to be the representative of the whole nation, that is why on his death he is supposed to break into as many pieces as there are citizens in India. According to Klonowska, "Rushdie's novels are full of fantastic, unusual, improbable or simply impossible events" (117).

The motif of the mirror in the novel is plainly seen in the character of Saleem, whose life is an exact parallel of the fate of India as a country. When starting to tell his story, he states: "I had been mysteriously handcuffed to history, my destinies indissolubly chained to those of my country" (Rushdie 9). Saleem is of poor origin, but he is raised in an affluent family, has got British roots, which makes him a perfect representative of his nation. He organizes a conference of the other children born at the stroke of midnight, which stands for the possibility of a dialogue between the representatives of different languages, religions and regions of India. The fragmentation of the nation is symbolized in the fragmentation Saleem's body is to undergo. The perforated sheet through which Aadam Aziz is allowed to look on Amina's body is also symbolic. Its stands for the fragmentation of the people's perspective.

It proves that it is impossible to see and fully understand the world, history and even ourselves. This characteristic of magical realist literature has not been so well and fully developed anywhere else.

Readers take Saleem to be a chronicler, but they quickly realize that his memories of India differ from factual history. There are several **disruptions in time and space**. Saleem makes mistakes by which he seems to question the whole process of recording history. He makes the readers think about the way they perceive their lives and the lives of their ancestors. Klonowska calls *Midnight's Children* "a novel about forgetting and remembering" (120).

The novel is told by a first person narrator who often pauses to make statements about the story and about the book itself. The novel has multiple **metaficitional elements.** At some point he owns up that he may make mistakes in the dates or facts. He says: "But I cannot say, now, what the actual sequence of events might have been; in my India, Gandhi will continue to die at the wrong time" (Rushdie 195).

In Rushdie's novel there is a **baroque language**. Very detailed descriptions, complex syntax, ornate vocabulary, the use of metaphor and grotesque, all make the novel very attractive. Another important linguistic feature of the novel is the use of English with some intrusions of Urdu words. The grammar and the use of vocabulary are distorted.

Saleem Sinai, the narrator of Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*, undergoes fantastic transformations", as Rubinson claims (33). He **metamorphoses** through the story. He is a symbolic figure that has got magical abilities. When told to be silent, he discovers his telepathic powers. He undergoes all the processes India undergoes.

The idea of Saleem's birth at the stroke of midnight when modern India is created makes the story very symbolic and **politically oriented**. The life of Saleem is linked with the history of the state and the most important events from the country's history are reflected in his life as well.

Death and rebirth are very important in *Midnight's Children*. The book concentrates on the birth of a new nation which is symbolized in the birth of the children that are attributed with magical powers and supernatural features. The existence of India is symbolically compared to the life of

a human being. One possible interpretation is that a country consists of its citizens, without whom it cannot exist. The problems that the country faces are the problems of the common people.

The **interracial relationships** which are characteristic for magical realist literature are visible in the person of Saleem himself, who turns out to be the son of an Indian girl, and an Englishman. He is then a full symbol of his nation, which after many years of being a British colony, turns out to be a typical postcolonial state. India gathers from both worlds but favours old Indian traditions and beliefs. Saleem does not have any problems with his identity since he is raised in a wealthy Indian family, not knowing anything about his English roots. Even after discovering this, he is definitely Indian and does not try to be like the British.

The **facility to accept the marvellous** or strange is clearly visible in *Midnight's Children* since it is linked with the mentality of the inhabitants of India. Because of his nasal defect, Saleem is compared to Ganesha, who is a god of art and wisdom, attributed with an elephant's nose.

Myth, folklore and old beliefs are present in the novel. It needs to be mentioned that the names of midnight's children are of mythical origin. Shiva, who is Saleem's counterpart, is named after the Hindu god of destruction and rejuvenation. Parvati-the-Witch who is another of the midnight's children, was named after the Hindu goddess, the consort of Shiva who is considered the Great Mother of several gods like Ganesha. Saleem and Shiva are opposite characters. Saleem is the creator of the story who builds the world the readers are presented, whereas Shiva represents a destructive force. This opposition symbolizes the two inextricably linked forces that exist in nature.

4. Conclusion

Klonowska states that in "Rushdie's novels, the realistic convention is represented by formal realism, while the 'magical' one, and this is an important variation, seems to have its source in myth" (116). Rushdie's writing is different from Carter's. He describes the places in his novels in great detail,

in a way that the readers seem almost able to smell the spices in the air. He concentrates on the fact that in India there is hardly any lonely person. In a country with so many inhabitants it is difficult to find one's own place. On the other hand, Carter concentrates mainly on the gender aspect. The magical elements her characters (usually female) possess are extraordinary for the people around them and are usually meant to help in achieving one's goal.

Latin American magical realist books by authors such as Gabriel Garcia Márquez or Carlos Fuentes differ much from the British literature of the genre. Salman Rushdie and Angela Carter both take us to metropolises like London or Bombay and present the lives of contemporary people who usually do not believe in old myths, but are characterized by rational thinking. What characterizes the writing of Carter and Rushdie is definitely the need to make statements through their novels. As Rubinson writes: "The popularity of the genre among postcolonials, women, and Eastern European writers suggests that there is something particularly attractive about the genre for representing political protests" (32). Apart from being a magical realist writer, Carter is also definitely a feminist writer, writing about women's rights, dreams and needs, rewriting popular myths into the feminist way of perceiving reality. Rushdie's books are also very politically oriented, drawing the reader's attention to the lives of the people living in a country that used to be a colony. In that hybrid society, Rushdie seems to be closer to Márquez' writing than Carter. He understands the duality in the mentality of the Indian people, who believe in traditional values and Hindu gods, but, on the other hand, are under strong influence of the British and Western lifestyle.

Despite some differences, like the setting, the two novels, Carter's *Nights at the Circus* and Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* are very much alike. The strongest link is the presence of the motif of a magical body. In *Nights at the Circus* it is realized in the figure of Fevvers, who cannot be perceived as an ordinary person since she has bird-like wings. In *Midnight's Children* the motif of a magical body is visible in the characters of all the especially gifted children who were born at the stroke of midnight, but mostly in the character of Saleem Sinai, who not only looks different, but also possesses supernatural abilities.

Chapter IV

MAGICAL REALISM IN THE FORM[1] OF *THE LAND OF LAUGHS*, *BONES OF THE MOON* AND *SLEEPING IN FLAME*

1. Introduction

Jonathan Carroll despises categorizations. Many literary critics classify his books as horror, but the horror elements are not obvious or visible at first sight (Oramus "Nocne wyprawy" 72). Carroll says that his books are "like mixed salads – lettuce, onion, capers" (My books). Apart from magic features, they have "horror tropes, psychological tropes, mainstream tropes, etcetera" (Carroll My Books). So to label him as only a magical realism writer would not be proper; instead, it would be true to write that his novels and short stories contain some magical realist characteristics.

1.1. The biography of Jonathan Carroll

Jonathan Samuel Carroll is a contemporary American writer, born on January 26, 1949 in New York to the actress and lyricist June Sillman and Sidney Carroll, a writer (Hughes). Though his parents were of Jewish origin, he was raised as a Christian Scientist. His parents' work duties involved traveling a lot, which made Jonathan a rebellious teenager. His troublesome behaviour is said to have ended after his best friend was shot dead.

In 1971, Carroll graduated from Rutgers University and on June 19, 1971 he married Beverly Schreiner (Hughes). He studied to achieve a Master's degree at the University of Virginia, while being an English teacher at

[1] The interdependence of content (what the text says) and form (how the message is conveyed) is studied in this text following the ideas of New Criticism, paying much attention to close reading of Carroll's novels.

schools – the North State Academy in Hickory, North Carolina and later at St Louis County Day School (Hughes). In 1973 he was offered a job at the American International School in Vienna, Austria and moved to Europe. Vienna has been his place of residence since then and became the setting of some of his works. He says:

> When I was living in America, I was offered three jobs as a teacher overseas. One was in Beirut, one in Tehran, and one in Vienna. Thank God, I chose Vienna. As basically, an extremely private person who does not like to be bothered by outside influences, I found it more comfortable to live here. Interestingly enough, the more well-known I have become, the happier I am that I am here because other friends of mine who gained a certain notoriety as writers have great difficulty functioning within cultures that will not leave them alone (Schweitzer 23).

The anonymity allows the writer to lead the life he wishes. In early 1970s he published a couple of press articles, with "Reading my Father's Story", his first essay that appeared in *Cimarron Review* in 1973 (Stableford 106). Jonathan Carroll is very popular in Europe where he has been living since 1974, and especially in Poland. He has been to Poland on numerous occasions, the last visit took place in May 2017.

1.2. Literary output

1.2.1. Early works

Jonathan Carroll is a prolific writer. His first fiction was "Hand me Downs", published in *Roanoke Review* in 1974, "All the Angels Living in Atlanta" in *Caret Magazine* in 1975, "Skip" in *Iron Magazine* in 1975 and "The Party at Brenda's House" in the *Transatlantic Review* 1976 (Stableford 107). His works have been classified as "literary fantasy, often with elements of surreal horror" (Straub 529).

Carroll's earliest published novels are *The Land of Laughs* from 1980 *and Voice of Our Shadow* from 1983. *The Land of Laughs* is a story of Thomas Abbey, an English teacher, and his newly-met friend Saxony

Gardner who travel to Galen, Missouri, to write a biography of their idol, a writer of children's stories, Marshall France. Thomas Abbey, a son of Stephan Abbey, a famous film star, is still looking for his place on Earth. As a nine-year-old boy, he was given his first Marshall France book, *The Land of Laughs* and soon became obsessed with everything that was written by his favourite author. In Galen, Thomas and Saxony meet France's daughter, Anna France, who greets them politely and, after getting to know him better, lets Thomas write the first chapter of the biography. She states that Thomas will be allowed to write an authorized biography of her father if his first chapter proves to be properly written.

After weeks of research, Thomas starts a relationship with Anna and realizes that Galen and its inhabitants differ much from his first impression. He is shocked when told that almost all people living in that small provincial town, except Anna and Richard Lee, are in fact products of Marshall France's imagination. Their fates were written down by the author in the chronicles of the village. This way, the people of Galen know exactly their future lives and deeds and, of course, the time of their deaths. Some time after France's death, due to unknown reasons, people die not in the chronology that they are supposed to, accidents not written in the books happen, and so the members of the Galen community (with Anna as their leader) let Thomas prove he is the suitable person to make it right by bringing France to life. As the Galeners wait for their creator, Marshall France, to return to the town, they try to murder the writers of France's biography, to remove any witnesses. Thomas' stay in Galen ends with a huge explosion in which Saxony is killed and he is made to abandon Galen immediately. The book ends with Thomas murdering Richard Lee, the one sent by Anna France to get rid of him. Thomas is aided by his father, Stephen Abbey, who is brought to life by Thomas.

The *Answered Prayers* Sextet, which was published afterwards consists of the novels: *Bones of the Moon* (from 1987), *Sleeping in Flame* (1988), *A Child Across the Sky* (1989), *Outside the Dog Museum* (1991), *After Silence* (1992) and From the Teeth of Angels (1994).

One part of the sequence, *Bones of the Moon*, is the story of a young and very beautiful American woman, Cullen, who, after having an abortion, falls in love with Daniel James, marries him and gets pregnant. Cullen tells the story of the first years of their relationship and happy life in Europe. Unfortunately, Daniel, who is a basketball player, gets injured during a match and has to leave the sport. The couple then moves back to the United Stated, where Danny gets a job as a coach at a school. The story seems to be very realistic, but at some point Cullen starts having very extraordinary and fantastic dreams in which she travels through a magical land called Rondua, together with her son Pepsi and human sized animals named Mr Tracy the Dog, Felina the Wolf and Martio the Camel. Their mission is to find the title's Bones of the Moon, which are said to be magical objects that can help Pepsi win over powerful Jack Chili, the ruthless ruler of Rondua. At the same time, Cullen starts her correspondence with Alvin Williams, a teenage neighbour of Cullen and Danny, who murdered his mother and sister with an axe and whom Cullen and her husband ironically call "The Axe Boy". What is strange, soon Cullen acquires magical abilities and the two worlds, the real and the fantastic seem to mingle. The story ends with Cullen's friend and neighbour, Eliot Kilbertus, being killed by Alvin who escapes from prison and wants to hurt Cullen after she had decided not to continue writing any letters to him. Strangely enough, Alvin proves to be Jack Chili from her dreams and is defeated by Cullen's son, Pepsi, who manages to gather all the Bones of the Moon and win the final battle.

Gillespie calls *Bones of the Moon* an "urban fantasy". He says: "It begins with some seemingly ordinary yuppies on the east coast of America, progresses to the heartland of America, and doesn't begin to get weird until half way through the book".

Sleeping in Flame tells the story of Walker Easterling, a screenwriter and actor living in Vienna. The author thus describes the story behind the novel:

> *Sleeping in Flame* is set in Vienna but it's based on a story that happened to me. Someone saw a picture on a gravestone in Russia, and took a photograph of it because the original photograph looked *exactly like me*. Very strange. It really gave me a chill up my back (Schweitzer 23).

The novel describes Walker's love towards Maris York and their relationship, but it is also a story of his journey towards learning the truth about his origin. Abandoned as an infant, Walker was adopted by a married couple in America, yet one day he comes across a grave with a picture of a man who looks exactly as him. Curious, Walker desperately wants to trace his roots, but the more he finds out, the strangest things happen.

Learning to be an incarnation of a man who lived and died in Vienna, Moritz Benedikt. Walker is given more details of his previous life by Moritz' widow, who shares the truth about her husband and his father.

1.2.2. Later works

Jonathan Carroll's later works included *The Crane's View* Trilogy, consisting of *Kissing the Beehive* (published in 1997), *The Marriage of Sticks* (2000) and *The Wooden Sea* (2001). Other titles include *White Apples* (2002), *Glass Soup* (2005), *Eye of the Day* (first published in Polish as *Oko dnia* in 2006 and then translated to English), *The Ghost in Love* (2008), *Bathing the Lion* (2014) and most recent novel *Mr Breakfast* (published in Polish in 2019). Carroll is also the author of a novella *Black Cocktail* (1990) and a short story collection *The Panic Hand* (1995).

2. Magical realist elements in the form

2.1. The narrator

Similarly to Rushdie's *Midnight's* Children, all three novels: *The Land of Laughs, Bones of the Moon* and *Sleeping in Flame* are told by first person narrators. The most striking difference between the way the stories are presented is that in both *The Land of Laughs* and *Sleeping in Flame* the narrator is male, whereas *Bones of the Moon,* a woman. Throughout the novel, Thomas Abbey, who is the speaker in *The Land of Laughs*, gradually reveals more information about himself. He says that he is a coward and adds: "I usually yawn when I'm nervous, and it either makes people think that I'm very courageous or stupid. Sometimes I can't stop yawning" (LL

109). This fragment is alluring and amusing. It reveals some personal information about the narrator and at the same time breaks the feeling of suspense. Thomas Abbey as a narrator gives away many details from his personal life. Similarly to Jack Walser from Carter's *Nights at the Circus*, when facing something supernatural, Thomas Abbey wants to find some rational explanation. After hearing the dog Nails speak, he says:

> Porpoises talked, didn't they? And hadn't they discovered a couple of words in ape language? What about the woman in Africa, Goodall? So what was strange about a talking dog? These and other stupid rationalizations fluttered across my brain on featherless wings (LL 175).

The first person narration in *The Land of Laughs* makes the reader believe in all that Thomas says. As Cox describes it: "Provocative in its imaginary realm, Carroll is able to make you actually believe there was a Marshall France who wrote children's stories," Gillespie points out that through the first person narration, Jonathan Carroll is speaking directly to the reader, who has difficulty judging if the magic is really happening. **The reader's uncertainty** is a common feature of magical realist stories.

The narrator of *Bones of the Moon* is Cullen is a young, attractive and contented wife of Daniel James. After getting pregnant, her dreams become imbued with magic. Over the course of time, certain magical elements keep cropping up in the woman's real life. Similarly to Thomas Abbey, Cullen also gives much personal information. She says: "Every year when I was a girl, we spent the entire month of July at my parents' house on the island. It seemed all we ever did then was swim in the ocean" (BM 55). From this short fragment, the readers may conclude that Cullen had a happy childhood. She also says:

> One of my favourite books when I was a little girl was *Doctor Doolittle*, but I was envious of his ability to speak the language of Gub-Gub the pig, or laugh at the jokes of horses. How wonderful it felt at this new moment to be able to laugh at the jokes of everything! (BM 181)

The first person narration makes the reader doubt whether the magic in *Bones of the Moon* is really happening or if it only takes place in the narrator's imagination (Bieńkowska 55). Also the fact that Cullen decides to visit several psychiatrists and meet with a palmist may suggest that she does not believe in the magic in her life.

Cullen says much about one of the dreams that she remembers from her childhood because she experiences a similar vision in Rondua. She adds:

> One of the few dreams I distinctly remember having as a child was this, and I had it many times. I am sitting outside somewhere by myself. It is a nice day and I'm doing something unimportant – maybe a doll is on my lap and I'm talking to it. For no reason, I feel compelled to look up and there, owning the entire sky – the whole roof and corners of the world above – is a face. I'm scared, but children have the ability to handle anything because their world has no limitations: everything is possible when you're eight (BM 187).

She describes it in a very detailed way because in her penultimate dream about Rondua she sees the face of Alvin Williams on the sky. Cullen also writes:

> I once watched a documentary on animals in Africa. Beside the usual vaulting gazelles and funny-looking outraged hippos, there was one part of the film that left me reeling when it was over. lion, slim and airborne all the way, chased a zebra across a plain and won. Grabbing the zebra by the nose, the lion shook it back and forth like a rag. It was hard to watch, God knows, but the most awesome thing about the picture was the zebra's reaction. Once caught, it stood stock-still and allowed itself to be devoured (BM 198).

In this fragment, it is visible that Cullen, as the narrator, introduces her own feelings and thoughts into the story. She is definitely not an omniscient narrator since she writes the story from her own perspective. The readers are shown her vision of the events.

The narrator of *Sleeping in Flame*, a former actor, now screenwriter, Walker Esterling, through the course of action learns the truth about his origin. He is told by a fairy tale character (who claims to be his father) to be leading his thirty-first life. The readers accompany Walker on his jour-

ney towards the truth of his identity, trusting his words and looking at the world from his perspective: "I was adopted, Maris. I was found in a garbage can outside a restaurant in Atlanta. A bum discovered me while looking for dinner one night. He's the closest I ever got to who my real parents were" (SF 64). The critics frequently stress his unique way of leading the story, claiming him to be "using a distinctive narrative method that makes almost everything he has written since then easily identifiable as his" (Stableford 107).

2.2. Language

"Jonathan Carroll has a knack for picking imaginative names and describing unreality" as Cox states. The titles of his novels, *The Land of Laughs*, *Bones of the Moon* and *Sleeping in Flame* are all alluring and poetic. They are meant to intrigue the readers and make them want to find out what the titles really mean (Oramus "Nocne wyprawy" 73). While reading the novels, the readers discover that the titles appear in the books as a name of some objects (in case of *Bones of the Moon*) or as a title of book written by one of the characters (in case of *The Land of Laughs*).

In *The Land of* Laughs, titles of the novels written by Thomas' favourite author, Marshall France, are also very intriguing: *The Green Dog's Sorrow*, *The Pool of Stars*, *Peach Shadows* and the one that is also the title of the Carroll's novel – *The Land of Laughs*. These titles add colour to the reading.

The language used by the narrator in *The Land of Laughs* is very diverse. Many rhetorical devices make the story very interesting to read; with vivid similes as an example. When meeting Mrs Fletcher for the first time, Thomas thinks that "she didn't have the dry snakeskin of a person who's old and lived out in the sun all her life. More white, an inside-living white that begun to go gray like an old postcard" (LL 69). The narrator also uses a simile to describe the looks of Nails, the bull terrier: "He was so ugly, so short and tight-skinned – like a sausage about to burst its casing" (LL 77).

In *Bones of the Moon* the language is also very colourful and poetic. Cullen describing her meeting with Danny at the airport says that "his smile was like sitting by a warm fire with the best book you've ever read"

(BM 18). The language is also very witty. It is visible in all the descriptions made by Cullen. She says: "Cabdrivers in New York are either autistic or philosophers; there's rarely an in-between" (BM 18).

Cullen's dreams are full of beautiful and strange names, like Mudrake, Cornsweat or Yasmuda, which are the names of fish. They bring about some most intriguing and exotic names from the writings of Márquez or Rushdie. In the first dream, when telling her son about Rondua, Cullen says that previously "Clouds moved like bows over the sky," which is obviously a very vivid simile (BM 47). She also states that "their (clouds') music was silver and sad" (BM 47). It is one of the most interesting examples of the use of a synaesthesia, a rhetorical device in which phrases linked with a particular sense perception are used to describe another sense perception. There is also an extensive use of the similes in *Bones of the Moon*. Cullen says: "The dream came and went like the spring breezes" (BM 49). The most powerful descriptions are when Cullen writes about Rondua. She says:

> How strange it was to eat glass and light. All of the food on the table was laid out beautifully and precisely. The spread would have looked delicious if everything hadn't been transparent; splashing the light from the icy chandelier hung high and huge over the crystalline dining table (94).

The language in *Bones of the Moon* is very witty as well. Cullen says: "With the help of my parents, we found our apartment in 'The Axe Boy Arms,' as I began calling it after our illustrious downstairs neighbor made his debut" (54). In a very funny way, Cullen comments on the terrible crime that happened in the downstairs apartment of their house.

The name of Cullen's son, Pepsi, is an example of playing with language. Giving a character the name of a popular product is extraordinary. But this name does not necessarily come from the name of the beverage, but may be rooted in the Greek word 'peptein' meaning 'to cook' or 'to digest'.

In *Bones of the Moon* there are many examples of other rhetorical devices, like anthropomorphism. Cullen says: "Our first summer back in America moved by with a genial smile on its face"(BM 57). This words are really

thought-provoking and the image is easy to imagine. There is also another example of anthropomorphism in *Bones of the Moon* when Cullen describes the landscape on Long Island. She says: "Only here on Long Island, there were cedar trees with a solid, rocky look to them which said they had stood guard over this part of town for a long time" (BM 125). This is how Cullen describes Mr Tracy after being attacked by Martio the Camel, who turns to be Jack Chili: "Since the calamity with Martio and the loss of his leg, the dog's whole being flapped like a big flag in a small wind" (BM 179).

Carroll's books are very readable and the plot is easy to follow. Gillespie says the books are written in a "chatty style", which means that even though the language is very poetic, it is not difficult to understand. There are some descriptions that are used in both novels. One of the characters in *Bones of the Moon*, De Fazio, says that Rondua is full of stupid people. He calls it "The Land of Laughs", which of course is the title of the other novel by Jonathan Carroll.

The novels contain proverbs and sayings invented by the narrators, one example, said by De Fazio in *Bones of the Moon*, being "life has a very bad case of acne which it has no desire to lose, because that would mean it couldn't look in the mirror fifty times a day and feel so sorry for itself" (BM 157). Another example is linked with Cullen's views on death. She writes:

> Death doesn't make you sad – it makes you empty. That's what's so bad about it. All of your charms and beliefs and funny habits fall fast through a big black hole, and suddenly you know they're gone because just as suddenly, there's nothing at all left inside (BM 214).

Cullen describes her talks with Daniel and Eliot, saying:

> Conversations with Danny were a long wander through familiar greatly loved countryside. Talking with Eliot, on the other hand, was like an evening spent in a curbside chair at a hopping Italian restaurant. His words and ideas buzzed in and out like kids on orange scooters – in a hurry everywhere. Gusts of noise, color, honking, crazy combinations that often left you gaga. Little of it ever slowed down enough for you to really focus on, but the happy frenzy did your heart good (BM 194).

In *Sleeping in Flame,* the narrator gives a number of similies, like the one used when describing marriage:

> Perhaps because wonderful as it can sometimes be, you can be sure marriage is at all times a quirky, difficult thing to maintain. In certain ways, it is very much like the solid gold family heirloom watch your father gives you for graduation. You love looking at it and owning it, but it isn't like the twenty-dollar liquid-crystal thing made of plastic and rubber that needs no maintenance to keep perfect time. Every day you have to wind the gold beauty to make it run right, and you have to keep setting it, and you have to take it to the jeweller to be cleaned… It *is* lovely and rare and valuable, but the rubber watch keeps better time with no work at all. The problem with twenty-dollar watches is that they all suddenly stop dead at some point. All you can do then is throw them away and buy another (SF 15-16).

The language the author uses is very poetic and alluring:

> If you are very lucky, you're allowed to be in certain places during just the right season of your life: by the sea for the summer when you're seven or eight and full of the absolute need to swim until dark and exhaustion close their hands together, cupping you in between. Or in another country when there is both an exciting _now_ and enough dust and scent of the past everywhere to give fall light a different, violent color, the air a mixed aroma of open flower markets, people named Zwitkovitz, a passing tram's dry electricity (SF 20).

The motif of the mirror is plainly seen in the titles of the books. *The Land of Laughs* is not only the title of the story, suggesting Galen to be an outstanding place, but it is also the title of the first book of Marshall France that Thomas came across. The source of the name 'Galen' is unclear; however, it could be rooted in the name of the Greek physician and philosopher whose achievements set the standards in Medicine for the next fifteen hundred years. Galen left dozens of medical and philosophical treatises, and this bears resemblance to the *Galen Journals* from *The Land of Laughs.* Galen is also said to have communicated by means of dreams with Asclepios, the god of Medicine.

The motif of the mirror is taken to extremes in the third novel, *Sleeping in Flame*. Here the main protagonist, Walker Easterling, finds himself to be

an incarnation of a child born to a fairy tale character. In the course of the novel, he recalls that in his previous life, he used to be a soldier living in Vienna, Moritz Benedikt, who served during the war but lost his life to a man who claimed to be his father. The results of the research conducted by one of Walker's friends give a fuller picture, presenting the penultimate incarnation of the novel's protagonist: "[Moritz Benedikt] was born here in 1923 and died in 1955. Worked as a tailor for his father in a shop on the Kochgasse in the Eight District, Benedikt und Sőhne, Schneiderei" (SF 200). His father, Kaspar, raised him alone, as Moritz' mother was said to have died at childbirth:

> From the different accounts I've read, Benedikt junior fought for the Germans in southern France in World War Two. He was taken prisoner by the Allies, held awhile, then let go. When he got back to Vienna, he started working again for his father. This is where it gets interesting. Seems like Moritz had a girlfriend named Elisabeth Gregorovius. … She and Kaspar didn't get along, but his son loved her, so there wasn't anything he could do _but_ accept it. "In 1955, January, Elisabeth discovered she was pregnant. She told Moritz, and he was thrilled. The first thing he wanted to do was give his father the good news. So he went over to the old man's apartment and told him. You know what Kaspar did? Pushed his son out of a fifth floor window and killed him! "When the police came to take him away, Kaspar told them -- wait a minute, let me read it to you -- told them 'He would have loved it more than me.' That was it." I looked down at Orlando. "What happened to the father?" "I'm not finished! While they were taking him to the police station, there was a terrible crash and the two cops in the car were killed, along with the driver of the other car. There was a photograph of the accident in the paper. Both cars, _both_ of them, Walker, were standing straight up on their noses! How the hell could that happen? It looked like a movie scene. And guess who the only one was who survived the crash? Kaspar Benedikt" (SF 202).

Being reborn, the character has exactly the same looks, but the widow, Elisabeth, explains that she can easily see the differences:

> You look like him and you remember things about me, but I don't feel anything for you. It's like bumping into an old friend forty years later. Maybe the face is

> familiar and maybe there are some good memories, but it's not the person you gave your soul to. The only thing that would make me jump or faint now would be to see _him_ walk into this room. I'd know it was him just as I know you're not. He'd come over here and say things only the two of us knew." "I know some of those things, Mrs. Benedikt." "So what? You don't know them all. That's the difference between you and Moritz. Scattered little pieces don't make a person. It's all the pieces put together that does (SF).

In his dream, Walker discovers one more life that he lived: "My name was Alexander Kroll. As a child, my father had liked to call me Rednaxela when we played together. I had come today to visit his grave and bring him an egg. He'd died the year before of a cancer that slowly ate his face and showed me what he would look like forever once the disease had finished with him" (SF 145). He continues, revealing further details:

> I didn't know my mother because she'd died when I was born. However, my father, who had the very un-Russian name Melchior, was almost enough to compensate for a life without her. He cooked and cleaned for us, showed me off to the world as his greatest achievement and joy, and spoke to me from the very beginning as an intelligent adult who would naturally understand and appreciate the sound of life's thunder (SF 145).

With some effort, the character is able to recollect some memories from his previous lives. To win over his "father", he revives Dortchen and Lisette Wild, who were the sources of the stories that the Grimm brothers turned into their world-known fairy tales.

The baroque style of writing, the language full of different rhetorical devices, makes *The Land of Laughs, Bones of the Moon* and *Sleeping in Flame* though provoking and intrigues the reader and builds interest in both the content of the books and the form in which they are written.

2.3. Metafiction

The metafictional foregrounding is visible in *The Land of Laughs*. The fact that the story is told after the events happened makes the readers witness the whole process of creation. Also, Thomas' arrival in Galen was supposedly

predicted by Marshall France or even caused by him. Anna tells Thomas that her father "was convinced that since he had been able to create the people in Galen, then if he died, someone somewhere would be able to recreate him" (LL 200). That may suggest that Thomas is also one of France's people and the fact that he would write a book was also predicted.

The fact that Cullen decides to write down her dreams and the feelings connected with them introduces certain metafictional elements into *Bones of the Moon*. The novel appears to be Cullen's journal depicting the events that really happened. The moment she starts writing is stressed:

> A few days later I bought a very sharp leather notebook at a stationery store and started transferring everything into it. I knew I was getting serious when I forked out twenty-seven dollars for a notebook: I hadn't kept a real one since college. I was both stirred and intimidated by the vast number of unfriendly white pages in there (BM 70).

Cullen is very attentive and precise in her writing, which becomes an important way of dealing with the supernatural elements in her life. Metafictional elements also reappear in *Sleeping in Flame*. The main character, Walker, turns out to have been given life by the Wild sisters, who had invented the story of his birth and told it to the Grimm brother. Walker is thus not only a fictional character from the novel the readers are given.

2.4. Linguistic magic

The magical power of words is one of the most important and visible magical realist features in *The Land of Laughs*. In the novel there are two people, Marshall France and Thomas Abbey, who possess abilities to create the world from their visions by means of writing. Everything that France wrote in the *Galen Journals* really happened and Thomas is able to bring France back to life. To his surprise, Thomas is told that "Marshall France had discovered that when he wrote something, it happened: it was: it came into being. Just like that" (LL 184).

In *Bones of the Moon*, the situation with regard to linguistic magic is less complicated. After Cullen gains some magical abilities, she is able to

cast spells in reality. To help Pepsi in Rondua, she uses the word "koukonaries", which in Greek means pine cones, as Cullen explains to the readers. The incorporation of a word that she knows in reality into the realm of her dreams may not be so extraordinary, but it worries Cullen. In ancient Greece, the pine was considered a holy tree. Asclepios, the god of Medicine, was often presented holding a branch with a snake wrapped around it in one hand, and a pine cone in the other.

One of the most obvious examples of linguistic magic is connected with the Colombian Formula One driver, Pedro Lopez, and his horrible accident during a race. After Cullen sees that on television, she prays for Lopez to survive, but realizing that he suffers a lot at the hospital, Cullen admits that he should die. She says:

> One afternoon, sitting by the window with Mae, I envisioned a figure in bed wrapped like a mummy. The only sounds around it were the jitter and hum of life-support systems. It was death in life and I knew who it was and it made me shiver uncontrollably. I thought of Lopez's family; their present pain and impossible hopes for the future. ….Life was certainly precious, but death even more so in some cases. In the quietest whisper, I said, 'Let him die.' He died the next morning (BM 79).

The immense power of linguistic magic can be also traced in *Sleeping in Flame*. The father figure, a little man who is a Grimm fairy-tale character, Rumpelstiltskin, wants Walker to guess his real name. He gives the same task he wanted Walker's mother to accomplish. To his surprise, Walker, with the help of the Wild sisters, the authors of the fairy tale, was able to win the trial: "Your name is *Breath*, Papa. Come on, dinner's ready." He walked slowly forward. What else could he do?" (SF 293).

Saying his name aloud, Walker is now free; similarly to what happened in the Grimm's version of the story, when the young woman guessed Rumpelstiltskin's name.

2.5. Detailed descriptions

In *The Land of Laughs*, the descriptions are presented in great detail. This is visible in the scene of Thomas describing the editor of Marshal France's books, Mr. Louis:

> He was short and squat, probably around sixty, sixty-one years old, well groomed. He had on this very dapper tan suit with wide lapels, and a sea-blue herringbone shirt with a maroon ascot tucked down into the neck instead of a tie. Silver metal-frame glasses that made him look like a French movie director. Semi-bald, he gave me a semi-dead-fish handshake (LL 35).

During his trip to New York, Thomas met yet another person who knew Marshall France. That was Mr. Lucente, an undertaker. Thomas describes him:

> Lucente was short an wiry. His face was tobacco brown and he had white hair cut in a to-the – bone crew cut. No nonsense there. His eyes were powder blue and bloodshot. I thought that he must be in his seventies or eighties, but he looked strong enough and still full of beans (LL 44).

There is also a description of New York: "The Big Apple! Shows! Museums! Bookstores! The Most Beautiful Women in the World! It's all there and has been waiting for me all this time!" (LL 32). Of course, Thomas is skeptical about the city but he depicts it in great detail. The descriptions of the cities, especially Galen make *The Land of Laughs* similar to Rushdie's *Midnight's Children.* The scene in which Thomas and Saxony finally arrive at Galen is presented with every detail and it is very interesting to read:

> A big green canopy had been set up in an open lot between Phend's Sporting Goods and the Glass Insurance Company. Underneath the canopy about twenty people were sitting at redwood picnic tables, eating and talking. A hand-painted sign in front announced that it was the annual Lions Club barbecue. I parked the car next to a dirty pickup truck and got out. The air was still and redolent with the smell of wood smoke and grilled meat. A slight breeze pushed by. I started to stretch, but when I happened to look toward the eaters I stopped in mid-flight. Almost all of them had stopped eating and were looking at us (LL 65).

The narrator reveals much, not only about the physical appearances of the characters, but also about the connotations he has in mind when seeing the people:

> Dan, the master of ceremonies, was shiny-bald except for some short brown hair on the sides of his head. His eyes were dark and friendly and set into a fat, red, unwrinkled face that looked as if it had eaten a lot of spareribs over the years. He had on a white T-shirt, rumpled tan pants, and black work boots. Overall he reminded me of an actor who died couple of years ago named Johnny Fox, who was infamous for beating his wife but who nevertheless always played the part in cowboy movies of a cowardly small-town mayor or shopowner (LL 67).

The descriptions are very vivid. In the scene when Thomas talks to Anna France for the first time, he looks at her mouth, thinking:

> Her lips were full and purplish and I was sure that that was their natural color, although sometimes they got so dark you would have thought that she'd been eating some kind of grape candy (LL 72).

Thomas finds Anna very attractive. His interest in her grows steadily, thus putting attention to her looks:

> When she spoke, her white teeth came out from under those dark, heavy lips in sharp contrast, but then they went back into hiding as soon as she stopped. She had long sparse eyelashes that looked recently curled. Her neck was long and white and incredibly vulnerable and held the only wrinkles on her face. I guessed that she was either in her forties or late thirties, but everything about her looked firm and healthy, and I could picture her living to a very old age (LL 74).

In addition to the characters of *The Land of Laughs*, the objects are also presented in great detail. Thomas depicts the house of Mrs Fletcher thus:

> We drove Mrs. Fletcher over to her house, which was on the other side of town. It was great. To get there you went up a flagstone walk that cut through a garden of six-foot-high sunflowers, chestnut-size pumpkins, watermelons, and tomato vines (LL 77).

When describing the house of Marshall France, the narrator uses the technique of enumeration to show that the place is full of different objects.

At some point in the novel, Thomas describes a winter landscape. Despite the fact that the description is full of details, there is also a visible presence of magical elements:

> A snowstorm whipped through town and painted everything thick white. I went out for a walk one afternoon and came across three cats romping it up in someone's open field. They were having so much fun that I stopped and watched. … All of them looked my way, and unconsciously I raised my hand to wave. Very faintly, very whispery across the snow, I heard them mewing. It took several seconds for it to dawn on me that it was their way of saying hello (LL 202).

Bones of the Moon also includes many detailed descriptions. A good example is a description of New York harbour:

> The boats in New York harbor shuffled and steamed and chuffed from side to side in the open water in their dark berths. Boats that had been on the high seas for months, loaded down with enough bananas or Spanish shoes or Japanese watercolor sets to keep the city going forever (BM 33).

The descriptions are very precise and poetic: "One morning the clouds cracked open and the sun slipped through like a big yellow egg yolk (BM 62) writes Cullen. She also describes her life in Europe and America and her journey across Rondua in great detail. She writes: "The landscape around the airfield in Rondua was black and surrounded by high black rolling hills. Volcanoes lived here once and had left their mark everywhere" (BM 50). Cullen describes also some other landscapes and objects in Rondua:

> As we approached across the plains of Rondua, the sound of the forgotten machines became gigantic, oiled and precise. I began to make out their separate parts: pistons and levers moving in a glistening storm of chrome, brass and tight compression. They no longer *made* anything, but continued to function. The ground they sat on was theirs, inviolable to others (BM 64).

This description of Rondua is in created great detail using a range of rhetorical devices.

She writes:

> Purple Jakes lived in the North. Purple Jakes and Yellow-striped Drews that ate cheese pies and slept furious or in fear of everything. Every one of them, bright neon things moving fast against the dark- earth colors of that landscape. Besides the colors, if you asked me to try and describe them, I would smile (BM 98).

The above quoted description is thought-provoking and imagination-provoking.

> Kempinski would have been miraculous if we hadn't been in Rondua so long and hadn't seen so much already. Giant animals like our three friends strolled the streets. People dressed in bizarre clothes and living hats moved by in a hurried crush. Different kinds of outlandish music accompanied us everywhere; much of it was reedy, mysterious and oriental. It was a suitable background for belly dancers and fire eaters, or walking through a bazaar in Baghdad or Jerusalem (BM 100).

Cullen describes the places that exist in her real life in a similar way. She is very sensitive to beautiful landscapes. She describes Remsenberg, the area where her admirer, a film maker, Weber Gregston, has his summer house thus:

> It was love at first sight with Remsenberg. White wooden houses hundreds of years old sat quietly next to each other in that proud, justifiable arrogance old beauty often has. there was no real town center – no stores or gas stations. Only the houses simply but perfectly maintained, very sure of their great value. What an uncommon place" (BM 124).

The description of Ophir Zik, the City of the Dead and its inhabitants is sad but very thought-provoking:

> Children ran helter-skelter through the wobbly, uneven streets, but their happy laughing faces made no noise. Nothing. there was no noise anywhere.

> Not the shouts of children, dogs barking, the bang of buckets and metal on stone, the squawks of birds or people saying hello across a narrow alleyway (BM 132).

The people living in Ophir Zik seem to be mute. There is an absolute silence there.

The landscapes in Rondua are presented as strange visions of the world presented from a childlike perspective: "It was the first time we had seen the ocean since our arrival in Rondua. It was pink and the waves, then they broke, frothed yellow. They were uncomfortable colors – childhood dreams gone awry" (BM 149). Cullen enumerates all different kinds of plants that grow in Rondua. She says:

> Food was never a problem. We picked leos and sixhat wherever we found their blue groves, naletense by the side of rushing streams. It all tasted delicious, but I had forgotten long before to pay attention to what I put in my mouth (BM 149).

During their short to Milan, Cullen gets a gift from her husband. She describes it in a very detailed way:

> When I came to Europe and joined Danny in Greece, one day I found on a beach the most beautiful piece of bottle glass I'd ever seen. Bottle glass? It's glass that has been in the ocean so long that, broken or not at one time, all of its corners have since become rounded and smooth. What's even better if you've come across a special piece, is that it has the most gentle, washed-out, unearthly color imaginable. … Of course it all depends on what color the glass was originally and how long it has been washing around under water. Enchantingly, I found my piece on one of the first days in Europe and naturally I took that as a great omen (BM 175).

For her birthday, Cullen gets that pretty piece of ocean glass with a small hole drilled in it on a gold chain.

Bones of the Moon also includes a description of the whole Ronduan community preparing to stand against Jack Chili. This fragment makes the

story similar to the great ancient epics or fantastic literature about fighting against an evil and powerful ruler:

> They had come from every part of Rondua: from cities, hives, forests, towers, nests, caves, under rocks, jungles, deep water… They had come to join us because it was known everywhere that this would be the final battle, the final chance to do what one could to save a world that otherwise was truly lost. Final battles are not a new thing in the history of the world, but they are still more terrible than everything else. They are the last resort, and only the desperate or the mad ever revert to that. When an entire civilization is pushed to that extreme, nothing could be more dangerous.

The narrator enumerates all the places from which the inhabitants of Rondua come to support Pepsi and see the fight. It makes the reader understand the number of the characters living there and the number of places. Cullen writes:

> We wove in and around groups of people and creatures who greeted us warmly when we passed, like old friends or comrades-in-arms. They could fly and swim and run impossibly fast. They carried weapons of cunning design that were capable of every wound; of splitting hearts behind any steel (BM 185).

Cullen describes also the feelings of the creatures preparing for the battle and the voices around her:

> There were also all kinds of music there, which was queer and lovely and often spellbinding. Time after time I wanted to stop and listen to this voice of these wings rubbed together. There was an instrument that looked like a microscope which sounded like nothing I had ever heard before anywhere (BM 185-6).

One of the strangest descriptions is the one of the children that are kept by Jack Chili in his place. Cullen describes this in a very detailed way:

> Some of the children looked like impossible survivors of accidents where they should have been allowed to die quickly if there was any mercy in the world. Every bit of them seemed to be either bandages, brutally exposed, or

> bleeding freely. A number of these shattered, blasted "children" had apparently been propped-up, because many of them fell slowly over as we walked past (BM 202).

Cullen is very touched when seeing the view. She is scared and shocked when looking at the children. Her style of writing lets the readers know that Cullen is moved and full of pity.

The whole image is very scary. The motif of a chamber of horrors is visible in this part of the book. Cullen says:

> There was no sound. No cries or screams or groans came from any of them. What made it worse was a soft, smoky-white fog which hung everywhere around us and blotted out any background that might have lessened the immediacy of the scene (BM 202).

But soon the vision turns into something yet more scary and terrifying: "What's more, all the bared faces were the same – Pepsi James. Pepsi without eyes, black – tumored or gouged – or the pale green of the beaten, the jaundiced" (BM 204). It is really an awful picture. One of the characters sees a vision of himself being close to death. Regarding the horror elements in his stories, Jonathan Carroll notes: "I don't generally respond to horror novels or horror movies because I don't particularly believe in monsters. The greatest monster I know is death" (Schweitzer 22).

Sleeping in Flame includes a number of detailed descriptions of the place of the action: Vienna, the favourite city of Jonathan Carroll. One good example is when the narrator mentions his stay there for the first time:

> Two blocks away was my beloved Café Stein where, after coffee strong as a stone and a fresh croissant, I would get down to work on my newest *magnus opum*. The waiters glided by in a professional hush. If I looked up and caught their eye, they'd nod approvingly at the fact I was writing in their café. They carried silver trays that caught the early sun's rays, which threw silver back against the smoke-stained wall (SF 20).

The thorough characterization of places and objects makes the readers feel more involved in the action of the novel.

3. Conclusion

All three novels, *The Land of Laughs*, *Bones of the Moon* and *Sleeping in Flame*, have some magical realist features in form. Similarly to the novels by Angela Carter and Salman Rushdie, the works of Jonathan Carroll are characterized by the presence of the metafictional foregrounding and linguistic magic. The power of words is typical of the fantastic elements of magical realism. It is usually realized by means of spells and sayings that bear magical powers.

Metafictional foregrounding is visible in the way the narrators tell their stories. The fact that writing has a therapeutic power and the process of writing is visible to the readers make both the texts metafictional. Due to the first person narration, the readers cannot be sure whether the events described in the novels really take place or they are products of the imagination.

The baroque style of writing and the language full of rhetorical devices make *The Land of Laughs*, *Bones of the Moon* and *Sleeping in Flame* similar to Rushdie's *Midnight's Children.* Even though the novels are written in American English and the language is understandable for a typical reader, the narrators use a specific language, names of places, objects and plants not known to everybody.

The motif of the mirror is also visible in the form of the three novels. The title of *The Land of Laughs* is repeated in the story as the name of the children's book written by one of the characters. More extraordinary, it is also repeated in *Bones of the Moon* when describing the magical land, Rondua. The novels devote a lot of space to detailed descriptions of all parts of the worlds: the places, characters, events and objects. They are intriguing and sometimes poetic.

Analyzing the form of *The Land of Laughs*, *Bones of the Moon* and *Sleeping in Flame*, it is easy to understand that both novels are very similar to the works by Carter and Rushdie. They contain elements that are considered magical realist by literary critics. The fact that both novels demonstrate almost all the characteristics of magical realism shared by *Midnight's Children* and *Nights at the Circus* proves that the two Jonathan Carroll novels belong to magical realism, at least regarding the form in which they are written.

Chapter V

MAGICAL REALISM IN THE CONTENTS OF *THE LAND OF LAUGHS*, *BONES OF THE MOON* AND *SLEEPING IN FLAME*

1. The time and place of action

In the beginning of *The Land of Laughs*, the action takes place at a school campus, and later in New York, but mostly in **Galen**, a small town in Missouri, where the main protagonist, Thomas Abbey, travels with the aim of writing a biography of his favourite author. It is said to be a typical provincial town with all the inhabitants knowing each other. At the beginning of the story, Thomas and his friend Saxony Gardner do not suspect that the place differs from what it seems. They are cordially welcomed by the Galeners. "As Thomas Abbey observes, Galen, Missouri looks like a picture painted by Norman Rockwell, the sentimental portrayer of small-town American life" as Gillespie states. By writing about the places like New York, the narrator introduces the elements of the **common world**. This is a feature of magical realist writing that is visible in Angela Carter's *Nights at the Circus*, Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* and undoubtedly Gabriel Garcia Márquez' *One Hundred Years of Solitude.*

"Galen is a small American mid-western town preserved from the 1940s", as Gillespie describes it. The town looks as if nothing has changed for decades. But the town has its secrets. The most important of them all is that some parts of the town and almost all inhabitants were in fact created by Marshall France and his magical powers. He is thus compared to God, the creator who has the power not only to create the world but to control it as well. But Anna France, Marshall's daughter, says about her father that "he didn't create the town – only the people" (LL 194). Galen is described in

a very detailed way. This is how Thomas depicts his and Saxony's arrival in the town:

> All of the sudden we were there. Coming over a small rise, we passed a white house with two thin pillars and a dentist's shingle hanging from a lamppost on the front lawn. Then there was the Dagenais Lawnmower Repair Service in a blue-silver tin shack, a Montgomery Ward outlet store, a firehouse with its big doors swung open but no trucks inside, and a grain store that was advertising a special this week on the fifty-pound bag of Purina Dog Chow (LL 63-4).

The town seems to be small and cozy. Nothing much happens there. All the inhabitants know each other very well. But the arrival of Thomas and Saxony is of much importance to the Galeners. It is quite obvious that not many people visit that sleepy town and that is why everyone gets interested in the newcomers.

> Everyone must have been either eating dinner or out because on one was in sight as we walked toward Anna's. It was almost a little eerie. The Houses were mostly Midwest-solid. Picket fences and aluminum siding and some metal statues on the lawn. Mailboxes with names like Calder and Schreiner, any my favourite – 'The Bob and Leona Burns Castle' (LL 83).

Thomas and Saxony are invited to dinner by Anna France. Her house is also depicted with care and great detail:

> Huge, brown, Victorian, full of intricate gingerbread woodwork, and on closer view, small stained-glass windows. Hedges in front that were full and carefully trimmed. Even though it was a kind of dark cocoa brown, the house looked freshly painted (LL 83).

The narrator even compares this building to his grandmother's house, giving the impression that the house of Marshall France may be a part of reality. But this house is very mysterious. Thomas thinks that "the house seemed to have separate upstairs and downstairs personalities: pure up, cluttered and crazy down" (LL 94). Marshall France's old study is suspiciously clean and tidy. Thomas, who seeks some traces for his book, feels really

disappointed when seeing that there is “literally nothing in the room but a large oak rolltop desk and a swivel chair tucked into the leg hole” (LL 94).

A few days later, Thomas is shown a strange little house in the woods. It turns out to be the house of Dorothy Lee, who, according to Anna France, was described in Marshall’s book as the Queen of Oil. Thomas feels really disappointed when in that house, and later says:

> The house, if you could call it that, was a crudely built wood thing that sagged to one side as if a giant had leaned on it. If there had been glass in the two windows, it was gone now, replaced by pine boards nailed across in an X pattern. There was a crude porch missing several floorboards. The step leasing up to it was split in half (LL 108).

Inside the building, there is almost nothing: “no sink, no stove, doodads, plates, clothes on hooks, nothing”, only “a raw wood table … two dying chairs” (LL 109). Nevertheless Thomas feels awkward when being told the story of the house and his owner. Earlier, he did not suspect that he could ever find any traces from any of the France’s books in reality.

When Thomas is told the extraordinary truth that almost all the inhabitants of Galen were created by France, he realizes that the town is not what he was told at the beginning. This is surely the **“irreducible element”** in the story that Faris called the most important feature of a magical realist texts. Thomas gets to know that:

> As long as things went according to France’s plans, Anna and the Galeners had little contact with the outside world. once in a while one of them went shopping or to a movie in a nearby town, and the Galen stores were constantly being replenished by trucks from St. Louis and Kansas City, but that was about all. For appearance’ s sake, there was a real-estate office in town, but the only things for sale there were in other towns. What wasn’t privately owned belonged to the town of Galen, and nothing was ever for sale. Nothing for rent either (LL 199).

Nobody from the outside world is allowed to settle in Galen. But when learning the truth about the town, Thomas is surprised to see that the town is just an ordinary place, although its inhabitants were brought to life by

means of some magical power. This makes the people of Galen similar to the inhabitants of Macondo, from Márquez' *One Hundred Years of Solitude*. The Galeners seem to be a unified group that can be described with the term "**collective consciousness**". Galeners share the same beliefs and traditions. Thomas states:

> Galen was a lower-middle-class town in the heart of Missouri, made up of hardworking people who went bowling on Wednesday night, loved *The Bionic Woman*, ate ham sandwiches, and were saving up to buy new Roto-tillers or a vacation cottage out on Lake Tekawitha (LL 203).

In *The Land of Laughs* the action takes place in Galen, which seems to be a magical land. In contrast, the action in *Bones of the Moon* takes place simultaneously in the contemporary United States and Europe and in a fantastic land called **Rondua** which appears in Cullen's dreams.

This mixing of the two worlds, the real and the fantastic, also gives the novel a sense of magical realism. The scenery and the events happening there are mostly fantastic (Oramus "Nocne wyprawy" 72). Cox claims that "the adventures in Rondua would make a fine fantasy novel on their own, but because Carroll inserts them into his realistic overlay they become even stranger", making the audience doubt in their perception of the world. The detailed descriptions of the European cities as well as New York introduce the **common world** into the story. In *Bones of the Moon*, the real world and the fantastic mingle.

Oramus claims *Bones of the Moon* is definitely not a fantasy novel since the realistic and the fantastic worlds mingle ("Nocne wyprawy" 72). The supernatural elements from Cullen's dreams move to other people's dreams first, then to reality, and then threaten Cullen and her newly-born daughter (Oramus "Nocne wyprawy" 72).

The first of the Cullen's "Yasmuda dreams", as her husband calls them, comes to her when the couple is still in Milan. Cullen remembers Rondua in great detail after getting up. "Rondua illuminates as well as exasperates, giving us glimpses not only of Cullen's subconscious (her guilt over the abortion and her fears for her present pregnancy), but also events in the 'real'

world without the filter of Cullen's narration" as Cox writes. In Rondua, there are all kinds all kinds of extraordinary objects and places. Cullen writes:

> The bottle-glass path turned a sharp corner and directly ahead were six glowing orange shoes, two stories high at the very least. They were men's Oxford shoes and were connected to tweed-covered legs as thick and high as California redwood trees that climbed up through the clouds (BM 199–200).

In all three novels, *The Land of Laughs*, *Bones of the Moon* and *Sleeping in Flame*, **time is disrupted**. Like in Carter's *Nights at the Circus*, in *The Land of Laughs* there are some moments during which time seems to pass more quickly or slowly than usual. Time is not linear in the novel. This is starkly seen in the fact that Thomas is able to bring to Galen his idol, despite the fact that Marshall France is dead. Time is circular in the novel and that explains why France's arrival to Galen is possible.

In *Bones of the Moon* time and place of action frequently change. Clute points out that "the four provinces of Rondua are called Strokes, as though space were time" ("Razor Dancing"). In spite of the fact that Cullen is sleeping when in Rondua, she seems to be really traveling to the magical island since when being there, she remembers everything from her real life. She is surprised by everything that she sees there. This is visible in her conversation with Martio the Camel:

> 'Where's that plane going now?'
> 'To the Happiness of Seals. That's in the south of the Second Stroke.'
> 'Oh.' I nodded and tried to look as if I knew what he was talking about. Seals? Stroke? Welcome to Rondua! (BM 51).

The incorporation of some sayings, words or characters from the real world into the world of dreams is quite natural, but the opposite process is not possible or probable (Bieńkowska 55). Bieńkowska claims that the mingling of the realistic, everyday-like events with the fantastic, the detailed way of describing both the real and the supernatural and the disruption of time and space prove *Bones of the Moon* to be definitely of the

magical realist genre (55). She regards *Bones of the Moon* as definitely not a symbolic novel.

Since Rondua is a land from Cullen's dreams, everything is possible there. It is definitely a magical land presented from a **childlike perspective**:

> Martio the Camel often acted as tour guide, pointing out blue pterodactyls that flew in the distance one morning, telling us to watch closely, another day as the sun began to spilt in half to mark the end of another Ronduan month (BM 57).

There are lots of different objects there, like the machines or strange-looking landscapes:

> The North was dark with clouds and impeding war. As soon as we crossed the border, we met up with dragoons of Heeg, the lizard King. These soldiers rode giant iguanas the color of stone and grass and were dressed in garish uniforms that reminded me of Hapsburg outfits Danny and I had seen in a military museum in Italy (BM 97).

In that short fragment, the readers can see that the two worlds, the real and the fantastic, are linked like in Carter's *Nights at the Circus*. Even in her dream, Cullen remembers all her real life, her family and friends.

In *Sleeping in Flame*, Walker is able to travel in time in his dreams, discovering increasingly more details of his previous lives. He also has visions in which he communicates with others, like Venasque, a man of immense power:

> Study your dreams. Follow up on what you learn from them. Maris doesn't know it yet, but she's pregnant. You must find your father before the baby is born. Your real father, not the man in Atlanta. He is in Vienna and watches everything you do. He isn't your friend. He loved you once, but doesn't anymore. Be very careful with him." "Who is he?" "The potato seller. Melchior Kroll. The midget. All of them before, someone else this time. When he loved you, he gave you some of his powers. They're coming now, that is part of the problem, but you've got to learn to use them right or else you'll lose when you face him. Look at your hand." There were no lines on my right palm. Or my left. No fingerprints, no lifeline, no love line. Only the soft pink hills of flesh and a purple trace of veins beneath the skin (SF 197).

Time is disrupted very often in the novel. Walker moves to his previous incarnations, being able to live their lives. With their magical abilities, both Walker and his "father" can communicate, ignoring the limitations of time and space:

> Is my real father magic?" "Yes, but so are you. Even more so, because of your relationship with Maris. Your father couldn't do that. You can, because you're more in this world than his now… Don't miss your chance, Walker. Don't let him hurt your family. He's a jealous son of a bitch. He has been for four hundred years (SF 199).

Interestingly, the four hundred year period mentioned by Venasque mark the time the Grimm fairy tale was written, the story behind the creation of Rumpelstiltskin and the birth of the boy.

2. The characters

2.1. Main characters

As one element that is clearly typical of Carroll's novels is the use of a **child's perspective** and attributes. Oramus points out the marionettes from *The Land of Laughs* and the magical land Rondua from *Bones of the Moon* (Nocne wyprawy 73). Rondua is a land from a child's imagination and dreams.

"Carroll puts his characters on stage, vivid, talking, interesting" as Gillespie states. The readers get to know Thomas Abbey during his conversation with a girl he dates that day. **Thomas Abbey** is unable to deal with the memory of his father (Gillespie). The novel opens with a question that is directed to the main protagonist of the novel: "Look, Thomas, I know you've probably been asked this question a million times before, but what was it really like to be Stephen Abbey's ------' '---- Son?" (LL 13). From that short conversation, the readers may learn that Thomas is the son of someone important and he is talking to a girl who in fact does not know him well, but wants to get some information from him. Thomas shows her his collection of masks,

soon realizing that she does not share his interest. He admires his masks, which are visible even when he touches them: "I went over to the Marquesa and touched her pink-peach chin softly. 'This one, the Marquesa, I saw in a little side-street store in Madrid. She was the first one I bought.'" (LL 15). The masks arouse an uncanny effect, they are surely not ordinary objects and seem to be of some magical importance.

Thomas wants to write a biography of Marshall France. His interest in the writer soon evolves into an obsession. "This obsession leads him, via a Marshall France rare volume, to Saxony Gardner, a woman whose obsession with the dead author is as strong as his" as Gillespie states. Thomas describes his fascination as follows: "My dream was to write a biography of Marshall France, the very mysterious, very wonderful author of the greatest children's books in the world" (LL 16). This obsession with Marshall France makes Thomas similar to Jack Walser, the character from Carter's *Nights at the Circus*. Similarly to Jack, Thomas is a man of reason who wants to write about the object of his interest and explain the phenomenon of popularity. Thomas calls the day he received his first book by Marshall a "momentous day" (LL 16). He treated the book as a precious and magical object, and even wanted to sleep with it. Thomas believed the first line of the book, "The Land of Laughs was lit by eyes that saw the lights that no one's seen", to be of magical power and he "expected everyone in the world to know that line" (LL 16–17). When he was a young boy, Thomas also valued a letter written to him by his idol, Marshall France. Thomas' idea of writing a biography of Marshall France is strengthened after he finds one of his idol's book in a bookstore. He describes the situation:

> I was browsing through a rare-book store one afternoon when I saw on the sales desk the Alexa edition of France's *Peach Shadows* with the original Van Walt illustrations. The book had been out of print for years for some reason, and I hadn't read it. I staggered over to the desk and, after wiping my hands on my pants, picked it up reverently (LL 19).

It is clear that Thomas looks up to Marshall France, appreciates all the author wrote, and feels honoured to try writing his biography. Despite be-

ing the son of a famous actor, Thomas is a rather shy person who does not like being looked on. He says:

> I'm the kind of person who'll order a steak and when the waiter brings fish instead, I'll take it just to avoid making a scene. I hate arguments in public, birthday cakes brought to you in restaurants, tripping or farting or anything out in the open that makes people stop and stare at you for the longest seconds in existence (LL 69).

Thomas is probably one of the biggest fans of Marshall France. He states:

> What was so attractive to me about Marshall France? His vision. His ability to create one world after another that silently enchanted you, frightened you, made you wide-eyed or suspicious, made you hide your eyes or clap your hands in glee. And he did it continually (LL 171).

At some point in the novel, Thomas tells an extraordinary story in which he suggests he may have some magical abilities. This is linked with his interest in some old fountain pens. Despite being an educated man, he does not exclude the possibility of the existence of magic. Thomas says that one day he was walking through a flea market in France and saw a man looking at an old Montblanc pen Thomas was interested in. He says:

> I stopped in my tracks and started a chant inside of me: PUT IT DOWN, DON'T BUY IT! … His back was still to me, but my loathing was so intense that it must have pierced him somehow, because all of sudden he put the pen down, looked fearfully over his shoulder at me, and scurried away (LL 20).

The scene may be an incident without much importance, but considering that Thomas will later bring his favourite author to life by means of writing, the readers are uncertain if they should believe in Thomas' magical abilities or just think of it as a coincidence. This aspect of the story, the readers' uncertainty whether the magic is really happening, makes *The Land of Laughs* similar to *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, in which Remedios' ascent into heaven is depicted as an event in which some can doubt.

Even though in all probability Thomas has some magical abilities which he even does not realize, he is not a brave person, accustomed to supernatural or scaring events. He says:

> I do not like: horror movies, horror stories, nightmares, black things. I teach Poe only because I'm told to by my department chairman, and it takes me two weeks to get over 'The Telltale Heart" every time I read it. Yes, I like masks and things that are different and fantastic, but enjoying the almost-real and fearing the monstrous are very different things. Remember, please, that I'm a coward (LL 91).

Saxony Gardner and Thomas seem to be a **mirror reflection** of the same person. They were both raised as only children, two weird children seeking their own company. Thomas' collection of masks is as precious to him as the marionettes to Saxony. Thomas realizes also that Saxony is as much into Marshall France as he, saying:

> I wondered then for the first time if France really appealed only to weirdos like us: puppet-obsessed girls in hospitals and analyzed-since-five boys whose fathers' shadows were stronger than the kids' (LL 25).

Saxony tells the story of how she got interested in France's books:

> When I was little I was playing with some kids near a pile of burning leaves. Somehow I tripped and fell into it, and the burns on my legs were so bad that I had to be in the hospital for a years. My mother brought me his books and I read them until the covers came off. Marshall France books, and books on puppets and marionettes (LL 25).

At some point in their lives, in their childhood, both Thomas and Saxony needed some support, some place they could escape from their health problems, in the case of Saxony, and emotional problems, in the case of Thomas. "Saxony and Thomas arrive in Galen, Missouri, as a research team", as Gillespie writes. But soon Thomas starts an affair with Anna France, the daughter of the dead author. She lives in France's house filled with the objects that belonged to her father. She seems to be the guard of his memory.

When Thomas starts a relationship with Anna, Saxony decides to leave the town, but, strangely enough, Thomas discovers that without her, he cannot continue writing. She turns out to be his only muse that can stimulate him to write. But Saxony is in great danger since she is not accepted by the local community and is not allowed to stay in Galen. Thomas is told that if Saxony stays in the town, she will surely get sick and die. Thus he discovers the dark side of the community.

Saxony is much more important for the process of writing than anyone suspects. Contrary to the chronicles, Saxony gets sick after leaving Galen and without her in the town, strange events happen. The magic is clearly not coming from Thomas alone: it most likely arises from the love between Thomas and Saxony.

Despite being dead, and hance having no physical presence, **Marshall France** is one of the most important characters of the book. He holds the power to control the Galeners' lives, since before he died he wrote the chronicles of Galen, in which he described the fate of the inhabitants of his town, with the most important dates and key facts. He managed to separate the town people from the rest of the world. But some time after France's death some unsuspected events happened: people stopped dying in the proper order. As such, Anna France decided to find an author talented enough to write a biography of her father. But her motives were even stranger. She not only wanted someone to straighten things up in the *Galen Journals*, but also to bring her father back to life so that he could continue writing the chronicles of Galen. This person was Thomas Abbey. Soon after his arrival to Galen and the beginning of his writing, the events start to return to their intended order, as written by Marshall France. France seems to be a very mysterious person; the information Thomas gets from the publisher, Mr Louis, is sometimes contradictory to that provided by Anna. There is a conversation between Thomas and Anna, in which she says:

> 'My father loved living in Galen. His parents sent him to America before the war because they were Jews and they were afraid of Hitler long before most people. Father's brother, Isaac, was killed in one of the concentration camps.' 'David Louis told me that your father was an only child.' (LL 90)

Marshall's attitude towards animals is a mystery, too. According to Mr Louis, during his visit to Galen, Marshall France and Anna had at least two cats. But being asked if she likes cats, Anna says: "Cats? No, never! I hate cats." (LL 91).

At some point of the story, Anna tells Thomas that Van Walt, the mysterious author of the illustrations from all the France's books, was in fact Marshall France himself. She states: "The real Van Walt was a childhood friend of his who was later killed by the Nazis. Father took his name when he started doing the drawings for the books" (LL 152).

Anna France is one of the most powerful characters in *The Land of Laughs*. Apart from Richard Lee, she is the only real human in Galen, but to the Galeners, she seems to be an almost God-like creature. This, together with the fact that she is Marshall France's daughter makes her the leader of the local community. Even though she differs much from the rest, since her fate was not written by Marshall France, she is the core of the local community. She resembles the members of the Buendia family from Márquez' story in that respect. She is an attractive woman in her late thirties or early forties. Importantly, she is very respected by the Galeners, who are also afraid of her. She is the one to decide whether Thomas is allowed to write a biography of her father. Galeners seem to share the same beliefs as Anna and agree with her on everything.

When it comes to the characters, according to Clute, *Bones of the Moon* focuses on a "small family groups". Cullen James, who is the narrator of this novel "seems to have created an island of stability for herself on the slippery meniscus of the world". **The dichotomy between the real and the fantastic** is visible in the attitudes towards life represented by the two main characters in the story. **Cullen** is rational and sensible, whereas her husband Daniel seems to believe in the wonders offered by the world. Danny's perspective is that of a child. Cullen states:

> Life was wonderful – or at least full of wonders – for Danny James. He would look at a junkyard and be thrilled by the weird mix of colors there. When he prodded me into looking, I would see a junkyard. Not a good or a bad one, simply a junkyard! Yet his wonder was not annoying or particularly conta-

> gious either. Most of the time you didn't even know it was there until you looked up at him and saw those quiet brown eyes staring at whatever it was, a slight, pleased smile on his face (BM 23).

Strangely enough, it is Cullen who experiences certain magical events, not Daniel. She undergoes a metamorphosis from a person who does not believe in magic into a believer with some magical abilities. The readers meet Cullen when she decides to change her life completely. She says:

> I … realized for the zillionth time that I had never been anywhere in the world outside of Chicago, New Brunswick, New Jersey and New York City. The only Greece I knew was *souvlaki* and posters of the Parthenon in a tired Greek restaurant I liked on the 46th Street (BM 33).

After the incident with the cup of coffee, which after her touch turns very hot, and the incident with Weber Gregston, Cullen is worried and frightened. Her friend, Eliot Kilbertus, who believes in the supernatural, asks Maria Miller, a famous palmist to examine Cullen. Strangely enough, when looking at the picture of Cullen's hand, she discovers nothing extraordinary. Maria says:

> I'm very surprised you're having any kind of trouble. Everything in your hand says you're all right. Your marriage is balanced, but you already know that. ….Your children have inherited that healthy balance. They also trust you, which is extremely important (BM 91–2).

Strangely, while reading Cullen's palm, Maria sees that in addition to her daughter, named Mae, Cullen also has a son named Pepsi, who is very important to the story. He appears in all her "Yasmuda dreams". Cullen says: "He looked like a little Irishman: curly brown hair, blue eyes full of curiosity and the devil" (BM 47). Cullen seems to believe that the boy is in fact the child the she aborted and after some time spend with him in her dreams she wants to rescue him.

During their meeting Maria Miller says to Cullen: "There are signs of a very strong fantasy life in your hand, that's for sure. Your imagination is vivid and it probably carries over into your night dreams" (BM 94). She also says:

> All I can tell you, Cullen, is that your hand shows no powers. So I don't think they're *your* powers if they do exist. In your palm it shows you're protected by others, but not by powers. Whoever it is, *they* won't let anything happen to you, if it is at all possible. … No, I don't see any powers here. A giant amount of love, but no powers (BM 94).

In one of her dreams, Cullen and her son Pepsi travel to Ophir Zik, the City of the Dead. It is there that Cullen realizes who the boy really is. Pepsi says to her: "This is where I was before you came back, Mom. I lived here. You killed me once. Don't you remember that?" (BM 133). That makes Cullen very sad and touched. She realizes that Pepsi is the child she aborted. She says: "Pepsi was the child I had had scraped out of me four years before on a sunny summer day. My abortion. My son. Getting rid of my evidence. My son – my dead, wonderful son" (BM 133). She understands that her role on Rondua is to do everything to help her son leave the city of dead forever. She believes that she is given a second chance. She can save her child only in Rondua. She says that "in real life that didn't happen. In Rondua, I would save my child" (BM 134). Cullen's dreaming about Rondua and her son can be a reaction to abortion that she had years before. Cullen's friend, Eliot, says:

> Everyone works out their troubles in their dreams. It's cheap analysis, you know? You had an abortion and you've felt horrible about it ever since. Somewhere in your mind you carried around this big bucket full of guilt, even though I think you're nuts to have done that. Anyway, with these Rondua dreams you're getting it out of your head. great! Help that little Pepsi and find the Bones of the Moon and you're homefree" (BM 143).

That words are supposed to calm Cullen down, but all the magical events that she witnesses in her real life make her doubt in Eliot's words.

After Cullen says Eliot that in one of her dreams she saw the face of Alvin Williams on the sky, he states:

> You're like a casebook history, Cullen. You keep thinking that dreaming about Rondua is bad for you, but you're so wrong. Some little catharsis faucet inside you turns on each night and you get to wash away every bit of guilt and fear and … everything bad in your life from Day One until now (BM 189).

Eliot is really excited when hearing that after that dream Cullen discovers her magical abilities. He believes in the supernatural so has the facility to accept the marvellous. Cullen knows the details of Eliot's life and predicts that Daniel's mother will soon recover. She admits:

> Remember you said you thought I had powers? That that's how I knocked down Weber? Well, you're right. I have them. I can do things I don't want to do. I guess I really did zap Weber. Then I took the zap off him with a magic word. Then there was the gypsy woman in Milan (BM 190).

The motif of **metamorphosis** is very important in Rondua. Culen and Pepsi are told by Mr Tracy that they changed during their stay in Rondua. Cullen metamorphoses in both Rondua and in reality. Her son, Pepsi, does so as well. Gaining the Bones of the Moon, he becomes stronger, braver and more sensible. He even acquires the ability to read people's thoughts. He appears to transform from a small happy child into a rational and mature man, but also becomes sadder and smiles less often. He understands that even if he beats Jack Chili, he will have to part with his beloved mother, whom he missed very much while in Ophir Zik, the City of the Dead.

The main character from *Sleeping in Flame*, Walker, turns out to be drawn from a fairy tale. In Grimm's *Rumpelstiltskin*, the infant is abducted and treated as a means of payment for the favour bestowed by Rumpelstiltskin. Making the baby, now a grown up man, the main character of the novel, Carroll retells the well-known fairy tale and adds a new ending. **The dichotomy between the real and the fantastic** is realized similarly to the abovementioned novels. The love between Walker, a man with magical abilities, and Maris York, an utterly feminine mortal, enables the man to confront his "father" and win:

> It's good being "only human" again. There are times when I wish I still had some magic left. For example, the morning I told Maris the story of what really happened, and she got so angry I was afraid she was going to start bleeding again. She didn't, though. After her initial explosion, she sat up in that big white bed and said, "I couldn't have done anything anyway, could I?" "Maris, you did everything! Your drawing showed me how to beat him."

> "Because I wrote 'Breathing you' at the bottom? Big deal." "No, because you showed me into a part of myself that had been closed through all my lives. If you'd only shown me his name it wouldn't have done any good. That would have only given us equal power. Showing me the city showed me his name and what I should do with it. It was clear in an instant. *You* did that. You showed me how. I couldn't have found it alone (SF 300).

Finding the missing elements of his identity, Walker is finally aware of the magical powers that he possesses and is able to prevail over his "father". The figure of *Breath*, as the man is called, is a midget, a man who "needs a surrogate gestational mother, a borrowed uterus" because he cannot conceive a baby (Rand). He wishes to compensate for the inability to have an emotional and sexual relationship with a woman by transferring his devotion to a baby boy.

2.2. Episodic characters

In *The Land of Laughs*, all the **Galeners**, apart from Anna France and Richard Lee, were created by Marshall France. They are aware of that and almost none of them wants to change its fate. Everyone is happy to live there. They live as long as Marshall France wrote them to. Anna says to Thomas:

> Remember that when one of *them* dies, it isn't the same thing as when a normal person dies. When we go, there is a chance that there's a heaven or a hell. For the people in Galen, Father didn't create an afterlife for them, so there is no question in their minds. They just disappear. (LL 195).

She also adds:

> since they know that nothing comes afterward for them, they don't worry about it. Nobody is going to judge them to throw them into a fiery pit. … As a result, most of them spend their lives trying to be as happy as possible (LL 195).

Obviously, what she means may not be true. But the latter talks to them, makes Thomas realize that the inhabitants of Galen are members of a unified society who ultimately accept their fate. Any person created by Marshall France is allowed to leave Galen for not more than a week, otherwise he/she is

doomed to die. The Galeners can lead their lives as they want, but the most important moments and decisions are written in the books. To his surprise, Thomas realizes that the Galeners are satisfied with their lives. He writes:

> The more people I asked, the more it seemed that the vast majority were content with France's 'way,' and horrified that suddenly, cruelly, they had been turned over to the clumsy hands of fate. But there were a few who didn't want to know what would happen to them. That was all right. The way it had been arranged, years ago, was that the oldest member of each family was responsible for a detailed copy of the history and future history of his family that had been given to him by France. Anyone over eighteen who wanted to know what was going o happen could go to the 'elder' and ask any question (LL 203–4).

Although Anna does not fully identify with them, she nevertheless feels rather superior. Despite some differences, Galen can be in fact compared to Macondo from Márquez' *One Hundred Years of Solitude*. The town people know each other very well and share knowledge privy to themselves. They are characterized by the **facility to accept the marvellous** in their lives. This feature makes *The Land of Laughs* similar to commonly-known fairy tales in which the characters do not question supernatural elements. Every arrival to the small community is visibly seen and the strangers are viewed with care. Newcomers have to respect the laws of the citizens.

At some point of the novel, Mrs Fletcher tells Thomas the story of a girl called Susy Dagenais who decided to leave Galen because she was unhappy, feeling "like a freak in the circus" (LL 223). Mrs Fletcher tells Thomas that after a couple of days, Susy died even though it happened during the life of Marshall France, who could have prevented it. He did not do anything to save Susy. "He used her as a kind of hideous example" as Thomas states (LL 224).

Bones of the Moon includes several characters that are typical of the real world, especially those living in New York. Cullen presents her parents or neighbours in great detail, stating that they are typical American citizens, not differing much from the others. When it comes to the characters from Rondua, Cullen describes different kind of creatures from the children's dreams and visions.

Animals are important characters in all the books of Jonathan Carroll. The author considers animals, especially dogs, to be very wise and possess some human features, which make both *The Land of Laughs* and *Bones of the Moon* similar to fairy tales full of animals attributed with the human characteristics. In *The Land of Laughs*, the two dogs that appear in the story, Petals and Nails, are, in fact, humans that were turned into animals by the great Marshall France. He decided to punish the two for abusing their child, but not wanting to do them serious harm, he made them into dogs. After Thomas and Saxony's arrival to Galen, the dogs, and especially Nails, become observers of the newcomers. They are spying on the couple and, being animals, they are never suspected of doing so. From the very beginning, Thomas takes to Nails very much. He says: "I've never been crazy for either dogs or cats, but one look at Nails and it was love at first sight" (LL 77). Thomas does not find anything unusual about the dog, although he realizes that during Thomas' conversation with Mrs Fletcher the face of Nails "was expressionless, although his eyes were following everything" (LL 77). When seeing the other bull terrier, Petals, for the first time, Thomas thinks: "I had never seen bull terriers before today, and then the two of them within a few hours" which suggests that the presence of these two dogs is extraordinary (LL 84). Anna France explains the presence of the bull terriers, saying: You'll see a lot of them around here. We're a little bull-terrier enclave. They were the only dogs my father ever liked" (LL 85). It turns out that Nails and Petals are in fact a married couple, Gert and Wilma Inkler, who were turned into animals by Marshall France.

In *Bones of the Moon*, animals are the main characters that live in the magical island, Rondua, so they obviously have some magical connotations. The animals that welcome Pepsi and Cullen on Rondua, Mr Tracy, Felina the Wolf and Martio the Camel, are very tall, larger than humans. This is what Cullen knows about these animals:

> Felina the Wolf told us the story of her ancestors; of how they rose from the sea as red fish and gave their scales back once they had reached land. It turned out that all of the animals in Rondua had metamorphosed from one species to another when they came here (BM 56).

There are also evil characters in the novels, the most representational being Jack Chili from *Bones of the Moon.* According to Cox, "Jack Chili, the antagonist in the dream world, is the epitome of chaotic evil" in the novel. Cullen first hears of him from Weber Gregston, who also dreams about Rondua. Weber says: "Mama, you don't want to know him, *ever*' (146). **Alvian Williams** and **Jack Chili** from Cullen's and Weber's dreams are in fact one character. He considers himself to be a god-like figure that is in a position to control other people's lives. Alvin kills his mother and sister, thus showing his power. After Cullen's decision to stop answering his letters, Alvin does not want to end their correspondence. He feels angry and lonely. Before the meeting with Jack Chili, Cullen asks Mr Tracy who or what Jack is. Mr Tracy answers:

> He's a man with wings. He's a bird with fins. I can't tell you what you'll see when you see him, Cullen, because he's different for everyone. When I was young and saw him for the first time, he was a book with the same word on every page (BM 159).

From that short fragment, it is understandable that Jack Chili means something different for every person looking at him. He is just a symbol of the evil in the world and that is why he is presented as the worst person or object that one can imagine. For Cullen, the symbol of evil and crime is Alvin Williams and that is why he appears in Rondua.

Before the meeting with Jack Chili, one of the characters, Stastny Panenka tells Cullen: "Jack Chili gives names to things. Half the time no one knows what they mean except him. He calls that the Café Deutschland. It's a madhouse for children" (BM 184). Cullen realizes that Jack makes use of the children's nightmares: "He taps into what they dream and chooses the parts which he wants to bring into being" (BM 184). Knowing this, Cullen is really frightened. Her son is about to fight the visions from children's nightmares. The elements of horror in Carroll's novels are presented in various ways. According to Oramus, everything can be dangerous in today's world, food can be poisonous and friends can be villains in disguise ("Nocne wyprawy" 72).

Gillespie writes that “innocent characters are particularly hard-hit: Eliot and Cullen in Bones of the Moon and Saxony Gardner in The Land of Laughs”. This is a very surprising element of the two novels, and may be linked with an irreducible element in them. The magic and evil happens when the characters do not suspect it.

In *Sleeping in Flame*, there appears the character of Venasque, a man with fantastic abilities, a shaman who “teaches people to fly” (SF 115).

> “Can you help me, Mr. Venasque?” “I can teach you to fly. That’s the first step.” “What do you mean, *fly*? Really, like a bird?” I almost heard him smile. “Birds don’t fly, Mr. Easterling. They live. Part of their way of living is to travel off the ground. But ask a bird how he does that and he’ll look at you funny. The same when someone asks you how to walk. Put one foot in front of the other. Sure, that’s the mechanics of it, but how do you _walk_? Or find the right balance to ride a two-wheeler bike? You do it. You find it. I can teach you where it is in you.” “And you do this with anyone?” “Anyone who can pay.” “How much is it?” “A thousand dollars.” “That's not much to fly.” “It’s not such a hard thing to do. If you’re not satisfied at the end, I’ll give you your money back.” “Why do I want you to live out in the desert, speak like a guru, and tell me it takes years to master the art?” “You read _Siddhartha_ and Castaneda too many times. Come and see me and we’ll talk some more. Listen, ‘Miami Vice’ is on in five minutes. A show I never miss. Come and see me” (SF 116–17).

Venasque’s abilities are well-known in society, albeit accompanied by a certain disbelief. There is not even a trace of questioning them.

Some characters have been copied from fairy tales, like the midget who is said to be an archetype of Rumpelstiltskin or the Wild sisters, Dortchen and Lisette, the authors of the story that the Grimm brothers wrote into their fairy tale, who are magically transported to the *real* world by Walker:

> The two women looked at each other. Lisette told Dortchen to begin: _Once upon a time there was a little man whose name was Breath. It was a strange name, but because he had such strong magic inside, whoever had created him chose a name no human would ever guess._ Papa let go of my lapel. _The little man was content with this magic for a time, but as he grew older, he realized it was not enough in life. What one really needed was love, especially if you hap-

> pened to be Breath, who was immortal._ _One day he was out walking and saw a beautiful young maiden sitting at a spinning wheel in a barn. She was very poor, but so beautiful that the little man fell instantly in love._ "_What is your name?" he asked brusquely, not wanting her to know that already he loved her with all his soul._ "_My name is Alexandra, but I'm so sad that I have almost forgotten it" (SF 294–95).

Magically, Dortchen and Lisette are able to retell the fairy tale, altering the ending:

> "Dortchen, would you finish the story now?" She straightened her dress in her lap and took a deep breath: _Now, the little man named the boy Walter because he was a human child and needed a human name. But because he loved him so, Breath also taught him all the magic he knew. The boy grew up knowing what it was to be human, as well as knowing what it was to possess great magic._ _The two of them lived together happily for many years. But even Breath, magic as he was, made one mistake. And he made it because there were many human things he could never understand. He allowed Walter to grow up! Naturally, when that happened, the boy fell in love with a pretty young maiden. He told his Papa that he wanted to marry and start a family of his own. Breath couldn't accept the thought of losing his only love. He told Walter that if he did marry, he would kill him. But Walter was young and very much in love, as his magical father had once been with Alexandra. Walter ignored his father and married the girl anyway._" "What is this? What do you mean, they created me?" "Listen."

Walker's ability to transport the women to contemporary times are never questioned in the novel. None of the characters is surprised by that fact.

3. The events

"Magic is not sweet and wish-fulfilling in the Jonathan Carroll scheme of things. It falls upon his characters like a curse" as Gillespie writes. Critics call *The Land of Laughs* "a modern adult fairy-tale" in which magic is visibly present. And this is visible in the accident that happens in Galen. Thomas writes:

> Early morning in Galen, Missouri. A few cars drove by, and I yawned. Then a little kid passed, licking an ice-cream cone and running his free hand along the top of Mrs. Fletcher's fence. Tom Sawyer with a bright green pistachio cone. I dreamily watched him and wondered how anyone could eat ice cream at eight o'clock in the morning. Without looking either way, the boy started across the street and was instantly punched into the air by a pickup truck. The truck was moving fast, so he was thrown far beyond the view from our window" (LL 99).

But the accident is not as strange as the Galeners' reaction to it. The driver keeps saying that he was not supposed to do it. He says: "All this is *wrong*. I knew it, though." (LL 99). From that point, and from the moment in which Mrs Fletcher keeps asking if the boy was laughing when he was hit by the truck, Thomas knows that the Galeners keep a secret. Joe Jordan, the man who ran into the boy, gives some more clues, saying:

> 'How many things are going to fuck up before we get this straightened out? Did you hear about last night? How many things've there been already, four? Five? No one knows *nothin'* anymore, nothin'! (LL 100).

Thomas decides to talk to Anna about his doubts. She answers to his questions, saying:

> 'All right, I'll tell you. Some terrible things have happened in town in the last six months. A man was electrocuted, a store owner was shot in a holdup, an old woman was blinded last night, and then this thing with the boy today. Galen is Sleepy Town, USA, Thomas. … Things just don't happen here. Suddenly, these nightmares are happening' (LL 113).

Anna tries to convince Thomas there is nothing extraordinary in the behaviour of the people who witnessed the boy's accident. But Thomas cannot believe that Mrs Fletcher, who asked him whether the boy was laughing before he was hit by the car, is in fact insane and needs some medical treatment. Anna says also that Joe Jordan, the driver of the truck, is a Jehovah's Witness, one of a people who consider themselves to be the chosen few. She says that this explains his assertion that he was not supposed to take part in the accident. All these words seem quite unbelievable to Thomas.

The next extraordinary thing is Saxony's discovery. After a walk to the cemetery, she says to Thomas:

> 'I was wandering around, but something was wrong, you know? Just off, or wrong, or not right. Then I realized what. All of the names that I saw there on the stones, or almost all of them, were the names of characters in *The Night Races into Anna*." (LL 122).

This information is really shocking to Thomas. He decides to go to the cemetery together with Saxony. While there, after seeing the names on the gravestones, he comes to the conclusion that Marshall France was not creative enough to invent the names for his books, but that he copied the names of the people he knew from Galen. He says: "Stories, settings, characters, names . . . I wanted it all to be completely their own – to have come only from them; not a graveyard or a phone book or a newspaper. This somehow made France look too human" (LL 123).

Anna's suggestions about the biography of her father are intriguing, too. She says: "Your book has to have it all, or else he won't…" (LL 130). After reading the whole book it is quite obvious that she means the resurrection of Marshall France and his return to Galen. But reading the book for the first time, the readers cannot be sure what Anna has in mind. During that conversation, she also says: "One month to work completely on your own, and then the first chapter has to be done. there isn't much time to spare these days" (LL 132). Anna gives Thomas a limit of time which is very strange to him.

One of the strangest things happens during the dinner at Richard Lee's house. At some point, Sharon, Richard's wife, turns into Krang, a kite that is a character from *The Green Dog's Sorrow*, a book by Marshall France. Thomas describes the scene:

> The first thing I saw when Sharon Lee came out of the kitchen was Sharon Lee. I blinked, and when I looked again, I saw Krang coming out of the kitchen holding a hot pie on a black metal tray. The Van Walt illustration: the wide empty eyes that betray the joy in the mouth's full, happy smile. The red cheeks, red lips, circus-yellow skin … At first I thought that it was

> some kind of remarkable mask that the Lees owned. And I'd thought that they were dumb? Anyone who owned a mask like that, much less put it on at the perfect moment, was brilliant." (LL 150).

This is the first moment when Thomas directly experiences something very strange and supernatural. He is probably the only person able to see Krang. This is a mixing of the two worlds, the real and the fantastic. He is shocked: "It was Sharon and then it was Krang and then it was Sharon" (LL 151). He tries to understand how this could be possible. Anna when told about Thomas' vision, says: "Personally, I think it's a good sign for you. Father is becoming your little dybbuk, and now he'll haunt you all the time, night and day, until you finish his book" (LL 152). She seems to be really satisfied when hearing the news: she has the proof that Thomas is the right person to write the biography.

Yet another event of magical connotation is connected with Nails, the dog that lives at Mrs Fletcher's house. One afternoon Thomas comes home and is shocked to hear the dog speaking while sleeping. He tells Nails that he heard him and asks him to say something else. He describes it:

> He opened his eyes and looked right at me. 'They're home,' he said. 'They'll be in here in a minute.' His voice was clear and understandable, but it sounded like a dwarf's – high and squeezed up through his throat. But he was right. Car doors slammed and I heard the mumble of voices from outside. I looked at him and he blinked (LL 174).

When Thomas starts writing the biography of Marshall France, everything starts to happen in the right order – in the way France meant it to be. Nails, the dog, dies one evening, just as he was supposed to, which makes all the citizens very pleased. This is how Thomas describes the joy after Nails' death:

> Carolyn Cort smiled, reached out, and touched the old woman on the elbow. She looked back and forth between the two of us. … 'Mrs. Fletcher, you'll never believe this. Nails just got killed! He got hit in the fog!" … 'What's today? Is it right, Carolyn? I can't remember!' … 'It's exact, Goosey! It's October 24th!' I looked at Mrs. Fletcher. She was smiling too, just as hard as Carolyn. (177).

Thomas is astonished by the woman's reaction to the news. She feels relieved and very happy, and not as sad as she should be. He says: "They were ecstatic. They hugged and kissed each other as if it was the end of the war. Mrs. Fletcher looked at me and her eyes were brimming with tears. The whole thing was crazy" (LL 177).

After this strange event, Thomas keeps asking more and more questions. That is why Anna decides to tell him the truth about the town. She wants Petals to reveal her real identity. After realizing that Petals is in fact Wilma Inkler, Thomas is shocked. He states: "I started to move up and out of bed. The voice was the same as Nails'. A dwarf's voice, only this one was more macabre and perverse because it was distinctly feminine" (LL 180). Thomas is a rational man who is profoundly moved when asked if he understands what is happening. He answers:

> Understand what, Anna? That you've got talking dogs here? No. The fact that you knew that little boy was going to die? No. The fact that people around here celebrate when a dog gets run over? A talking dog, by the way. No. (LL 180).

When Thomas starts writing his book, all the events happen in Galen as they are written in the *Galen Journals* up the moments when four people get injured in a surprising car accident and one of the inhabitants, Joanne Collins, gives birth to a boy who was supposed to be a girl. After several days, Joanne Collins discovers that her baby boy turned into a bull terrier, which worries the local community very much. Richard Lee describes the events: "All of a sudden all of Marshall's characters are beginning to run together. Not only aren't things going like they're supposed to in the journals, but now they're mixing up all together, changing back and forth (LL 229). Surprisingly, the train appears in Galen as Thomas wrote in his book, so he literally brought Marshall back to Galen, even though he does not see the author at the station.

A mixing of real and supernatural events also occurs in *Bones of the Moon*. In Rondua, Cullen finds all her toys, which is an obvious **disruption in time and space**. Her son is allowed to take two of them to help him accomplish his mission. Seeing all the toys from her childhood, Cullen

says: “It chilled and excited me- they were a treasured, lost picture album of time machine” (BM 52). She seems to be time traveling, as she has not seen these objects for years. The magic from Cullen’s dreams seems to merge into her real life; however, Cullen cannot tell whether it is really happening when it does. She writes about the events that happens at the cafe:

> The cup wasn’t hot and the coffee was barely warm when I sipped it. I clunked it back down on the table and looked out of the window. I hate lukewarm coffee. It has to be hot, *hot*; almost enough to burn your tongue. The waitress was reading a magazine at the counter and I was about o call her over and complain when I looked at the mug. Steam swirled up from it and carried the good smell of fresh ground coffee in it (BM 63).

Cullen is astonished and tries to find a logical explanation for that experience. She decides not to tell her husband about it. Gillespie states that “magic tricks work because they are always surprising”.

Another example of the magic in *Bones of the Moon* is visible in the scene when Cullen meets Weber Gregston, a film director and a screenwriter. Cullen does not like Weber’s aggressive behaviour and defends herself physically when he tries to touch her. She describes it:

> A giant arc of purple light flared out from the middle of my palm. I knew that light –
> I’d seen it in the dreams: Rondua light, Bones of the Moon light. ‘Stay away!’
> The light struck Gregston square in the chest and knocked him back across the room.
> My hand, the light now gone, stayed extended toward him.

Strangely enough, after this incident Weber Gregston starts to dream about Rondua as well. Knocking Weber down, Cullen seems to share her magical powers with him. Cullen says:

> Weber had been places and met creatures in Rondua I didn’t know – the alligator chess bullies, Cloud Hell, the nighttime old lamp market in Harry. He’d been to the Caves of Lem and the Gardener’s Office on the Mountain.

> One of the guides was a crane named A Sport and a Pastime. Later he was accompanied only by a voice named Solaris (BM 146).

After a horrifying dream, Cullen realizes that her life is in danger not only in magical land, but also in reality. She describes the dream:

> The dream began in an empty room which reminded me of a ballet rehearsal hall. middle-aged women in nondescript dresses stood in the center of the room; there must have been twenty of them in all and they had identical long green scarves in their hands, which they swept across the floor in slow choreographed arcs. The end of each scarf was on fire, but the flame didn't grow or consume the silk; it flickered on each end like a lit wick (BM 114).

Cullen feels unusual, and a little frightened, when the women turn to her saying: "You have no right to the Bones. You live *away*!" (BM 114). They are really scary when shouting: "Stay here and your Mae burns. Little scarf. Silken baby" (BM 114).

The motif of death is also present in *Bones of the Moon*. In her real life, Cullen is afraid of her father, who is very ill. She prays for him, not wanting to be separated from him. In her dreams, she witnesses the death of Felina the wolf:

> Felina, …, died quietly one night not long afterward. Mr. Tracy and Martio knew immediately and stood on either side of her body throughout the night. … We didn't have to bury her because the body vanished as soon as Pepsi placed the three Bones on her head, heart and left rear leg. In a few minutes only the Bones lay on the ground where she had slept for the last time (BM 148).

Cullen wonders where all the inhabitants of Rondua go after death. Ophir Zik seems to be a place for humans only and she is curious to know where the animals go. The motif of **death** is very important in *Bones of the Moon.* Cullen, in deciding to have her child aborted, did not suspect that it would affect her so much. After meeting her son in Rondua, she desperately wants to save him. Although *Bones of the Moon* is not a book of political connotations, it does have a hidden message. Cullen's remorse and despair

when realizing that Pepsi is her aborted child make readers understand that the author of the book is clearly against abortion. Cullen is given a chance to rescue her child only in the realm of her dreams.

Strangely enough, Weber Gregston also dreams about Rondua. He asks Cullen to help him deal with that because his dreams worry him. Again she uses the "magical" word, *koukounaries* and it really works. Weber says: "I'm still in Rondua, but it's become … something entirely different. There's no dark stuff anymore, only wonders. Only beautiful, amazing things. I love it" (BM 168).

In Milan, where Daniel takes Cullen for her birthday, Cullen experiences yet another extraordinary event. A gypsy woman going down the street with a baby in her arms calls Cullen in Italian "strega", which means "witch" in English. Cullen is shocked and soon realizes that she had seen the woman among the women dancing with scarves in her dream. Cullen describes that moment:

> She pulled away from the waiter and ran across the floor of the Galleria, looking at me over her shoulder as she ran. I didn't want her to come back, but unconsciously I put up my hand in her direction. No purple light spun out of my hand in a hard arc as it had with Weber Gregston, but a hundred feet across the way the woman lifted off the ground and fell in a screaming heap. Had I done it, or had she simply fallen? (BM 172).

In her last "Yasmuda dream" Cullen finally meets Weber Gregston. It is the moment in which everyone is getting ready for the final battle against Jack Chili, but Weber seems to be very happy, not realizing that the whole community of Rondua is in danger. After that dream, Cullen acquires magical abilities and knows how to control them. She makes use of them in the street, trying to get rid of an aggressive man who tries to flirt with her and persuade her into having sex with him. Consciously, she makes the man stand still with his arms above his head. He is frightened and angry.

The final battle takes place not in magical Rondua, but in New York. The magic elements from Rondua travel to the real world. In the beginning, it is hard to judge whether the action takes place in reality or in Cul-

len's dream. In her dream, Cullen with Pepsi go through the door of Café Deutschland, which turns out to be a magical passage that leads to New York. Cullen writes:

> Dizzied and numb, I walked down the street with my son. I had no way to judge time, but it felt like midafternoon. The sun was moving toward building in the west, a breeze blew that had no freshness in it. Things were silent, no noise or people or signs of life anywhere. That was completely wrong and made me think this was some other 90th Street – a figment of some clever but incomplete imagination (BM 205–6).

Strangely enough, Cullen wakes up just before the final battle between Pepsi and Jack Chili, and realizes that her life, and those of her family, are in danger. She is attacked by Alvin Williams, who murders Eliot and tries to hurt Cullen and her daughter because Cullen refused to answers his letters. Cullen tries to fight him with her magic powers. She writes: "The arc came again, only this time slowly and lazily. It drifted in many colors across the room. Williams put up his hand, caught the light and put it in his mouth. He ate it" (BM 219). The magic is happening in otherwise realistic surrounding, in Cullen's house. The woman is frightened and does everything to save her life. She is then rescued by her son, Pepsi: "A noise like a bomb shook the room and for an instant I thought I had already been hit, because at the same time a white light enveloped us all" (BM 219). Strangely enough, both Cullen and her baby daughter are able to see Pepsi. In the sky there is also a face of Mr Tracy.

Death and rebirth are present in *Sleeping in Flame* not only in connection with bringing to life the characters of Dortchen and Lisette Wild, but also by resurrecting animals:

> The bell rang promptly at seven. I walked down the hall, accompanied as always by Orlando. He walked faster now that he could see, but his sweet personality was still the same. When I opened the door I only saw a big bouquet of flowers wrapped in shiny plastic paper. Tilting his head to one side, he peeked out from behind them and said, "I brought you some flowers. You used to like roses." I smiled and took them. "I still do. That's nice, Papa.

> Come in." I let him pass me and gestured toward the living room. "Dinner's almost ready." He went forward a few steps, but then Orlando began weaving his way in and out between his feet, almost tripping him. "Get out of here! I hate cats!" He put his hand out, fingers spread. Orlando fell over, dead in an instant. I put my hand out, fingers spread, and the cat opened his eyes again. The old man stopped, back to me, and didn't move (SF 293).

Walker and his "father's" magical skills are connected with control over life and death.

Breath makes Walker reborn to make him live his life without falling in love with a woman, a task which he continues to fail.

4. The objects

The Land of Laughs includes several objects that are of great importance to the characters, such as Thomas' masks. In addition, Saxony has a similar interest to Thomas, and has a considerable collection of marionettes. During his first visit at Saxony's home, Thomas realizes that to her the puppets were of great value. He says :

> She talked about Ivo Puhonny and Tony Sarg, Wajang figures and Bunraku, as if we were all best friends. But I liked the excitement in her voice and the incredible similarity between some of the puppet faces and my masks (LL 25).

The novel has yet another object of great importance. This is the book of Marshall France, titled *The Night Races into Anna*. The title is quite strange since Anna is the name of the author's daughter. When Saxony shows the book to Thomas, he is surprised. This is how he describes that moment and that piece of writing:

> It was a small, very thin book printed on beautifully thick, rough-textured paper. From the illustration on the cover (a Van Walt, as always), I knew that it was something by France, but I had no idea what. It was titled *The Night Races into Anna*, and what first surprised me was that unlike all his other books, the only illustration was the one on the cover (LL 28).

Saxony knows the novel and is very eager to tell Thomas what the book is about. She says it is a very sad book, or rather a piece of a book, since it is only forty pages, gathered into one chapter. Oddly, Saxony says that it "is the only part anyone's ever seen" (LL 28), but in Galen, at Mrs Fletcher's house, the couple discover a copy of the novel which has three more chapters than that held by Saxony.

Strangely, at France's house, Thomas and Saxony discover many objects of great importance, like fans, feathers, and most importantly, masks and marionettes. When realizing that their idol, Marshall France shared their interest in the objects, Thomas and Saxony feel themselves to be in a position to fully understand the writer and his vision of the world. They also feel honoured and extremely happy to be there.

In *The Land of Laughs*, the *Galen Journals* also have magical features and are arguably of most valuable objects in the book. This is how Thomas describes them:

> There were no dates on the pages. One continuous flow. No drawings, no doodles. Only descriptions of Galen, Missouri. Galen from the east, Galen from the west, everywhere. Every store, every street, people's names and what they did for a living, whom they were related to, the names of their children. I knew so many of them (LL 182).

There are forty-three books, in which Marshall France describes not only the people of Galen, but their lives with their most important events, the way they are to die and what is to happen next in the town. France decided to write them after he realized he, in a way, killed one of his friends, Dorothy Lee, by writing down her death. This is how he discovered his power.

Anna says: "A couple of years ago everything that Father had written was still happening. If someone was supposed to give birth to a boy on Friday, the ninth of January, it happened. Everything went as he had written it down in his *Galen Journals*" (LL 195).

There are also magical objects in *Bones of the Moon*, the most important of them being the titular Bones of the Moon. They are to be found by Cullen's son if he wants to become the next ruler of Rondua. Cullen describes

how they found the first of them: “It was heavy and solid – not any kind of wood at all. … I felt nothing special, nothing different. I knew what it represented, but I held and regarded it as something that made little difference” (BM 75).

Cullen is told by Mr Tracy, the dog, that she once was in Rondua and she tried gathering all the Bones. She writes:

> If someone wants to rule Rondua, they must possess all five of the Bones. What’s wonderful about the rule is that to acquire each one, a person must possess a certain good quality. For example, to find the first, Obnoy, one must be loved; must be *lovable*. Taken together, these qualities are what would make someone a great ruler (BM 104).

Finding Bones of the Moon is, in fact, going from one test to another. The person who wants to gather all five of them, needs to be worth it.

During the meeting with Jack Chili, Cullen and Pepsi are told the history of the magical objects:

> Whoever created Rondua was fair. At all times, there are ten Bones of the Moon in existence. The five you found are called, collectively, The Bones of Smoke. The ones I found are called The Bones of Mark. Don’t ask what the phrases mean, because I don’t know. I do think they have something to do with the gods, or God, or whoever is in charge here. … What happens in Rondua depends entirely on which set has been found (BM 210–11).

Then Jack Chili says: “A long time ago I found The Bones of Mark, so I’ve ruled Rondua since that time” (BM 211). This way he explains how he became the ruler of Rondua.

> Once someone finds the five Bones, either set, they rule for five Milans. Then they must take the test I’ll describe to you in a little while. … In the past, it has frequently happened that two have found the different sets of Bones at the same time, or almost the same time (BM 211).

The name of the set of bones, *The Bones of Mark*, is very interesting. Since the author lives in Vienna and surely knows German, he is aware of

the fact that “Mark” means “marrow” in German. The name is then ambiguous: it may mean real bones, not wooden objects.

5. Biblical and mythical motifs

The Land of Laughs conveys a feeling of the presence of God. As Cox puts it: “One character turns out to be the writer of the world, the definer of Reality for the other characters”. The first understanding of God can be attributed to the fact that even in his adult life, Thomas thinks highly of his childhood idol, Marshall France. All the objects that can be somehow attributed to France are treated by Thomas as very precious or even holy. Thomas read his first Marshall France book several times during his life and treated it with respect, almost as scripture. The day he got *The Land of Laughs* is described in a very detailed way: “On my ninth birthday – momentous day! – he gave me a little red car with a little engine … and as an afterthought I’m sure, the Shaver-Lambert edition of *The Land of Laughs* with the Van Walt illustrations” (LL 16). He loved the first line of the book so much that he “expected everyone in the world to know that line” as he himself admits (LL 17). None of the presents he received from his parents got as much attention as the book. This may be due to the fact that the children’s book took the child to some other fantastic place, with talking animals and fantastic elements; this experience may have helped Thomas believe the story of Marshall France as the almighty creator in Galen. Inside, Thomas is still a small child searching for some magic in his adult life.

The whole story in which a writer has such power as to create a whole community seems very extraordinary. Being told about the supernatural abilities that Marshall France possessed, Thomas says to Anna: “You’re telling me that your father was *God!* Or Dr. Frankenstein!” (LL 186). He thinks of Marshall as “a modern Prometheus who used orange fountain pen instead of clay” (LL 187). When told the details connected with Marshall France’s power, Thomas ironically calls him “a jealous God” who wanted to fully control the lives of the Galeners and punish them for their cruelties.

The motif of writing down the history of a city bears a strong resemblance to Melquiades' manuscripts from *One Hundred Years of Solitude*. These documents also contain the knowledge of the fates of people but cannot be understood by anyone.

At some point of the story, Thomas describes himself as "Prometheus", the mythical creator of human beings (LL 245). He accepts that role and seems to be honoured to have similar abilities to those of France. Apart from being the god-like creator, Thomas acquires the role of town saviour. He seems to be the only person that could bring France back to life and thus let him write another pages from the chronicle of Galen. Thomas considers himself a hero. This is how he describes it: "Suddenly I was on the verge of … of … I don't know, being *Prometheus* or something. Stealing fire from gods! Through my art, or through *our* art rather, we were going to recreate a human being" (LL 245).

After realizing the supernatural power to create humans through writing, Thomas is able to bring his father back to life. **The motif of death and rebirth** is very important in the novel. He works very hard, writing Stephen Abbey's biography and is successful. the whole process is not shown to the readers, but the final scene, in which Thomas kills Richard Lee with his father, proves him right. The scene is both ironic and witty: "When Richard was five or six feet away, Pop stepped out of the pitch dark behind me and said lightly over my shoulder, 'Want me to hold your hat for you, kiddo?'" (LL 253).

Gillespie writes that Marshall France is not a god, but rather "a loony absolute dictator". He also compares the crowd gathered to welcome Marshall France at the train station to the people from 1930s German propaganda movies (Gillespie). They value the same traditions and they all look up to Marshall France, their creator. As the inhabitants of Macondo from *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, they share the facility to accept the marvellous. For them, the supernatural elements are part of their everyday life. They are a homogenous group of believers whose god is Marshall France.

The motif of God is also present in *Bones of the Moon*. Cullen James gets into this role when deciding to have her child aborted. Her "Yasmuda

dreams", in which she travels through Rondua, seem to be a way of coping with the abortion and her feelings towards her aborted child. One possible interpretation of the dreams may be that they are caused by Cullen's guilty conscience. The whole adventure of gathering strange attributes (that is, the title's bones of the moon) and trying to rescue Pepsi and the other characters living in Rondua may in fact be Cullen's way of dealing with feelings of guilt. In a way, Cullen wants to bring her son back to life. The motif of creation is most important in Jonathan Carroll's writing. Gillespie states that "the obsession needed by writers or film-makers or artists or architects to create something great" is one of the most common theme of Carroll's writing.

In *Sleeping in Flame* the names of Three Magi are mentioned: "Think of the name Melchior. Think of Caspar and Balthazar. They're next. I can tell you nothing else. I don't know what will happen to you. Fate is an open road. What you're capable of is beyond belief. But so is he" (SF 198). Despite the fact that the names Caspar, Melchior and Balthazar are commonly associated by the Biblical story of the birth of Jesus[1], their names are never mentioned in the Scripture. Matthew (2:1-2) says: "Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, Saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him" (King James Bible).

According to the sources, Magi "are conspicuous chiefly as a Persian religious caste. Herodotus connects them with another people by reckoning them among the six tribes of the Medes" (Smith and Wright 497). They were skilled in astrology and much admired due to their abilities to interpret dreams (Durken 11). Their names and their exact number is not revealed[2]. As Durken says: "The traditional number of three magi is derived from the three gifts that they bear" (12). These were described in Matthew 2:11:

[1] The Three King's Day is linked with the Epiphany, January 6th. In Poland it is a national holiday, a day in which, according to tradition, the Three Wise Men visit Jesus to acknowledge his lordship, marked by a visit to the church and chalking the door.

[2] In Eastern tradition the number is sometimes twelve or nine.

> And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh" (King James Bible).

6. Conclusion

"Magic is as real for Carroll as so-called ordinary reality" as Gillespie states. Gillespie writes that in Carroll's books "the most important magic is that of story-telling itself". This makes Jonathan Carroll's novels similar to *One Hundred Years of Solitude* by Márquez, which was modeled on the stories told to young Márquez by the members of his family, especially his grandmother. Oral tradition had great influence on magical realism as a genre. It helped that kind of literature to develop, since the first Latin American books were based on the stories passed down from generation to generation. Gillespie stresses this, saying: "Much of the magic in his [Carroll's] novels comes into being because somebody tells a story or writes down a story. Magic is what we do when we write fiction". Indeed: "In Carroll's fiction, reality as we know it is a thin veneer, beneath which teem forces more fantastic, and more terrifying, than anyone but he can imagine" (Murphy 594).

Analyzing the four main elements that build the story in *The Land of Laughs*, *Bones of the Moon* and *Sleeping in Flame*, that is, the place of action, the characters, the vents and the objects, it is easy to see its similarly with the novels by Gabriel Garcia Márquez, Angela Carter and Salman Rushdie, and that the novels by Jonathan Carroll contain magical realist elements.

The world presented in the novels bears a similarity to the common world, even though it includes some elements of the fantastic. The mixing of the two realms, the real and the supernatural, is definitely a key characteristic of magical realism. There are often disruptions in time as well as in space. The characters possess magical abilities and they accept the supernatural elements in their lives. The events are often presented from a child-like

perspective, which is most visible in *Bones of the Moon.* “Carroll wants to make literature that affects you the way the fables you read as a child did – that draw you into a universe of magic and wonder, that make good and evil genuine choices rather than themes” as Hampton writes. There are also Biblical elements connected with the motif of creation and life after death. In *The Land of Laughs, Bones of the Moon* and *Sleeping in Flame* there are also objects that are either magical or they are precious to the characters as if they possess some supernatural features.

Conclusion

Analyzing the most representative and popular books by acclaimed magical realists, such as Gabriel Garcia Márquez, Angela Carter and Salman Rushdie, the readers may identify a list of magical realist features shared by their works. There is an ongoing debate on the features of magical realist stories. *One Hundred Years of Solitude* by Márquez, *Nights at the Circus* by Carter and *Midnight's Children* by Salman Rushdie present several characteristics that are representative of magical realism, and which are revealed in their form and the content. The reader's uncertainty as to whether magic is really happening, the presence of metafictional foregrounding and the magical power of words are surely the most commonly-met features of magical realism in form. Detailed descriptions and the baroque style of writing, full of rhetorical devices, also belong to this genre.

As far as the content of the books is concerned, all three magical realist novels include the presence of irreducible elements, the repeated use of folklore and old beliefs, and surprising disruptions in time and space. The magical and the real worlds are combined in the stories, but the real world bears a strong resemblance to the common world of every reader. The characters undergo metamorphoses and they are characterized by the facility to accept the marvellous.

The motif of the mirror is used not only to describe the similarities between the characters, but it can be met in the form of a novel, for instance in the language. All novels share common mythical elements and Biblical motifs.

Analyzing *One Hundred Years of Solitude, Nights at the Circus* and *Midnight's Children*, it is necessary to list the features that any piece of writing needs to share to be labelled a magical realist story.

Although Jonathan Carroll is not generally classified as a magical realist writer, his novels *The Land of Laughs, Bones of the Moon* and *Sleeping in Flame*, contain certain magical realist traits in both their form and content,

of which numerous illustrations are given the present work: the amalgamation of the *real* and the *fantastic*, the presence of the archetype of death and rebirth, and other characteristics of the genre. While they also possess various psychological and horror tropes, as demonstrated herein, *The Land of Laughs*, *Bones of the Moon* and *Sleeping in Flame* are fundamentally magical realist novels.

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ISBN 978-83-7133-999-8