

Magical Realism and You!

Essentially, magical realism takes a realistic world, a familiar situation, and presents something fantastical, magical, and extraordinary; yet this alien element is accepted, expected, and sometimes even rejected.

Remember that magical realism was first coined as an artistic term but morphed when it embraced literature. For this assignment, you will be working with both the literary characteristics and an artistic representation.

The Story

The first thing you need to do is find a story you want to read and work with. I've placed a number of stories on my webpage. They are all within the genre of magical realism. Read through them to see which one you like best, then select a story. Once you have settled on a story, read it thoroughly, identify the elements of magical realism, and identify any archetypes that are turned around. Also visualize the story (this is really important).

The Collage

Your job is to create a collage based on a situation that is part of a magical realism text. How do you do this? Good question, and part of the point of this assignment is that you are not guided by me. Think about how Garcia Marquez presents his story "Old Man." He has a priest who is a lumberjack, a woman who turned into a spider, a sky sad since Tuesday. To visually represent these, you could put eyes in the sky, draw tears, have the head of the Pope on the body of a big time wrestler, and do all kinds of fun things with women and spiders. Think about how Cortazar plays with the reader in "Axolotl." If you were to visually depict some of this story, you could have a man's head on an Axolotl riding a bike. You could put them in a French cafe sipping coffee. You could put all kinds of famous people behind bars in a zoo.

Your collage should be 8x11 and images should *fully* cover it. It should be neat and relevant. Do NOT use lined paper. If you need poster board, I have some I'll provide.

The Apologia

You may do an amazing job with your collage, but I need to thoroughly understand what your choices are and how they present the concepts behind magical realism. How do I get that information? Through your apologia! For those of you who don't know, an apologia (or apology as it is sometimes called) is often used in literature not to apologize for something written but as a defense or explanation. The apology gives you the opportunity to address the reader and explain exactly how you integrated elements of magical realism into your collage. It fills in the gaps for the reader, viewer, and evaluator.

Your apologia should include the following:

- A *brief* plot summary of your selected story,
- A presentation of elements of magical realism as they appear in your selected story,
- A presentation of the archetypes presented in class and how they do/do not appear in your story
- An explanation of why you presented what you presented in your collage and how they address elements of magical realism.
- Examples drawn from the text including properly cited quotations,
- A strong introduction and conclusion.

This paper should be at least two pages, double-spaced, 12 point. Because it is an apologia, you may use “I,” but it is formal in the sense that I will pay careful attention to your writing: its content, organization, style and correctness.

Collage: 20 points

Apologia: 35 points