



Long Paper

The Fantastical Reconstruction of Psyche: An Analysis of Magical Realism Elements in *Kafka on the Shore*

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Abstract

This qualitative research analyzed how Haruki Murakami, in his famous book *Kafka on the Shore* (2006), utilized Magical Realism in the psychological development of the main protagonist, *Kafka Tamura*. By employing Wendy Farris' primary characteristics of Magical Realism, the entire narrative was explored for the prevalence of magical realism elements and how consequential these have been in the story's progression. Results of the analysis show that four (4) of the five (5) magical realism elements (Irreducible element of magic, strong presence of the phenomenal world, the merging of different realms, and predilection for disturbing ideas about identity) were utilized to fully establish the psychological development undergone by the main protagonist, and to an extent, several other characters like Saeki and Nakata. Of these, the merging of different realms figures extensively in the protagonist's experience; from his extremely lucid dreaming, to self-fulfilling prophecies, to the existence of the "other world", his entry, and eventual psychological breakthrough and emergence from the other world. Through these magical realism elements, the main protagonist's psychological ordeal and eventual development are given much depth, engaging better the readers. The study also shows the personal struggles of Nakata and Saeki, with their paths seemingly naturally converging to exert an



effect on the main protagonist through magical realism elements. Finally, the findings of the study also highlight those literary analyses remain a viable ground for scholarly research, and that literary techniques iconic to a certain region in the world can and may develop into different forms and applications across other regions of the literary world.

Keywords – Kafka Murakami, Kafka on the Shore, Magical Realism, Magic Realism, Marvelous Realism

INTRODUCTION

Much like any art form, magical realism as a literary movement started in Latin America and soon spread across the English-speaking world. One such author of the literary movement in contemporary times is the world-famous Japanese novelist Haruki Murakami. Considered a recurring favorite for the Nobel Prize for Literature since his breakthrough piece of writing *Norwegian Wood* in 1987, Haruki Murakami is a famous novelist and short-story writer from Japan whose works have sold millions of copies around the world and have been translated into at least 50 languages. One important reason for Murakami's rise to worldwide acclaim as a writer is his style of writing which blends magical realism with the exploration of human psychological phenomena.

While the psychological explorations in his works have been the constant subject of studies by literary scholars (Asfahani, 2009; Akins, 2012; Depci, 2019), a proper analysis of the role of magical realism in the novels' progression has yet to be explored. It is this dearth that this study wishes to address with the implementation of renowned Magical Realism scholar Wendy Farris' (1995) five (5) characteristics as a narrative mode, particularly on one of his works that was made popular in mainstream media with elements of popular culture blending with "matter of fact" supernatural themes.

LITERATURE REVIEW

On Magical Realism

The term "magic(al) realism" pertains not only to a specific narrative mode. Indeed, the first mention of the term related to a specific art movement of German painters in the 1920s. Owing much to the political turmoil and great upheaval during its inception, Franz Roh, a German art critic largely credited for the coining of the term, regards the unique characteristic of "magic realism" to be the expression of the mystery of a concrete object through a realistic rendering of it (Roh, 1995). For Roh, this was mainly to evoke the feeling of "wondrous meaning", and in the process of uncovering, encourage artists to take on the psychoanalytic influences of Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung, the same way that the 'surrealist' movement was greatly influenced by the advances in the understanding of the human mind by Freud and Jung.

As a literary movement, "magic(al) realism" first took its roots in Latin America, prospering greatly in the region, as evidenced by the narrative mode being epitomized in the image of Colombian Nobel Prize in Literature laureate Gabriel Garcia Marquez (Swanson, 2010). Garcia Marquez himself elaborates that the Latin American tradition of magic realism (as observed in his internationally acclaimed works *Hundred Years of Solitude* (1967) and *Love in the Time of Cholera* (1985)) was mainly utilized to convey the 'unearthly tidings of Latin America', about the excessive violence and confusion in Colombia, and political unrest in the whole Latin American region (Garcia Marquez, 1982).

Due to its development as a distinct literary style, magic realism has since been a rich source of literary research and analyses. Byrnes (2015), for one, analyzed the works of American novelist Tom Robbins to trace the historical evolution and appropriation of magical realism as a literary tradition. By employing various methodologies such as feminist and postcolonial discourse analysis, Byrnes affirms that Robbin's use of magical realism is part of the American counterculture movement and makes use of literature as a unique ideological space that allows the challenge, reinterpretation, and democratization of metanarratives.

Byrnes (2020) pursues magical realism yet again, but on a wider scope, this time studying the literary style itself in the context of postcolonial studies. By challenging the preconceived notions of the style's postcolonial persuasions, Byrnes argues that postcolonial theories of magic(al) realism fail to fully encapsulate its varied origins, its highly dynamic geohistorical developments, and its utilization of vibrant and storied matters. As such, Byrnes recasts magic(al) realism along historical and new-materialist lines to account for the mode's various aesthetics and applications, postcolonial or otherwise.

Following the same trend of delving deep into the use of magic(al) realism, Abualhassan (2017) analyzed the works of four (4) Saudi novelists who employed magic(al) realism in the 1980s. By comparing the works of the Saudi novelists to classical Arabic literature, Abualhassan delves deep into the distinctive power that magic realism accords modern Saudi writers, and how the literary style prospered in the Arab region that enabled the employment of creative, innovative, and unconventional ideas, away from the restriction of realism and the classical definition of reality.

Holgate (2016), on the other hand, sought to broaden the scope of studies in magical realism by analyzing contemporary fiction from Asia and Australasia. By employing dual intervention of postcolonial studies and world literature, along with new paradigms of critical thought such as mythopoeia, epistemology, ecocriticism, intertextuality, and human rights discourse, Holgate analyzes how six (6) different Asian and Australasian authors reinvent magical realism to suit their artistic purposes. Ultimately, Holgate concludes that magical realism is a porous literary mode; both in the geographical and cultural sense that the narrative mode frequently spills over into other distinct modes, and as such, should be defined in a succinct but flexible approach.

Also in the same manner, albeit much more focused on a single author, Stendal and Rodriguez (2018) analyzed the magical realist elements in the transgressive fiction works of contemporary American author Chuck Palahniuk between 2002 and 2009. Through the comparison of each of three (3) of Palahniuk's works with specific magical realist novels (*The House of Spirits* by Isabel Allende, *A Hundred Years of Solitude* by Gabriel Garcia Marquez, and *The Doorman* by Reinaldo Areanas), the authors establish yet again the non-exclusive description and nature of magical realism provided by one of the mode's first scholars, Alejo Carpentier.

In a similar analytic perspective, Wyrill (2014) looks into the works of Russel Brownlee, Ingrid Winterbach, and Etienne van Heerden, particularly into how magical realism was utilized by the three authors in the recreation of realist historiography. By looking into the imaginative recreation of cultural, historical, and psychological modernities, Wyrill shows how the identified authors refigure and recombine notions of temporality, narrative, and characterization, and in the process, defamiliarize the usually stable discourse of history.

Shamshayooadeh (2018), on the other hand, delved into one of the most iconic literary pieces of magical realism, Salman Rushdie's *Midnight Children* and *Shame*, and focused on elements of spatialization and meta-narration. As a result, Rushdie's texts were found to embody magical-realist recreation of the actual politico-historical trajectory of India-Pakistan's postcolonial history, harkening back to the development and proliferation of magical realism in Latin America being a mode seemingly specialized to tell stories of post-colonialism.

Additionally, the principles and understanding of magic(al) realism have been employed by scholars and academicians in the production of actual works of literature. Hales (2015) writes five (5) short stories and explores themes like belongingness, happiness, and complexity of human relationships against a backdrop of surreal and dreamlike landscapes only made possible through magical realism. Fogarty (2015) does the same in the exploration of reality, magic, and American culture in his collection of 40 short stories and a novella, laid out against the backdrop of Detroit, Michigan. Fogarty employs magical realism in these stories and novella to comment on the uniqueness of life and how individual people perceive elements unique to them.

Similarly, Randall (2016) employed Spindler's theory of magical realism as a foundation in the writing of a novel titled "27 Club" and subjected the same piece of literature to several litmus tests according to William Spindler's typology of magical realism. As a result, the new piece of literature is revealed to exhibit three forms of magical realism; metaphysical, anthropological, and ontological.

In the Philippines, magical realism elements have also been studied for their role in various pieces of both classical and contemporary Philippine Literature. Tribunal (2015), for instance, analyzed Hiligaynon urban legends for elements of magical realism. After

analyzing six (6) Hiligaynon urban legends from the Negros provinces, Tribunal identified five (5) magical realism elements that tie into the cultural background of the Hiligaynon people, these being fantastical elements, real-world settings, plenitude, meta-fiction, and mystery. Sabanpan-Yu (2011) similarly conducted analyses to uncover magical realism elements, this time in Eric Gamalinda's *My Sad Republic* (2000) by juxtaposing it alongside Alejo Carpentier's *The Kingdom of this World* (1967). Through the analysis, Sabanpan-Yu opines that Gamalinda uses contradictions and inversions, alongside complexities, which are made more powerful and apparent through the use of magical realism elements, to mirror the differing perspectives and worldviews. By doing so, Gamalinda effectively mirrors Marquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude* as a story of love, hate, and the unbreakable connection between people and the world around them. Finally, Martin (2021) looks into the National Artist Nick Joaquin's use of magical realism to portray trauma in his work *Caves and Shadows* (1983). Martin subsequently concludes that Joaquin's use of magical realism allows for the discussion of spectrality and historical justice, providing a literary venue for postcolonial resistance and inclusiveness of peripheries.

METHODOLOGY

Methods and Techniques Used

This study is qualitative in nature, particularly employing literary research. Unlike other forms of literary research that employ a particular established theory as a “lens” of analysis, this literary research shall utilize instead Farris’ (1995) characteristics of Magical Realism as a Narrative Mode in uncovering how the author utilized magical realism and its role in the underlying progression of the story.

Instrument of the Study

This literary research is guided by the characteristics, theory, and utilization of magical realism as a narrative mode, as outlined by Faris (1995), to understand how Murakami uses his unique blend of writing in the exploration and exposition of his novels’ psychological state and development.

In particular, the five (5) characteristics of literary works of magical realism are (1) an irreducible element of magic, (2) a strong presence of the phenomenal world, (3) some unsettling doubts on the part of the reader in the effort to reconcile two contradictory understandings of events, (4) the narrative's merging of different realms, and (5) the predilection for disturbing ideas about time, space, and identity.

RESULTS

The story first introduces Kafka Tamura, the effective protagonist of the story in the novel’s prologue in a conversation with a boy called Crow. From the initial introduction, and through the subsequent chapters, it becomes evident that Kafka suffers from a fractured identity, with the boy called Crow being a creation of his consciousness acting at

times as an inner conscience. The overall journey undertaken by Kafka Tamura towards the reconstruction of his fractured psyche is presented below.

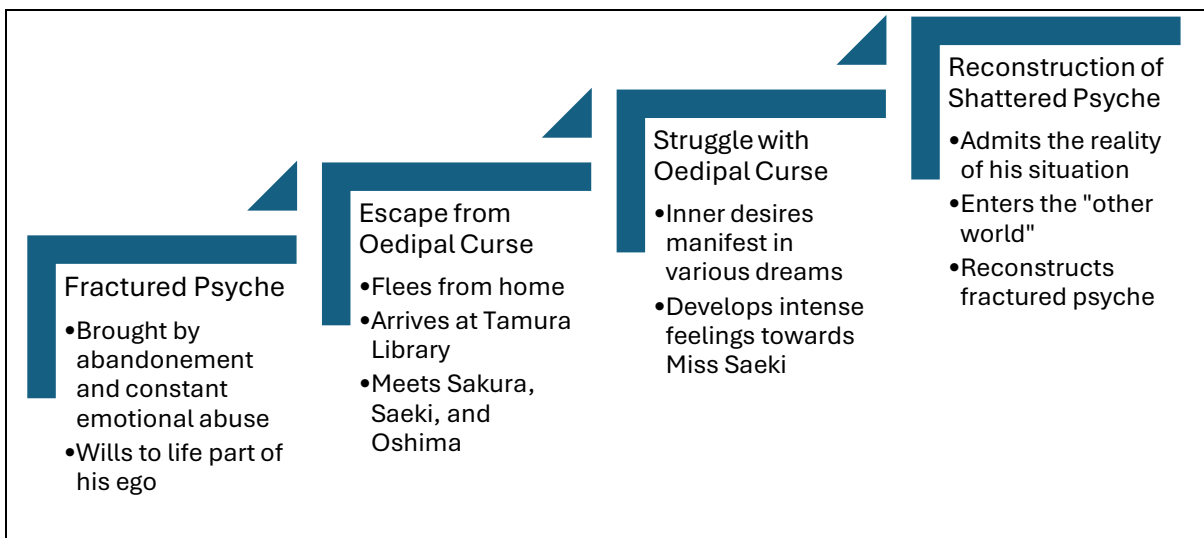


Figure 1. Kafka Tamura's Psychological Development

In particular, the conversation with Crow in the prologue serves the important job of establishing the turmoil inside Kafka, and a premonition of the hardships that would later come in his quest. And that at the end of it all, he will emerge a different man.

"You're going to be the world's toughest fifteen-year-old," Crow whispers as I try to fall asleep. Like he was carving the words in a deep blue tattoo on my heart. And you really will have to make it through that violent, metaphysical, symbolic storm. No matter how metaphysical or symbolic it might be, make no mistake about it: it will cut through flesh like a thousand razor blades. People will bleed there, and you will bleed too. Hot, red blood. You'll catch that blood in your hands, your blood, and the blood of others. And once the storm is over you won't remember how you made it through, how you managed to survive. You won't even be sure whether the storm is over. But one thing is certain. When you come out of the storm you won't be the same person who walked in. That's what this storm's all about. (p. 4-5)

The primary motivation that Kafka presents in leaving behind his home is to escape the Oedipal curse that he believes his father put on him. Kafka goes on to narrate the details of this curse to Oshima later on, that back when he was still in elementary, his father said he would kill him and be with his mother and sister. This is then followed up by his narration of how he was living along with his father after he was abandoned by his mother and sister.

It becomes apparent that his fractured identity is a result of the said abandonment and feeling of helplessness from his mother and sister leaving him behind, and the

psychological torture his father continuously inflicted on him throughout his childhood. After being left behind by his mother and sister, Kafka copes by subconsciously erasing all traces of them from his memory.

"You don't remember your mother's face?" Oshima asks. "You lived together till you were four, so you should have some memory of what she looked like."

I shake my head. "I just can't recall, not at all. I don't know why, but the part of my memory where her face should be is dark, painted over, blank." (p.218)

As for his feelings towards his father, Kafka illustrates in multiple instances how his hatred towards him runs deep. First, there was the prophecy that Kafka believes his father put on him to exact revenge on his wife and daughter who left him. Due to this, Kafka believes that even as his father is a world-renowned talented sculptor, he does so at the cost of destroying everything around him, including himself, and his son, and driving his wife and daughter to flee.

"Maybe so. But the dregs left over from creating these he spread everywhere, like a poison you can't escape. My father polluted everything he touched and damaged everyone around him. I don't know if he did it because he wanted to. Maybe he had to. Maybe it's just part of his makeup. Anyhow, I get the feeling he was connected to something very unusual. Do you have any idea what I mean?"

"Yeah, I think so," Oshima says. "Something beyond good and evil. The source of power, you might call it."

"And half my genes are made up of that. Maybe that's why my mother abandoned me. Maybe she wanted to cut herself off from me because I was born from this terrible source. Since I was polluted." (p. 180)

Before he departs from home, Kafka undergoes several processes of preparation, from choosing which things from his father's study to take with him, to meticulously identifying which clothing to pack, and most importantly a ritualistic cleansing of his body. At the core of this ritual is Kafka's attempt to start his journey with a state closest to being an "empty slate", though he admits that try as he may, he cannot erase the connections he has with his father who psychologically tortured him, and his mother and sister who abandoned him.

Before running away from home I wash my hands and face, trim my nails, swab out my ears, and brush my teeth. I take my time, making sure my whole body's well-scrubbed. Being clean is sometimes the most important thing there is. I gaze carefully at my face in the mirror. Genes I'd gotten from my father and mother—not that I have any recollection of what she looked like—created this face. I can do my best to not let any emotions show, keep my eyes from revealing anything, and bulk up my muscles, but there's not much I can do about my looks. I'm stuck with my father's long, thick eyebrows and the deep lines between them. I could probably kill him if I wanted to—I'm sure strong enough—and I can erase my mother from

my memory. But there's no way to erase the DNA they passed down to me. If I wanted to drive that away I'd have to get rid of me.

There's an omen contained in that. A mechanism buried inside of me. (p. 9)

Perhaps the most important person that Kafka encounters in the novel is the enigmatic middle-aged librarian of the Komura Memorial Library, Miss Saeki. She first appears in Chapter 5 and immediately triggers a wistful feeling of nostalgia in Kafka, something that he automatically latches onto and develops further into an unstoppable physical and emotional attraction. What is glaringly evident during their first interaction is Kafka's obsession with the Oedipal curse that he swears was the reason he left home in the first place.

She makes a strong impression on me, making me feel wistful and nostalgic. Wouldn't it be great if this were my mother? But I think the same thing every time I run across a charming, middle-aged woman. The chances that Miss Saeki is my mother are close to zero, I realize. Still, since I have no idea what my mother looks like, or even her name, the possibility does exist, right? There's nothing that rules it out completely. (p. 35)

This initial attraction with Saeki to look for connections and possible links did not stop then and there. He tries to reason that one of the lines that Saeki wrote in her song for her boyfriend coincides with the events of Kafka's departure from his home (p.203). Next, when he learns from Saeki that she once went all around Japan interviewing people hit by lightning, he again tries to draw the connection by remembering how his father was once hit by lightning while working as a caddy on a golf course. For him, Saeki and his father might have met each other through her book, fell in love, and had him (p. 223). Through all this, Kafka is grasping at straws, looking at even the faintest of coincidences to establish a connection with Saeki; initially due to the shadow cast upon him by the Oedipal curse he sets out to escape, but later evolves into something else.

As Kafka stays in the library, he eventually develops romantic feelings for Saeki, to the point of actually desiring her for himself. He admits to her that she indeed is in love with her (p. 259). This feeling for Saeki however, appears to be unnatural due to various reasons. For one, Kafka's initial attraction to Saeki is mainly due to the possibility of her being his mother. By admitting it, he is working towards the fulfillment of the curse that he is desperately trying to escape from.

Miss Saeki stares into the cup in her hand, then looks up again. "So do you—desire me?"

I give one clear nod.

She closes her eyes. I gaze at her closed eyelids for a long time, and through them, I can see the darkness that she's seeing. Odd shapes loom up in it, floating up only to disappear. Finally, she opens her eyes. "You mean in theory you desire me."

"No, apart from the theory. I want you, and that goes way beyond any theory."

"You want to have sex with me?"

I nod. (p.259)

Saeki, however, is not the only character that Kafka comes into a close relationship with in his journey that Crow so eloquently likens to passing through a sandstorm. In chapter 3 of the novel, Sakura is introduced as a hairdresser on her way to Takamatsu to visit a girlfriend. Through their initial interaction, Kafka immediately develops a feeling of familiarity and trust towards Sakura. While Sakura treats Kafka as a younger brother whom she feels a yearning to protect and comfort, Kafka's feelings towards Sakura however are haunted by his history and the Oedipal curse he believes he is running away from. This results in him trying to find any reason to justify that Sakura might be her sister. By doing so, with the curse of him "sleeping with her sister", her sexual urge that he believes he has kept in check surfaces as if taunting him. This all comes to a head towards the latter parts of the novel where he dreams of raping Sakura. This tragic and graphic scene, though through a dream, is a crucial event for Kafka to confront his shattered identity. At this point in the story, Kafka has already metaphorically fulfilled the first two parts of the Oedipal curse; murdering his father, and sleeping with his mother. His alter-ego creation, Crow even remarks that this act is a means of rebellion from the path laid out by the world for him, that from here on out, he can no longer justify his actions by saying it was in fulfillment of a curse, that he and he alone now shall be responsible for everything that happens.

"It's too late," I tell her.

"Why?"

"Because I decided it is."

"Because you decided it is," says the boy named Crow.

You don't want to be at the mercy of things outside you anymore or thrown into confusion by things you can't control. You've already murdered your father and violated your mother—and now here you are inside your sister. If there's a curse in all this, you mean to grab it by the horns and fulfill the program that's been laid out for you. Lift the burden from your shoulders and live—not caught up in someone else's schemes but as you. That's what you want. (p. 328-329)

The thing inside you has revealed itself. The shell is gone, completely shattered, nowhere to be seen, and it's there, a dark shadow, resting. Your hands are sticky with something—human blood, by the look of it. You hold them out in front of you, but there's not enough light to see. It's far too dark. Both inside, and out. (p.329)

With the Oedipal curse all but fulfilled, Kafka now enters the "other world". By trudging through the forest and entering a distinctly parallel yet separate world, Kafka readily confronts himself, and in the process of doing so, undergoes the transformation he needs. As such, the "other world" was made manifest and is a representation of his psyche, now totally shattered after fulfillment of his father's Oedipal curse and at the same time, ready for reconstruction. He accomplishes the first step towards this goal when he ponders on the question that he has been trying to escape all along.

The journey I'm taking is inside me. Just like blood travels down veins, what I'm seeing is my inner self, and what seems threatening is just the echo of the fear in my own heart. The spiderweb stretched taut there is the spiderweb inside me. The birds calling out overhead are birds I've fostered in my mind. These images spring up in my mind and take root. Like I'm being shoved from behind by some huge heartbeat, I continue on and on through the forest. The path leads to a special place, a light source that spins out of the dark, the place where soundless echoes come from. I need to see with my own eyes what's there. I'm carrying an important, sealed, personal letter, a secret message to myself. (p.354)

This act of actually verbalizing the cause of all his suffering and eventual shattering of his identity forces a part of his repressed psyche to materialize into the boy named Crow, who verbalizes the answers he desperately tried to bury and keep hidden. In essence, through the materialization of the boy named Crow, a persona brought to life by Kafka himself to act as his conscience and at the same time a wall to protect himself from the world, he forces a confrontation with his innermost feelings.

I nod. You can never put it back together like it was. He's hit the nail on the head. The boy named Crow continues. "Your mother felt a gut-wrenching kind of fear and anger inside her, okay? Just like you do now. Which is why she had to abandon you." "Even though she loved me?" "Even though she loved you, she had to abandon you. You need to understand how she felt then and learn to accept it. Understand the overpowering fear and anger she experienced, and feel it as your own—so you won't inherit it and repeat it. The main thing is this: You have to forgive her. That's not going to be easy, I know, but you have to do it. That's the only way you can be saved. There's no other way!" (p. 355-356)

With his innermost feelings now bared to him, he fully enters the "other world"; a world populated by his thoughts and feelings and reflecting his psychological state. Inside this "other world", Kafka is finally able to confront his feelings toward his mother. However, with his mother's face erased from his memory, he resorts to using the image of Saeki to stand in for his mother, culminating in their final meeting. While the Saeki that Kafka converses with never admits that she indeed is his mother, it becomes irrelevant to the situation as the main crux of the matter is his feelings towards his mother, whether it is Saeki or not.

"You were discarded by the one person who never should have done that," Miss Saeki says. "Kafka—do you forgive me?" "Do I have the right to?" She looks at my shoulder and nods several times. "As long as anger and fear don't prevent you."

"Miss Saeki, if I really do have the right to, then yes—I do forgive you," I tell her. Mother, you say. I forgive you. And with those words, audibly, the frozen part of your heart crumbles. (p.392-393)

After returning to the outside world from the "other world" and trudging through the forest, Kafka finally confronts the reality of his situation. Towards the end of the story, he is now able to take responsibility for his actions. Gone now were his obsessions towards the Oedipal curse that his father threw at him. Gone now also was his tendency to "play the victim card" about him being left behind by his mother and sister. And though he ends up fulfilling the curse he desperately tried his best to escape, he acquires empathy and resolve. In the final chapter, even his creation, his alter-ego the boy called Crow seemingly assimilates back to him as he is no longer needed. With it, Kafka surrenders himself to sleep and bravely awaits the morning that he is now ready to confront.

"You'd better get some sleep," the boy named Crow says. "When you wake up, you'll be part of a brand-new world."
 You finally fall asleep. And when you wake up, it's true. You are part of a brand-new world. (p. 415)

DISCUSSION

Considered one of the unique selling points of the novel, magical realism is replete in Kafka's journey towards reconstructing his identity with Faris' five primary characteristics of magical realism. These elements even extend to other supporting characters like Saeki, Nakata, and Hoshino, and are summarized in the table below.

Table 4. Use of Magical Realism Elements in Kafka on the Shore

Narrative Element	Magical Realism Characteristics as per Farris (1995)
Boy named Crow	(1) Irreducible element of magic
The nature of dreams	(2) Strong presence of the phenomenal world; and (4) the narrative's merging of different realms
Ability to enter and nature of the "other world"	(2) Strong presence of the phenomenal world; (4) the merging of different realms; and (5) predilection for disturbing ideas about identity

For Kafka's part, the existence of magical realism elements is indispensable in his journey's purpose of identity reconstruction. The first instance of magical realism is immediately present in the novel's prologue. The boy named Crow, being an alter-ego that Kafka himself wills into being, acts as his confidant, conscience, and at times, his voice when he cannot properly verbalize his thoughts. The entire essence of Crow, who also appears at times as a black crow instead of a boy, already constitutes Faris' element of magical realism, particularly an irreducible element of magic by showing that Crow goes beyond what is normally to be expected of an imaginary friend or a willed-to-life alter-ego, a characteristic labeled as "doubling" where images take lives on their own and engender

beyond themselves (Zamora & Farris, 1995) – with Crow seemingly embodying a separate will of his own and able to refuse Kafka’s call (p. 95, 344), able to verbalize thoughts that are not of Kafka’s nor is he even aware of, and able to make him realize (p. 355).

This phenomenon of willing an alter-ego to life of its own serves as instrumental for Kafka in several ways. First, the boy named Crow becomes an important confidant for the lonely, isolated, and abandoned Kafka, preventing him from devolving further his already fractured personality. Also, by becoming his mouthpiece, Kafka can find words for his feelings and thoughts that he normally cannot, and in doing so, makes the people whom Kafka has allowed to get close to him understand him better. Finally, by admonishing Kafka several times and acting as his conscience, Crow gives Kafka much-needed guidance towards his individuation – as Crow is originally willed from Kafka's personality, his admonishment becomes a form of self-reflection.

Kafka, and by their admission, Nakata and Saeki, are also able to enter the “other world” where important psychological developments happen. This is yet another important example of magical realism, particularly the strong influence of the “other world”. For Kafka, the “other world” manifests in two distinct ways; through dreams that seem to bleed and merge into their realities (p. 193, 327), and the “other world” that he enters willingly to confront his feelings and finish individuation (p. 344, 396).

The dreams that Kafka has are reflections of his experiences and more importantly, manifestations of his desires that he suppresses. Considering the trauma he felt after being abandoned by his mother, Kafka latches on to the idea of Saeki being his mother. With the morality imposed upon them by society, however, he is unable to fully express his actual desire to possess Saeki. This, in turn, forces his subconscious to look for a remedy, hence, he dreams of having sexual relations with Saeki as a fifteen-year-old girl. The magical realism element of this particular dream is how the dream is a reality for Kafka. He verbalizes it himself, "This isn't a dream—it's real life" (p. 248). Additionally, the dream that Kafka has also distorted his notion of time, saying that "time's rules don't apply here. Time expands, then contracts, all in tune with the stirrings of the heart (p. 194), another important element of magical realism.

In the latter chapters, Kafka experiences another seeming instance of a sexual dream that bleeds into reality. In the dream, however, instead of having another tender and nostalgia-inducing sexual intercourse with Saeki, Kafka dreams of sexually assaulting a sleeping Sakura. Unlike the dream with Saeki, Sakura is fully aware of the nature of the dream and admonishes Kafka that he is trespassing into her dream. Experiencing yet again the bleeding of dreams into reality, Kafka takes full control of himself. Instead however of the usually meek and unassertive boy, Kafka lashes out at Sakura and knowingly rapes her, to which again Sakura sternly reminds him what he is doing (p. 329). The sexual nature of the dream is extremely polar to the first, being violent and transgressive this time as compared to the tender and nostalgic dream with Saeki. It is important to take note that this particular dream precipitates after he engages in a sexual affair in reality with Saeki,

who he still believes could be his mother. As such, considering how he thought of Sakura as being his possible long-lost sister, he dreams of raping her as a symbolic resignation to his faith in being under the powers of the Oedipal curse thrown at him. With him believing that he has played a role in his father's death, having sexual relations with a woman he believes to be his mother, and now having violated his theoretical sister, Kafka fulfills the curse as if understanding that there is no escaping it.

Through this bending of natural laws of time and the hyperrealist nature of dreams that bleed into reality, Kafka immerses much deeper into his dreams. Though differing in the real-world circumstances that precipitate them, since these dreams that his experiences are borne out of his subconscious trying to surface into the fore, he is in actuality immersing in his feelings and emotions that he both knowingly and unknowingly suppresses. As such, their dream of Saeki is a product of his experience of being enthralled with Saeki in the real world, his longing for his mother who abandoned him resulted in him grasping at straws to try and prove that Saeki could be his mother, and the feeling of his desire of having Saeki for himself being suppressed by the notions of society imposed on him. Meanwhile, the dream of Sakura is a product of him engaging in a sexual affair with who he believes could be his mother, the immense crushing uncertainty and pressure that by having sexual intercourse with his theorized mother he is fulfilling the Oedipal curse, and ultimately, resignation to his faith that he cannot escape the curse.

Another important, if not the most crucial use of magical realism in the novel, is the ability of certain people to enter the "other world" after fulfillment of obscure requirements. While the true purpose and nature of the "other world" is never explicitly elaborated, from the experiences of the people who did enter the "other world", it appears to be a manifestation of a person's inner psyche, lending an element of "organic authenticity", as was also opined by Akins (2012). In this "other world", people can confront aspects of their personality by conversing directly with manifestations of their memories and psychological constructs. The requirements to enter the "other world" appear to be distinct for every person that enters it, with Nakata entering it unknowingly, Saeki entering it consciously of her own accord, and Kafka entering it after completing a ritual performed by Nakata and Hoshino. This "ritual" is yet again an irreducible element of magic that pervades the entire novel, and by doing so, greatly stresses the different circumstances that a person needs to undergo to come to terms with their individuation process.

As for its purpose, the "other world" plays an important role in the individuation process of characters, appearing as a stage where one can either shatter their personality in totality as with the case of Saeki, a place of refuge after experiencing intense trauma like Nakata, and a setting for eventual reconstruction of identity like with Kafka.

Chronologically, the first person to enter the "other world" was Nakata during wartime in 1946. While not much is elaborated as to how and why Nakata was able to enter, it is evident however that entering the "other world" was precipitated by extreme trauma and psychological distress for the then little boy. The trauma that Nakata felt back then

was a result of being violently assaulted by his teacher after he innocently uncovered the towels his teacher used to stem her sudden onset of menstruation. Immediately after being viciously assaulted, Nakata collapses haplessly, followed by his other classmates. While his classmates were able to fully recover afterward, Nakata remained bedridden for at least three weeks. Another distinct feature of the event was the memory loss for the children; the other children had no memory of the events before their collapse, while Nakata's memory was wiped clean.

The entirety of Nakata's experience of the "other world" is replete with several elements of magical realism. First, the instances surrounding his entry are an example of an irreducible element of magic, and a merging of both the inner psyche and the physical world. It is also evident that Nakata enters the "other world" as a result of experiencing trauma and immense psychological distress after being suddenly assaulted for what to him is of no apparent logical reason. By a figure of authority that he respects and seemingly idolizes. Additionally, it also revealed that Nakata is a victim of physical abuse at home, thus, the experience of being yet again assaulted by a person he feels safe within a place he also feels secure causes trauma in him and induces a psychological breakdown in him.

The most glaring part of the aftereffects of Nakata's entry to the "other world", however, is how different of a person he became after waking. As was mentioned, Nakata's memory was wiped clean, a proverbial clean slate. Along with this, however, Nakata also loses all desire and attachments to the physical world. He even verbalizes to Hoshina several times that he does not understand what it means to desire something. Nakata also mentioned to both Hoshina and Saeki how his "shadow" is half of what it was. Much like his loss of memory, all of this can be seen as a result of the trauma that he experienced, and additionally, how his psyche failed to be reconstructed properly.

The second instance that a person entered this "other world" was when Saeki was desperately trying to hold on to the memories she had with her childhood sweetheart who suddenly passed due to a violent incident. For Saeki, the "other world" became a refuge for her to desperately cling to whatever she had left of her childhood sweetheart. As a result, instead of the intended purpose of confronting her feeling of grief and eventually accepting what happened and moving on, Saeki perverts to the "other world". Through the use of magical realism elements, the story can greatly magnify the effects of this perversion on Saeki. Exhibiting what Yu (2013) terms as the dualism between the real world and the "other world", Saeki was able to greatly impact the outside world as evidenced by her remark to Nakata that what she did in the "other world" is still having ripple effects, distorting the world – an example of what Farris termed as the merging of different and distinct realms.

The third and seemingly focal person to enter the "other world" is Kafka. The circumstances surrounding Kafka's entry are very distinct from Saeki's and Nakata's as there exist several "rituals" that he must first undergo and experience before he can enter. Of these rituals, the most important is how Kafka must first come to terms with himself

that he is responsible for the things that he does, and he cannot, and should not, hide behind an obscure Oedipal curse that he feels is overriding his will. By enacting all elements in the Oedipal curse, Kafka is thus rendered "pliable" and finally able to enter the "other world". Besides this, another immutable magical realist element is the "entrance stone" in both Saeki and Nakata plays vital parts and seemingly precipitates Kafka's entry into the "other world".

Additionally, Saeki also exhibits another element of magical realism about her identity, personality and the role memories play, a manifestation of yet again an "irreducible element of magic" and "predilection for disturbing ideas about time, space, and identity". The role of Saeki in the individuation journey of Kafka is more direct as she plays a crucial role for Kafka to confront his shattered identity and serve as his object of desire.

The motivations and true personality of Saeki in the novel are not initially revealed in her introduction. Instead of being outright presented with her backstory, she is instead portrayed through the eyes of Kafka as inducing emotions of wistfulness and nostalgia. Through later conversations with Oshima, Kafka learns of the circumstances behind the enigmatic Saeki, particularly her cherished past with her childhood sweetheart, how her life was shattered by his untimely passing, and what she became after the ordeal. Saeki herself confirms this with Kafka by saying "I am just waiting for death to come. Like sitting on a bench at the station, waiting for the train to come", speaking to the inevitability of her impending death.

In the latter parts of the Novel, Saeki shares an intimate talk with Nakata about the nature of their "shadow", the "entrance stone", and how she considers herself to have died at age twenty when his childhood sweetheart died, and what happened after that were her merely surviving each day. While Saeki and Nakata are practically strangers to each other, they share familiarity, particularly in their understanding of the important magical realism elements of the novel such as the role of memories and gaining entry to the "other world". This understanding of how important memories are is highlighted several times. Saeki's most treasured possessions, for instance, are the memories she shared with her boyfriend, and with his passing, she has ceased to accumulate noteworthy experiences. Saeki even remarks that after the tragedy, her life has been nothing more than a series of endless reminiscences. Filled with despair, pain, and denial, Saeki tried her best to hold on to those memories and entered the "other world", and as mentioned before, perverted its purpose.

The death of Saeki does indeed come towards the end of the novel. It finally comes to her after she fulfills what she believes is what she has been waiting for a long time. Before her death, she entrusts to Nakata her precious memories and experiences transcribed and carefully elaborated into thick manuscripts and asks him to burn them all to ashes. This act is how Saeki now accepts her fate and surrenders herself to death, relinquishing the physical manifestation of what binds him to the world. True to her own

words, after Hoshino and Nakata burn the thick manuscripts, Saeki dies peacefully and contently on her desk.

Compared to Murakami's other works, *Kafka on the Shore* is much more replete with magical realism elements such as talking birds, fish falling from the sky, and contemporary figures of capitalism taking on questionable jobs like human trafficking. Through the use of these magical realism elements, the psychological problems, how they are handled, and ultimately, how they ended up are showcased in even more creative detail; from Kafka's fractured and eventually reconstructed psyche to Nakata's trauma, life devoid of desire, and eventual death, and Saeki's refusal to accept reality, life devoid of meaning, and eventual acceptance of inevitable death.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Magical realism, while it figures in most of Murakami's novels, exists in much greater prominence in *Kafka on the Shore*, being replete with magical realism across important elements of the novel such as the nature of the boy named Crow, the hyper-realistic dreams, and the process of mending one's broken psyche by entering the "other world", the effects of which greatly influence actual events in reality.

Unsurprisingly, the most dominant theme is the existence of the "other world" that was made possible through the use of magical realism. Additionally, the inner psyche of the protagonist is made manifest and able to confront persisting issues of his fractured psyche directly in this "other world"; from which confrontations and developments are manifested in the real world. As a result, the psychological development is creatively portrayed and given much more gravitas.

IMPLICATIONS

Theoretical Implications

The study also highlights the possibility of using what was once considered a defining characteristic of Latin American literary culture in contemporary Japanese culture. As such, the possibility of such a unique narrative mode can indeed no longer be geographically bound and is ripe for development and utilization by any writer from anywhere. Furthermore, as the analysis of magical realism elements can be considered a traditional analysis of a novel's plot elements, more contemporary theoretical literary lenses can be further integrated such as Freudian psychoanalysis, Jungian analytical psychology, and Lacanian psychoanalysis.

Practical Implications

The writing style of Haruki Murakami, particularly the portrayal of psychological problems through elements of magical realism, as evident in *Kafka on the Shore* bears several important implications in the teaching of writing. First and foremost, his works

serve as fertile ground for the conduct of literary analyses, particularly the continuously evolving utilization of unique narrative modes such as Magical Realism. Also important is the unique use of popular culture references and historical events that drive the discussion of these issues and their impact on today's society.

Given Murakami's worldwide popularity and acclaim, his works can serve as initial pieces for the introduction to creative writing, and for more advanced scholars, literary analyses, and syntheses of psychoanalytic theories with literature.

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DECLARATIONS

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there has been no conflict of interest in the conduct of the study.

Informed Consent (if not applicable, explain why)

No Informed Consent is necessary for this piece of work as the research does not involve living human participants and does not utilize any personal data.

Ethics Approval (if not applicable, explain why)

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