

## Comparison of magic realism with fantasy

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Some people mistakenly confuse magic realism as a genre with fantasy, but in fact, this genre is distinctly separate. Magic realism and fantasy, the two genres, though often confused, have actually quite similarities and differences. From the first sight magic realism can be seen as like fantasy, and fantasy also can be confused with magic realism. It is a big blunder. Magic realism is existence of fantasy elements in the realistic setting. It is between realism and fantasy. But not mixture both of them as mentioned German historian, photographer, and art critic Franz Roh.

According to Roh then magic realism is not a mixture of reality and fantasy, but a way to uncover the mystery hidden in everyday reality.[1]

The Spanish writer and philosopher Jose Ortega y Gasset had Roh's book partly translated into Spanish in the 1927 June issue of his influential *Revista de Occidente*, and the term magic realism subsequently became widely used by literary critics in Latin America. There the concept of magic realism became connected with the myths and cultures of the indigenous populations and thus departed from the European notion which was more individualistic.[2]

As magic realism first appeared in Latin American literature, literary works in this genre were written in connection with legends and myths of that indigenous population's culture. But magic realism is not fantasy. They are close to each other but not the same. The focal point is not the dreamlike, fantastic, or supernatural elements that appear, but rather the very real world that serves as the framework for the literary work. For more clearing this idea we decided to analyze first what is realism and fantasy and then we learn magic realism in details and compare them with each other.

Realism refers generally to any artistic or literary portrayal of life in a faithful, accurate manner, unclouded by false ideals, literary conventions, or misplaced aesthetic glorification and beautification of the world. It is a theory or tendency in writing to depict events in human life in a matter-of-fact, straightforward manner. It is an attempt to reflect life "as it actually is"--a concept in some ways similar to what the Greeks would call mimesis. Typically, "realism" involves careful description of everyday life, "warts and all," often the lives of middle and lower class characters in the case of socialist realism. In general, realism seeks to avoid supernatural, transcendental, or surreal events. It tends to focus as much on the everyday, the mundane, and the normal as events that are extraordinary, exceptional, or extreme. [3] As it's mentioned here, realism is full of truth without any coloring and hyperbola. Consistently, fantasy elements in realistic works are out of speech. In realistic literary works events happen in a real world, with common people within reasonable limits. Writer writes only truth about life of people, sometimes it is connected with history and politics.

Fantasy is an imaginative fiction dependent for effect on strangeness of setting (such as other worlds or times) and of characters (such as supernatural or

unnatural beings). Examples include William Shakespeare's "A Midsummer Night's Dream", Jonathan Swift's "Gulliver's Travels", J.R.R. Tolkien's "The Lord of the Rings", and T.H. White's "The Once and Future King". Science fiction can be seen as a form of fantasy, but the terms are not interchangeable, as science fiction usually is set in the future and is based on some aspect of science or technology, while fantasy is set in an imaginary world and features the magic of mythical beings. [4] In fantastic literary work events take place in future, or in another planet or world. And of course, it is full of fantasy elements as unnatural beings like monsters, vampires, trolls, dragons, wizards and magic. Writer depicts his fantasy in his work with the help of hyperbola and creates fantastic super heroes with extraordinary magic power. This genre is mostly used in children literature.

But Magic realism is often extremely serious, and it contains embedded commentary about art, culture, and human nature. People may deeply enjoy these works, drawn into an interesting world and the fascinating characters, but it is typically far from escapist, forcing people to confront very real issues and situations. Magic realism is a genre of art, literature, and performance in which elements of the fantastic are presented within the context of very real scenes and events, typically without comment. [5]

Magic Realism is a literary movement associated with a style of writing or technique that incorporates magical or supernatural events into realistic narrative without questioning the improbability of these events. This fusion of fact and fantasy is meant to question the nature of reality as well as call attention to the act of creation. By making lived experience appear extraordinary, magical realist writers contribute to a re-envisioning of Latin-American culture as vibrant and complex. [6] In spite of this artistic genre emerged in Latin America, although examples can be drawn from other regions of the world as well, especially, in English and American literature. Some notable figures in this field include Angela Carter, Toni Morrison, J.K. Rowling, Stephanie Meyer, Salman Rushdie. Each of these writers could open new and different features of magic realism in their pieces. For example J.K. Rowling's "Harry Potter and Sorcerer's Stone" can be good example in this case. J.K. Rowling could connect magic realism with fantasy. The beginning of the "Harry Potter and Sorcerer's Stone" is referred to magic realism, and another parts of the book refer to fantasy genre. So, this book includes both magic realism and fantasy genres.

Harry looked into the fire. Now he came to think about it . . . every odd thing that had ever made his aunt and uncle furious with him had happened when he, Harry, had been upset or angry . . . chased by Dudley's gang, he had somehow found himself out of their reach . . . dreading going to school with that ridiculous hair-cut, he'd managed to make it grow back . . . and the very last time Dudley had hit him, hadn't he got his revenge, without even realizing he was doing it? Hadn't he set a boa constrictor on him?[7]

As you noticed this genre is characterized by paradoxical events which never fully explained by the author, and these events are often accepted as perfectly normal and in fact usual by the characters or figures in the world of the artwork. For

example, a ghost may appear in a novel, and while its presence might seem difficult for readers to accept, the characters seem to have no difficulty with the ghost's existence and actions. A good example of this process is "Beloved" by Salman Rushdie.

Often, very terrible things happen in art in this genre. Acts of sadism, torture, and murder may be committed by various characters, and people often struggle with intensely brutal, sad, or frustrating situations. The resolution of such situations may be imperfect, reflecting the reality of the world, and readers and viewers are often disquieted and even disturbed after delving into this genre. Lasting lessons and memories tend to endure for years after absorbing an example of this genre, and sometimes viewers or readers even find themselves haunted by a work of art. [5] In this case Stephanie Meyer's a series of book "Twilight" or Oscar Wilde's "Dorrian Grey" can be good examples.

In Angela Carter's magic realist works fantasy elements were included as natural part of our world. Her "Nights at the circus" can be a good example of this fact. This is story about the person who is half swan and half woman and can fly. The novel focuses on the life and exploits of Sophie Fevvers, a woman who is hatched from an egg laid by unknown parents and ready to develop fully fledged wings. At the time of the story, she has become a celebrated aerialist, and she captivates the young journalist Jack Walser, who runs away with the circus and falls into a world that his journalistic exploits had not prepared him to encounter. She is six feet two inches tall, curvaceous, peroxide blonde, and the largest personality within the story.

In this novel, Carter combines the mythical with the realistic, creating a playful, whirlwind adventure for the reader that is often as chaotic and lively as a real circus. In adding this magical, playful element to the novel, Carter is able to infuse the story with underlying political and social messages. The whimsy in her novel is a tool that enables Carter to address pertinent social issues such as patriarchy and individual rights. Furthermore, in the two main characters, Fevvers and Walser, she illustrates the contrast between the magical and the believable. Fevvers' status as half swan and half woman remains questionable and surreal while Walser's role as the pragmatic journalist looking for the facts grounds the story in reality. Through magical realism, Carter is able to address everyday concerns through an engaging and playful form.[8]

"But, now, unused as they were to so much exercise, my wings began . . . oh, God! to give out! For going up involves an altogether different set of cogs and pulleys than coming down, sir, although I did not know that, then. Our studies in comparative physiology were yet to come.

So I leaps up, much as a dolphin leaps -- which I now know is not the way to do it and have already misjudged how high I should leap, in the first place, my weary wings already folding up beneath me. My heart misses. I think my first flight will be my last and I shall pay with my life the price of my hubris.

Scattering the cherries I had gathered in a soft, black hail over the garden, I grabbed at the guttering and -- oh! and, ah! the guttering gave way beneath me! The old lead parted company with the eaves with a groaning sigh and

there I dangled, all complete woman, again, my wings having seized up in perfect terror of a human fate but I reached out and grips her by the arms. Only love, great love, could have given me such strength, sir, to permit me to haul her in onto the roof against the pull of gravity as you might haul in, against the tide, a drowning person." [9]

Chanady (1985) argued that authorial reticence (i.e., the lack of an explanation of the discrepancy between the fantasy elements and the real world) plays a specific role in magical realist works. In particular, she argues that in magical realism, authorial reticence "... naturalizes the supernatural and the strange world view presented in the text. ... the supernatural is not explained away, but simply brought down to the level of reality..." [10]. However, the examples presented here suggest that normal magic plays a similar role in popular fantasy. In all cases, the magic is presented as merely another element of the story world, and it is accepted as natural in the story world by the narrator, by the characters, and, presumably, by the reader. Indeed, popular fantasy works are rarely about the presence per se of fantasy elements; although the mechanics of the plot generally depend on magic in the story world, the theme and the interest value of the story typically hinge on other aspects of the narrative. For example, the initiating plot event in *The Farthest Shore* is the lack of magic in certain regions of the world; "Green Magic" revolves around the special characteristics of "green" magic but not those of magic in general; and both *The Dragon Waiting* and *Nine Princes in Amber* have the form of royal court intrigues involving the ascension to the throne. Thus, I would argue that in popular fantasy, just as in magical realism, the magic is "naturalized" and "brought down to the level of reality." [11]

So in my conclusion if all these facts and theories show in one concrete formula it will be like this,

In fantasy: "Fantasy elements + Fantasy setting = Fantasy.

And in magic realism: "Fantasy elements + Realism setting = Magic realism".

Not all the books with fantastical features refer to fantasy genre, and not the all books with realistic setting refer to realism. There is a golden mean between them. And this golden mean is Magic Realism.

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