

Magical Realism

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What is it?

An artistic style or genre in fiction where magical elements are mixed to become realistic in order to enter a much deeper understanding of reality.



What purpose does this technique serve in books (why do authors use it)?

To give a real situation a touch of something that is hard to believe, like a magical or fantastic creature. Authors mix these two worlds and is often to give a spin to the story with something magical, but at the same time still use a real character.



How has it appeared in *Oscar Wao* so far, and what future impact do you think it will have?

Magical realism in, [The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao](#) has appeared numerous times, in a common way, best shared along with fukú and zafa.

In the past reading one encounters many events where magical realism is manifested. As Yunior and Oscar begin to their lives together, Oscar tells Yunior, “he was cursed” also saying, “my family are Sureños, from Azua/ we know everything about curses.” One can say this phenomena, is if not the greatest issue which has to be dealt by many characters. Later on as their relationship shatters, after Oscar tried to commit suicide, “it was the curse” that made him do it, thus noticing how there is a long presence fukú in his family lineage.

Then one learns two men attacked Beli, under the command of Trujillo. When Beli managed to escape the men, she dragged herself through the canfield, which, “are no fucking joke” but right before she lost all hopes, Beli heard a creature’s voice. Hearing that voice made Beli hold on to a cane, almost like, “the cane didn’t want her to leave.” She could also listen to the creature singing, and, “sometimes she saw the creature’s chabine eyes flashing through the stalks. Yo me llamo sueño de la madrugada.” After having read that passage, confusion arose, what is this thing Diaz is talking about? It could have been the zafa to Beli’s survival, yet still being one of physical features, therefore leaving magical realism all to the readers imagination, it certainly is manifested.

Later on in the chapter named La Inca in Decline, right after Beli was harshly and brutally beaten up by two of Trujillo’s gangsters, but, “through the numerous power of prayer La Inca saved the girl’s life, laid an A-plus zafa on the Cabral family fukú. Here one can see how Dominican culture does create a big impact in families like this one, believing that such unrealistic, yet very realistic things like a fukú would actually save a girls life.

In this text there are many different manifestations about magical realism, “there are still many, and off the island” who say that what happened to Beli was the source of a, “high-level fukú.” One can clearly see how the Cabral family and other people in the text are affected if not once, by a sort of magical realism, depicted by Diaz in many ways and forms.

How does the technique of magical realism make the novel, *Oscar Wao*, more true to Dominican or Latin American culture?

The technique of magical realism makes the novel more Dominican in things such as fantasy and science fiction which are present throughout the book. This involves the terms *Fuku* and *Zafa*, these are one of the most important elements of the culture. An example of magic realism in the book is how Beli finds the talking mongoose which leads her to safety. This mongoose is science fiction and fantasy since it is not possible for this to happen in real life. This event appears again in the book when Oscar is about to jump from the bridge. In this case the mongoose was probably there to stop him from jumping but Oscar ignored it and still jumped. This mongoose is a great example of *Zafa* against the *Fukú* that the family has.



Examples of Magical Realism

- “So as Beli was flitting in and out of amiable mongoose if not for its golden lion eyes and the absolute black of its pelt. This one was quite large for its species and placed its intelligent little paws on her chest and stared down at her” (Díaz 149).
- “Because no matter what you believe, fukú believes in you” (Díaz 5).

