



IDX G10 English H

Study Guide Issue S1 Final

By Virginia, Edited by Isabella

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Magical Realism

(1) Definition & Origin

- A literary hybrid combining **realistic narrative with magical/fantastical elements**.
- Term became popular in the 1980s, but works existed earlier.
- **Originated from Latin American literature** (“Latin American Boom” of the 1960s–70s).

(2) Key Characteristics

- **Fusion of real and magical:** Everyday settings with surreal events treated as normal.
- **Political engagement:** Often used to critique political/social realities.
- **Historical blending:** Time is fluid; past, present, and myth coexist.

(3) Major Authors & Works

- Jorge Luis Borges: Labyrinths (short stories, e.g., “Funes the Memorious”).
- Gabriel García Márquez: One Hundred Years of Solitude (masterpiece of the genre).
- Salman Rushdie: Midnight’s Children (India’s history via magical realism).
- Günter Grass: The Tin Drum (post-war Germany).
- José Saramago: The Cave (allegorical, political critique).

(4) Importance

- Allows writers to address political issues under oppressive regimes.
- Breaks down boundaries between history, myth, and fiction.
- Creates a global style without borders.

Southern Gothic Literature

(1) Definition & Roots

- Sub-genre of **Gothic literature** focused on the American South.
- Roots in British Romantic and Gothic traditions.

- **Explores social, moral, and character flaws in Southern society.**

(2) Key Characteristics

- **Grotesque characters:** Flawed, alienated, often physically or mentally broken.
- **Decaying settings:** Plantations, small towns, symbolizing moral decay.
- **Dark themes:** Racism, poverty, violence, repression, hidden history.
- **Supernatural elements:** Ghosts, hauntings, uncanny events.
- **Oxymorons/paradoxes in language** (e.g., “sweltering shade”).

(3) Major Authors

- Edgar Allan Poe (foundational).
- William Faulkner
- Flannery O'Connor (Southern Grotesque, Catholic themes).
- Harper Lee, Truman Capote, Carson McCullers.

(4) Importance

- Exposes the repressed history of the South (slavery, racism).
- Uses horror and irony to critique social norms.
- **Focuses on outsiders and the marginalized.**

American Minimalism

(1) Definition & Style

- A literary style emphasizing **simplicity, sparenness, and subtlety.**
- Emerged in late 20th century as a reaction to maximalist prose.

(2) Key Characteristics

- 1. Economy of Language:** Sparse prose, few adjectives/adverbs.
- 2. Focus on the Ordinary:** Everyday life, mundane settings, relatable characters.
- 3. Understated Emotion:** Feelings are implied, not stated.
- 4. Ambiguity:** Open endings, unresolved conflicts, reader interpretation.
- 5. Sparse Detail:** Minimal backstory, concrete imagery over metaphor.
- 6. Themes of Disconnection:** Isolation, alienation, existential angst.
- 7. Flat Narration:** Detached tone, neutral perspective, emphasis on dialogue/action.

(3) Importance

- Reflects modern alienation and emotional restraint.
- Forces readers to read between the lines.
- **Captures the quiet complexities of ordinary life.**

Point of View (POV) & Narrative Techniques

(1) POV Type Pronoun Key Trait

1st Person “I” Subjective (inner thoughts) or Objective (external only)

2nd Person “You” Rare, directly addresses reader

3rd Person “He/She/They” Limited (one character’s thoughts), Objective (no thoughts), Omniscient (all thoughts)

4th Person “We” / “One” Rare; collective or hypothetical

(2) Key Narrative Techniques

1. **Anticlimax:** Build-up leads to muted/disappointing outcome → emphasizes theme over action.
2. **Cliffhanger:** Unresolved ending → engages reader’s imagination.
3. **Flashback:** Shifts to past → provides context/background.
4. **Framing Device:** Story within a story → adds reflective/allegorical layer.
5. **In Medias Res:** Starts in middle of action → creates immediacy.
6. **Interior Monologue:** Character’s private thoughts → reveals inner conflict.
7. **Plot Twist:** Unexpected turn → reshapes understanding of story.
8. **Stream of Consciousness:** Mimics unstructured thought flow → messy, emotional, nonlinear.
9. **Unreliable Narrator:** Biased/flawed narrator → encourages critical reading.

Vocabulary

Here are the vocabulary words with definitions and example sentences:

Pallid – adj. pale, lacking color or vitality.

After weeks indoors, his pallid complexion showed he needed sunlight.

Prodigious – adj. remarkably large or impressive.

She made a prodigious effort to finish the marathon.

Geniality – n. friendly and cheerful manner.

His geniality made everyone feel welcome at the party.

Gratuitous – adj. unnecessary, uncalled for.

The movie's gratuitous violence added nothing to the plot.

Suffuse – v. to gradually spread through or over.

A warm glow began to suffuse the evening sky.

Incredulous – adj. unwilling to believe something.

She gave him an incredulous look when he claimed he'd seen a UFO.

Rabble – n. a disorderly crowd or mob.

The rabble gathered outside the gates, shouting demands.

Indignant – adj. feeling anger over unfair treatment.

He was indignant when accused of lying.

Imperious – adj. assuming power without justification; arrogant.

Her imperious tone annoyed her subordinates.

Ruminating – v. thinking deeply about something.

He spent the afternoon ruminating over his career choices.

Delirium – n. a state of wild excitement or confusion.

The fever put him into a state of delirium.

Supine – adj. lying face upward; passive.

He lay supine on the grass, staring at the clouds.

Reel – v. to stagger or feel dizzy.

The unexpected news made her reel in shock.

Anecdote – n. a short amusing or interesting story.

She told a funny anecdote about her first day at work.

Unorthodox – adj. not following traditional methods.

His unorthodox teaching style engaged the students.

Semblance – n. the appearance or resemblance of something.

They tried to maintain a semblance of order.

Squeamish – adj. easily nauseated or shocked.

She's too squeamish to watch medical dramas.

Patronizing – adj. treating with an apparent kindness that betrays a feeling of superiority.

His patronizing advice only irritated her.

Fruitless – adj. failing to achieve the desired results.

The search for the missing keys proved fruitless.

Deferential – adj. showing respect and esteem.

He was deferential toward his elderly mentor.

Subvert – v. to undermine or overthrow.

The rebels sought to subvert the government.

Titter – v. to laugh nervously or quietly.

A titter went through the audience at the awkward joke.

Rejuvenate – v. to make someone or something look or feel younger or more lively.

The vacation helped rejuvenate her spirits.

Quaint – adj. attractively old-fashioned.

They stayed in a quaint cottage in the countryside.

Temperament – n. a person's nature or character.

Her calm temperament made her a good mediator.

Guffaw – v. to laugh loudly and heartily.

He let out a guffaw at the comedian's punchline.

Mollify – v. to soothe or calm.

He tried to mollify the angry customer with an apology.

Reproach – v. to express disapproval or disappointment.

Her eyes reproached him for his forgetfulness.

Imperceptible – adj. too slight or gradual to be seen or felt.

The changes in the painting were imperceptible to most.

Embellish – v. to make more attractive by adding decorative details.

She liked to embellish her stories with exciting details.

Sublime – adj. of such excellence or beauty as to inspire awe.

They watched the sublime sunset over the mountains.

Balk – v. to hesitate or refuse to proceed.

The horse balked at jumping the high fence.

Ardor – n. enthusiasm or passion.

She spoke about her research with great ardor.

Wanton – adj. deliberate and unprovoked; reckless.

The wanton destruction of the historic building angered many.

Bluster – v. to talk in a loud, aggressive, or indignant way.

He would bluster about politics but never take action.

Abjection – n. a state of humiliation or misery.

The refugees lived in abjection after losing their homes.

Superfluous – adj. unnecessary, more than enough.

His lengthy explanation was superfluous; we already understood.

Listless – adj. lacking energy or enthusiasm.

The hot weather made everyone feel listless.

Vermin – n. wild animals harmful to crops or farm animals; also used for pests.

The old barn was infested with vermin.

Vantage – n. a position giving a strategic advantage.

From his vantage on the hill, he could see the whole valley.