



**ALLUSIONS TO HISTORICAL CHARACTERS AND EVENTS IN THE NOVEL
BELLEFLEUR BY JOYCE CAROL OATES**

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ABSTRACT: *The article is devoted to allusions to historical characters and events, inclusions from precedent texts with zero or implicit marking, reference to the realities of the world, information about a previous text, event or fact by mentioning some well-known toponym, anthroponym, historical date.*

Keywords: *allusion, realities of the world, historical characters, hermit, quotes, literary sources*

"Bellefleur" is the most determined book to come so far from that alarming phenomenon Joyce Carol Oates. However one may complain, the novel is proof, if any seems needed, that she is one of the great writers of our time. "Bellefleur" is a symbolic summary of all this novelist has been doing for 20- some years, a magnificent piece of brave the power of imagination and intellect. In "Bellefleur" Oates makes a heroic attempt to transfigure the almost integrally goofy tradition of the gothic (ghosts, shape-shifters, vampires and all that) into serious art. If any writer can bring it off (someday it will be done), Joyce Carol Oates seems to be the writer to do it.

Allusions to historical characters and events, inclusions from precedent texts with zero or implicit marking, reference to the realities of the world, information about a previous text, event or fact by mentioning some well-known toponym, anthroponym, historical date. She passed the curious old Civil War drum on the first-floor landing, which Raphael Bellefleur had had covered with his own skin, after his death, and edged with brass, gold, and mother-of-pearl (poor Grandfather Raphael! – he had anticipated homage for generations, and now not even the idlest of the children took notice of him) Also, the mention of not very distant historical events, correlated with the time of the novel, once again fixes the reader's attention in the necessary historical era. At the same time, dates and well-known historical events associated with them are mentioned in the work Emmanuel's reverence for the Indians and the local Indian culture (which could hardly be said to exist any longer since the treaties of 1787 had banished all Indians from the mountains and the fertile farmland along the river, and a few thousand of them lived in a single reservation north of Paie-des-Sables) was mocked by most of the family, who did not know quite how to interpret it [p. 32]....won at cards with British officers not three weeks before the Golden Hill riot in January— that Jean-Pierre Bellefleur, looking, with his smart three-cornered hat of black velvet, and his costly new leather boots, somewhat older than his twenty-six years, first saw Sarah Ann Chatham: at that time a girl of no more than eleven or twelve. In the next passage, the dates intersect with historical characters (the name of the horse is given in honor of Napoleon Bonaparte. Then there was an ugly scrappy creature of uneasily mixed blood – Arabian, Belgian, saddle horse – Louis's stallion Bonaparte, later called Old Bones. He was named not for the megalomaniac emperor but for his older brother Joseph who, traveling incognito as the mellifluous Count de Survilliers, acquired through Jean-Pierre's Compagnie de New York some 160,260 acres of uninhabitable and unfarmable wilderness land under the mistaken impression that, as part of New France, it would prove a reasonable and even



idyllic retreat for the defeated emperor himself, once he escaped Saint Helena. (Unfortunately, Napoleon was closely guarded on Saint Helena and his escape was never a possibility. And the 160,260 acres were uninhabitable, despite Jean-Pierre Bellefleur's hearty enthusiasm, and his dreams of roads, railroads, and even canals to come.) It was the roan stallion Bonaparte Louis was riding that April afternoon in 1822 when he pursued the noisy hooting mob out of the settlement on the south shore of Lake Noir (not to be called Belle fleur for some years) [p.84]. A good example of an indirect reference to a historical character is the following quote. The beautiful drumming rain! The ceaseless rain! Egg-sized, fist-sized drops of rain! Mesmerizing. Blinding. (For he could not even see the edge of the bank, he could barely see the doorway of the cabin behind him.) The word "mesmerizing" on Friedrich Anton Mesmer (1734 - 1815), famous at the end of the 18th - beginning of the 19th century - an Austrian doctor, the creator of the doctrine of "animal magnetism" ("mesmerism").

Here are more examples of links to specific historical events: It was characteristic of Raphael's studied generosity that, in 1861, he would hire to take his place in the 14th Regiment of the Seventh Corps of the Union Army of the Potomac not one but two bounty soldiers, and that though he contracted to pay them a fairly small, fixed price, he in fact paid them far more, on the condition that they tell no one – no one at all – exactly how much he was paying ...decades earlier, a young Petrie soldier and a young Bellefleur soldier had gone off together on the Big Horn Expedition of 1876, the Petrie boy under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel Custer and the Bellefleur boy under the command of General Terry, and one had perished and the other had survived; the judge who heard the first appeal, Osborne Lane, had been rejected by a beautiful young woman who later became involved with Samuel Bellefleur, and so naturally he detested the very name Bellefleur; and the judge who heard the second appeal, and who dismissed it so rudely, was an old political rival of Senator Washington Payne's – the senator having been financed generously by Bellefleur money, or so rumor had it.) Allusions and quotes from sacred books (Bible, Koran, etc.): The characters in the novel are often named after characters from the Bible. For example, the name "Jedediah" comes from the Hebrew "Yididyah", which means "beloved of the Lord." The names "Mahalaleel" and "Hiram" also have biblical roots and are found repeatedly in the Old Testament. The name Hiram, in addition, is the name of the chief architect of the Temple of King Solomon, who was killed by three wicked men during an unsuccessful attempt to force him to reveal the secret password of the master mason. The name "Gedeon" means in Hebrew "destroyer", "mighty warrior", "woodcutter", "slasher". In the Bible, Gideon was the judge of the Jews. In Pushkin's "The Tale of Tsar Saltan" this name is given as "Guidon". The name "Samuel" is also present in the Bible. That was the name of one of the Hebrew leaders. This word is also mentioned in the Qur'an as the name of one soothsayer (prophet). An interesting origin is the name "Noel", which is mentioned in English for the first time in the Middle Ages as a synonym for the word "Christmas", coming from the Old French "noël", which, in turn, has a root from the Latin word "nātālis (diēs)" - "birthday". Interestingly, the writer does not deny that the names have a connection with the biblical ones: "Mahalaleel," Leah said, naming him at once, snatching at a sound she had never heard before – but somehow it was exactly right, it was exactly right – as if an imp had whispered it in her ear. (Later she was told Mahalaleel was out of the Bible, and she halfway wondered if the name was appropriate: for Leah was one of the Bellefleurs who prided themselves on their contempt for the Bible.) There are especially many biblical motifs in the description of the life of Jedediah, a hermit of the Bellefleur family: In his saddlebag, along with his bedding and other light provisions, he had a leather-bound Bible that had belonged to his mother. In it, in the Gospels, he might read of the casting-out of devils; he might read once again of the powers promised to those who believed in



the Lord Jesus Christ, and who sought to come unto the Father .Had he hidden himself up in the mountains like one of those Old Testament prophets who hid themselves in the desert, maddened with God, touched by God's fire, ruined forever for the world of man? —though he forced himself to glance at the opened pages, in case they held a message he must decipher. (The Bible was open to Psalms 91-97. He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in Him will I trust ... He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust.) [p. 70].Biblical passages are organically woven into the text of the work, making it deeper, like this quote from Ecclesiastes 3.1 (Old Testament):He growled that they should leave him alone. To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven: a time to be born, and a time to die. A time to kill and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up. A time to laugh, and a time to weep [p. 115].

And here is a quote taken from the Gospel of Matthew:Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body more than raiment? Behold the fowls of the air... Consider the lilies of the field... Therefore take no thought, saying What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day [p. 166].Quotations are also used from the Psalter, put into the mouth of Jedediah:Hear my prayer, O Lord, Jedediah whispered, and let my cry come unto thee. Hide not thy face from me . . . For my days are consumed like smoke, and my bones are burned.In some places of the work, the words of the Bible are paraphrased by the lips of the characters of the workI talking about God, God speaking in us ... in some of us. . . . There is a place, Father, there is a home, but it isn't here, but it isn't lost either and we shouldn't despair, poetry is a way of getting back, of coming home".Allusions and quotes from myths, fairy tales .The castle chronotope is a reference to many fairy tales and gothic works by other authors. This also applies to the part that describes the ominous desolation and withering, which speaks of a curse flying in the air and the dark times of the family:

By the time Mahalaleel came to the manor, however, it was much changed. All but a very few of the staff of thirty-five servants had been dismissed over the decades, and a number of the rooms were closed off, and the wine cellar was badly depleted, and the marble statues in the garden were crudely weather-stained. As the delicate Japanese trees sickened and died they were replaced by sturdier North American trees – oak, cypress, silver birch, ash: some of the most beautiful pieces of furniture had been seriously scarred and battered by children, though they were, of course, traditionally forbidden to play in most of the rooms. The slate roof leaked in a dozen places, the turrets were storm-damaged, weeds grew where an outdoor swimming pool had been planned, the parquet floor of the entrance hall was badly injured when Noel Bellefleur, as a young man, rode one of his horses into the house, for reasons never explained. Sparrow hawks and pigeons and other birds nested in the open towers (and the stone floors of these crude structures were strewn with the skeletons of tiny creatures); there were termites, mice, even rats, even squirrels and skunks and raccoons and snakes in the house; there were, everywhere, warped doors that would not quite close, and warped windows that could not be forced open. Tulip trees badly damaged by porcupine and starving deer were not adequately treated, nor was a magnificent wychelm whose topmost limbs had been struck by lightning. The roof of the east wing had been only superficially repaired after a bad spring storm, and on the very night Mahalaleel arrived at the manor the highest chimney of this roof would be damaged.



But what was to be done? What could possibly be done? To sell Bellefleur Manor was unthinkable (and perhaps impossible), to acquire another mortgage was out of the question. There is also a correlation with the fairy tale about Little Red Riding Hood in the book: Tales of girls alone in the forest many years ago: someone named Hepatica, a distant aunt or cousin, who had walked alone in this very woods, evidently, and had met... or been confronted by ... by whom, by what? Yolande did not recall [1-6]. There were hints that something had happened or almost happened to aunt Veronica, long ago (but it would have to be long ago, Yolande giggled, for poor thick-waisted homely aunt Veronica was hardly the type of woman to drive men into a frenzy of lust), and something had almost happened to Aveline as well. . . . Cautionary tales, frankly silly tales that Yolande only pretended to listen to: she knew very well how foolish the older women were being. You can also draw a parallel between the cat named "Mahalaleel" and the Cheshire Cat from Lewis Carroll's fairy tale "Alice in Wonderland", which are united by a mysterious manner of appearing and disappearing: You can also draw a parallel between the cat named "Mahalaleel" and the Cheshire Cat from Lewis Carroll's fairy tale "Alice in Wonderland", which are united by a mysterious manner of appearing and disappearing: How was it possible, the children asked, that Mahalaleel could be sleeping soundly by the fireplace in the parlor, but when you left the room or only turned your head he was gone—simply gone? Albert and Jasper swore they had seen Mahalaleel up a tall pine back of one of the logging roads, a mile and a half away. It was one of those pines with no branches or limbs for a considerable distance – seventy-five feet or more – and there was Mahalaleel perched on the lowest limb, absolutely motionless, his hair gray and indistinct, his enormous tail curved about to cover his paws, his wide staring intelligent; face terrible as that of a great horned owl about to swoop down upon its prey. They wondered – how could a cat so large manage to climb that tree? – and was he trapped there, would he need help getting down? They called him but he did no more than glance down at them, as if he'd never seen them before. They tried to shake the tree, without success. "Mahalaleel, you'll starve up there!" they shouted. "Mahalaleel, you'd better come home with us!"

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