



MAGIC REALISM

presented by shake & stir theatre co

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REALISM

BACKGROUND.

Realism began as a theatrical form in the late 19th century largely as a reaction to the existing forms of the day whose stock situations and often overblown melodramatics, started to become stale and hackneyed. Early exponents of the style were Zola and Ibsen, and of course, Stanislavsky (who has influenced realistic acting for nearly 100 years).

Michael Fitcher states: *“A realistic play is a play which is primarily written in dialogue which reflects everyday speech, and whose situations mirror real life as we normally experience it.”*

Essentially realism is about placing the actor and the character he/she embodies at the centre of the theatrical experience. It is about the actor connecting with the role and the job of the director is to facilitate that (as well as serving the playwright’s intentions!). The actor has to be wooed and inspired into the world of the play.

But wait, is anything ever just ‘Realism’ anymore?

The constant struggle to find a pure play to respond to....

HYBRID FORMS / SUBSETS

Genres that spring from Realism, but are hybrid in nature and mess with the genre of Realism:

- Australian Gothic Theatre
- Verbatim Theatre
- Theatre in Education
- Music Theatre
- In Your Face Theatre
- Forum Theatre
- Magic Realism

WHERE DID **MAGIC REALISM** SPRING FROM?

- Similar to, and inspired by Surrealism, but different as it focuses on the **actual existence of the magical elements within a mundane world**, rather than Surrealism's **subconscious reality**.
- Springs from a Latin American literature movement in the 1920s – 1950s, influenced by Surrealism.

DEFINITIONS OF MAGIC REALISM



Importantly, in magical realism the fantastical and supernatural exist in a realistic setting and are almost always accepted by other characters as normal. They coexist in a realistic world that would ordinarily make them irreconcilable.

It is generally recognized that rather than explaining reality using natural or physical laws, the magical realist creates a new reality. This is characterized by the matter-of-fact inclusion of fantastic or magical elements into seemingly realistic fiction.

Magic Realism expresses a primarily realistic view of the real world while also adding or revealing magical elements. It also draws upon the conventions of fables, myths, and allegory. Magical realism often refers to fiction and literature in particular, with magic or the supernatural presented in an otherwise real-world or mundane setting.

CONVENTIONS OF MAGIC REALISM

- Non-human characters
- Timelessness / unusual time shifts
- The mundane VS the fantastic
- Characters with supernatural powers
- Other worlds
- A sense of mystery / eerie atmospheres
- Extraordinary events unable to be explained by rational thought
- Myths and legends
- Moments where the unreal becomes real

ELEMENTS OF DRAMA / CONVENTIONS OF MAGIC REALISM

ELEMENT	CONVENTION
THE HUMAN CONTEXT	Human & Non Human Characters
TENSION	Supernatural Elements, Everyday relationships
PLACE	'Realistic' and 'Other' worlds
TIME	Timelessness & unusual time shifts
MOVEMENT	The Fantastic VS The Mundane
MOOD	Eerie atmospheres
SYMBOLS	Incorporation of Myths & Fables

LET'S EXPLORE

Warm Up – Chicken Evolution, Shake Banana

Improvisation – Personification, Magic Spell

Script Work modeled – WILL-I-AM

Script Work extension – *Skeeter's School for Successful Superheroes*

Other examples: *Animal Farm, Dracula*



IMPROVISATION GAMES

PERSONIFICATION

Get students to think about what objects might say if they could speak. Create a performance space and have some objects you can find – such as a chair, speakers, school bag, water bottle etc. One person enters the space which has one of the objects in it – another student is the voice of that object. The human should be shocked that they can speak and then see where the improvisation goes. The chair could be upset that it always gets sat on, or happy to have someone sitting with it because it had been alone for so long... Repeat with a new person and new object.

MAGIC SPELL

Start a simple improvisation – and allocate a wizard or witch (or teacher to play this role). At any point the Wizard/Witch can call out 'MAGIC' and everyone must freeze. They can then cast a spell on someone in the impro, changing what happens. When the impro starts again, this spell must be implemented, but the other players shouldn't show that they know it was magic, they should react normally.

POSSIBLE SCENARIOS

There might be a scene where a woman is in the florist buying flowers for her friend. Wizard calls MAGIC and casts the spell on the Florist that she now dances everywhere she goes. When the scene continues she must justify the dancing, she can't say 'I had a spell cast on me'.

A parent / teacher interview discussing progress. MAGIC is called and they are now at Hogwarts, but the scene must continue as normal, still discussing the progress of the student (as if completely normal that they go to Hogwarts).

Siblings cleaning up a mess. MAGIC - the mess is slime that their pet dragon has vomitted up.

Always feel free to get in touch!

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SCRIPT EXCERPT: WILL-I-AM

By Nelle Lee

PUCK

So....

LENNY

So what?

PUCK

Aren't you wondering who I am?

LENNY SHRUGS

LENNY

I guess.

PUCK

Puck. I'm Puck.

LENNY

Hey Puck, Lenny.

PUCK

Yeah I know who you are.... Aren't you going to ask what I'm doing in your room?

LENNY

Sure... what are you doing in my room?

PUCK

I'm here to teach you about Shakespeare.

LENNY

Why?

PUCK

Because you hate it.

LENNY

Not really, I just don't get it. So I don't bother with it.

CONSIDER THIS

In your group, answer the following questions about your scene.

What has happened just before this?

Where is it set? Be specific.

Who are the characters?

How old are your characters?

What does Puck want Lenny to do?

What have they got to lose?

Who starts with the highest status?

When does the status shift?

STAGING CONSIDERATIONS

Putting your elements together to create a piece of theatre.

What is around you - set pieces, noise, other people?

Your vocal qualities - whispering, yelling, no voice - typing?

Your physical qualities - sitting, standing, facing each other, fast, slow?

Other considerations?

MAGIC REALISM

What elements of Magic Realism exist in this excerpt?

SCRIPT EXCERPT: WILL-I-AM

By Nelle Lee

PUCK

Well that's what I'm here to change!

LENNY

Na, not likely bro.

PUCK

Why?

LENNY

Because, it's Shakespeare. You know? Only drama freaks and nerds like Shakespeare.

NERD 1

Oh. My goodness. I am SO EXCITED about this SHAKESPEARE unit!

NERD 2

ME TOO!

NERD 1

It's been too long. Too long away from my ruffled neck hero.

PUCK

That is an exaggeration

LENNY

Na.

PUCK

Yeah.

LENNY

Na.

PUCK

How would you know if you haven't even given it a chance?

CONSIDER THIS

In your group, answer the following questions about your scene.

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What elements of Magic Realism exist in this excerpt?

SCRIPT EXCERPT: WILL-I-AM

By Nelle Lee

LENNY

Hello? I see what you're up to... you're trying to make me look like an idiot. Ha, well jokes on you Puck! Don't even care.

LENNY SETTLES DOWN WITH HIS NOTEPAD AND PEN. HE BEGINS HIS RAPPING AGAIN.

LENNY

It's Monday and I have to go to school,
I'd rather stay at home and be a fool.

TITANIA

What angel wakes me from my flowery bed?

LENNY

At morning tea I buy a sausage roll
Don't need a knife or fork, a plate or bowl....

TITANIA

I pray thee, gentle mortal, sing again:
Mine ear is much enamour'd of thy note;
So is mine eye enthralled to thy shape;
And thy fair virtue's force perforce doth move me
On the first view to say, to swear, I love thee.

LENNY

You're pretty hot.

TITANIA

You're as wise as you are beautiful.

LENNY

Ahh nope. Not true.

CONSIDER THIS

In your group, answer the following questions about your scene.

What has happened just before this?

Where is it set? Be specific.

Who are the characters?

How old are your characters?

What does Titania want Lenny to do?

What have they got to lose?

Who starts with the highest status?

When does the status shift?

STAGING CONSIDERATIONS

Putting your elements together to create a piece of theatre.

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What elements of Magic Realism exist in this excerpt?

SKEETER'S SCHOOL FOR SUCCESSFUL SUPERHEROES

EXCERPT 1

Alex (to the audience) Phew! Hi, how's it going? Welcome to my life. I guess you could it's a pretty normal life. Just like any other 12 year old.

WE HEAR A LOUD BANG AND YELLING FROM OFF STAGE.

Oh... and there is that. Sorry, I forgot to introduce myself. My name is Alex Power. Yep you guessed it. Daughter of the almighty crime fighting due Mr & Mrs Power.

MR & MRS POWER ENTER

Mr Power Desley! Did you put my Super-Shirt in the dryer again? Look!

MR POWER COMES OUT WITH IS TINY SHRUNK SHIRT.

Mrs Power No darl, it must have been one of the kids.

Mr Power Darcie! Fynn! Inside now!

Alex Darcie, my older sister. She just graduated from the Intergalactical School of TimeTravel.

Darcie Yeah? What is it?

Alex She was number two in her class.

Mr Power Did you put this in the dryer?

Darcie Ha no! It must have been Fynn.

FYNN ENTERS

Fynn Did you want me mum?

Alex That's Fynn he's what you call a Climator which means he can pretty much do what he wants with the weather. He's only 5 but he could bring on a cyclone just like that!

Mrs Power Fynn sweetie did you put Daddy's suit in the dryer?

Fynn No way mummy.

Mrs Power Ok, good boy.

Fynn Thanks mummy.

Alex He is also a total suck up.

Fynn Love you.

Mrs Power Love you too my special boy!

Mr Power It must have been...

SKEETER'S SCHOOL FOR SUCCESSFUL SUPERHEROES

ALEX APPROACHES THE GROUP.

Alex Hi family!

Fynn Hi Alex! Did you see me on the news?

Alex I sure did little bro! You looked awesome!

Fynn YOU are awesome.

Mrs Power Alex, did you put Dad's super suit in the dryer? I won't get mad, I just need to know.

Alex Umm I think I might have.

Mr Power Alex! This was a brand new suit!

Mrs Power Bruce we promised we wouldn't get mad...

Alex I'm sorry Dad...

SKEETER'S SCHOOL FOR SUCCESSFUL SUPERHEROES

EXCERPT 2

Mrs Power So, what did you get up to today Alex?

Mr Power It's boiling hot in here!

Alex Nothing much...

Mr Power Fynn? Could you?

Fynn You got it Daddeo!

FYNN CLASPS HIS HANDS TOGETHER AND JUMPS INTO THE AIR, LANDING ON ONE FOOT. INSTANTLY THE ROOM TURNS FREEZING.

Darcie *(TEETH CHATTERING)* Too cold. Too cold Fynn!

Mrs Power Yes, down a notch please darling.

Fynn Sorry.

FYNN PERFORMS THE ACTION AGAIN. THE GROUP INSTANTLY RELAXES.

Mr Power That's better!

Alex Nice work Fynn.

Fynn I'm getting better at it, right Mum?

Mrs Power You sure are!

Fynn Weeeee! Soon my cape will be as long as Dads! Hey how come Alex didn't come and help us save the day mummy?

Alex Ummm...

Darcie Because she doesn't have any powers Fynn...

FYNN LOOKS AROUND. CONFUSED.

Fynn But why?

Alex Because... I don't know what my power is suppose to be.

Fynn But why?

Mrs Power Because sometimes sweetheart, some Superheroes take a bit longer to get their powers.

Fynn But...

Mr Power That's enough Fynn. *(TO ALEX)* It's alright love.

Alex Fynn's right Dad, why don't I have my powers yet?

SKEETER'S SCHOOL FOR SUCCESSFUL SUPERHEROES

EXCERPT 3

Mrs Power Darl, you can't let it get to you.

Mr Power If you've got any powers in there, they'll find their way out eventually.

Alex It's so embarrassing being the ONLY person in the family without any superhero powers...

Mrs Power I know, but it's not a competition. You'll get there

Alex I guess... I just hate being the different one...

MR & MRS POWERS MOVE AWAY FROM ALEX, JUST A SMIDGE.

Mr Power You shouldn't do that Des.

Mrs Power What?

Alex *(to the audience)* This is the awkward moment when your parents talk about you, thinking you can't hear them, but really you're only 2 metres away from them...

Mr Power Get her hopes up.

Mrs Power I'm just trying to make her feel better. Look how down she is.

Mr Power Maybe it's time we talk about getting some outside help?

Mrs Power No, she doesn't want to hear that now!

Alex Hear what now?

Mrs Power Nothing love.

Alex No, I definitely heard you say 'she doesn't need to hear that now'.

Mr Power Well it's just... your mother and I think it might be an idea to... maybe talk to someone about your problems.

Alex Like a shrink?

Mrs Power Well, no not exactly. Maybe like a... tutor or something?

Alex No mum! No one else in the family had a tutor? Why do I have to?

Mr Power Sometimes it's good to get an outside eye love.

Alex I'll get powers. I promise, just don't make me go to some weird tutor!

Mrs Power It doesn't have to be a tutor? Something else?

Alex Like what?

Mrs Power I don't know, but I'm sure there are plenty of children with the same problem. We'll find somewhere that will help you find out what powers you have.

SKEETER'S SCHOOL FOR SUCCESSFUL SUPERHEROES

EXCERPT 4

TV AD Wondering if you even HAVE powers?

Alex Ummm...

TV AD Are you the only one in your family WITHOUT any powers.

Alex Mum...?

TV AD Well then you should apply for SKEETER'S SCHOOL FOR SUCCESSFUL

SUPERHEROES.

Mrs Power That's a lot of s's.

TV AD Established in 1992, Skeeter's has quickly become the world's leading training institution for potential superheroes. Entry is via application. Call this number for more information 445625658452100.

Mrs Power Wait! I didn't get that!

TV AD Didn't get that? It's 445625658452100.

THE TV AD DISAPPEARS AND BOTH THE PARENTS LOOK AT EACH OTHER THEN BACK TO ALEX.

Alex No.

Mr Power Alex...

Alex Please don't send me there!

Mrs Power It's a sign dar!!

Alex No Mum! Please, not boarding school! I don't want to be the reject kid that get's shipped off to boarding school!

Mr Power You're not a reject Alex. We're trying to do what's best.

Alex No no no... you don't want to send me there. It's so far away! And it's probably VERY expensive. Have you even thought about the cost?

THE ADVERTISEMENT POPS UP AGAIN.

TV AD Thinking about cost? Families with more than one superhero guardian are entitled to the 100% government superhero rebate offer!

Mr Power 100%?

TV AD That's right! 100%! Ok. Bye bye.

SKEETER'S SCHOOL FOR SUCCESSFUL SUPERHEROES

EXCERPT 5

Alex Please Mum, Dad. Don't make me go...

Mr Power We would never force you to go. If you really are against it. We'll scrap the idea.

Alex Ok. I really am against it.

Mrs Power Do you want to just think about it?

Mr Power Desley, she doesn't want to go.

Mrs Power Alright love... We just want what's best for you. Come on, let's go have a cuppa.

MRS POWER HUGS ALEX.

Mrs Power You alright?

ALEX NODS. MR & MRS POWER EXIT.

Alex Skeeter's School for Successful Superheroes. Sounds ridiculous. What kind of a name is Skeeter? And NO I'm not a chicken. I'm not scared of being away from home. I'm not scared of boarding school. No. Not scared. It's just... well I would be the first person in my WHOLE family who didn't get their powers all by themselves....

ALEX THINKS FOR A MOMENT THEN HEADS INTO THE KITCHEN TO THE REST OF THE FAMILY.

Alex OK. I'll do it.

Mrs Power Alex sweetheart, you don't have to decide this right now.

Alex No Mum. I have to go. It's the only way I'm going to find out about my powers once and for all.

Mr Power You are such a brave girl.