**Magic Realism Body**

**Beckett 2020**

Use the MS word highlighter to highlight the components of the body paragraph below.

Matilda Murphy Body Paragraph

Tragedies are an overwhelming presence in many magic realist texts. Tragic events often serve as the catalyst for both the characters’ motivations and the magical elements. In both *Life of Pi* and “The Paper Menagerie,” the tragic loss of one’s parent is a moving and devastating form of trauma that sets the stage for the magic.  *Life of Pi* is a clear example of how tragedy functions in a magical realist text. At the start of part two, Pi’s ship, the Tsimtsum, sinks over the Marianas Trench in the Pacific Ocean. This kills Pi’s entire family as well as many of animals from the Pondicherry zoo. Even years later, as an adult, recounting the memory of his family is traumatic to Pi. In looking at the few incomplete photos of his childhood, Pi reveals he cannot picture his mother anymore:

*“The worst of it” he says, “is that I can hardly remember what my mother looks like anymore. I can see her in my mind, but it’s fleeting. As soon as I try to have a good look at her she fades. It’s the same with her voice. If I saw her again in the street, it would all come back. But that’s not likely to happen. It’s very sad not to remember what your mother looks like.* (87)

Like *Life of Pi, “*The Paper Menagerie” deals with the tragic falling out of a child and his mother and her ultimate death. In short, Jack rejects his mother and her Chinese heritage. After vicious and unspeakable bullying, Jack spurns his mother for being so different, shunning her, and her foreign traditions. He goes so far as to abandons his heritage—even the magical origami that comes to life with his mother’s magical breath. It is not until he discovers her letter years after her death, that Jack realizes the monstrous enormity that of what his rejection of his Mom means:

*Son I know that you do not like your Chinese eyes , which are my eyes. I know that you do not like your Chinese hair, which is my hair. But can you understand how much joy your very existence brought to me? And can you understand how it felt wen you stopped talking to me and won’t let me talk to you in Chinese? I felt I was losing everything all over again. Why won’t you talk to me, son? The pain makes it hard to write. (192)*

In both cases the main character is haunted by the loss of his mother. In both cases a trauma that is overwhelming makes the magic of the story all the more potent. The trauma serves as a main catalyst for characters’ motivations and many magical elements of the story.