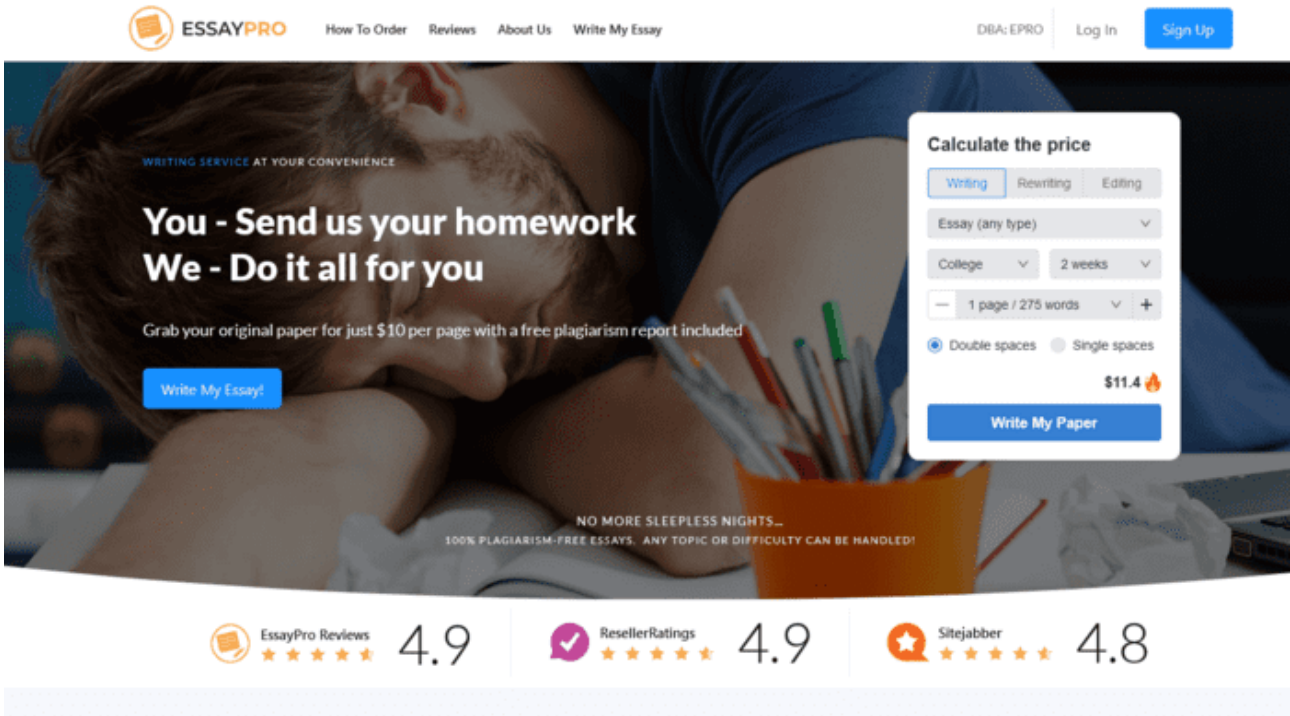


# Painting and Writing with Magical Realism



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## Painting and Writing with Magical Realism

The term Magical Realism describes an artistic style of painting and writing. In these paintings and novels the composer "interweaves, in an ever-shifting pattern, a sharply etched Realism in representing ordinary events and descriptive details together with fantastic and dreamlike elements" (Abrams). Some of the Magical [Realism](#) writers are said to be Gabriel Garcia Marques in Columbia, Gunter Grass in Germany, and John Fowls in England. Understanding the history and theory of Magical Realism will help clarify the meaning of the term.

No one can really say who coined the phrase 'Magical Realism,' but some say that "in 1925 to champion a new direction in painting, Franz Roh originated the term Magical Realism to characterize this painting's return to Realism after Expressionism's more abstract style" (Zamora and Faris 15). This art style was also first used after World War I. Franz Roh at first called this new style of painting Post-Expressionism, but changed it later to Magical Realism because he knew that the work "had to have a name that meant something, and the word 'Post-Expressionism' only indicated ancestry and chronological relationship" (Roh). Roh says that he uses the word 'magic' instead of 'mystic' because

"the mystery does not descend to the represented world, but rather hides and palpates behind it." At the same time that Roh came up with the term Magical Realism, a museum director named Gustav Hartlaub called this new art style New [Objectivity](#). The word New Objectivity over took Roh's title for the art style until 1960 when it was used to describe the art style of that time in art history. Angel Flores might argue that he coined the term 'Magical Realism' in 1935 after he read [Jorge](#) Luis Borges' book A Universal History of Infamy, but he was actually the first one to give the name to books not just paintings.

It is hard to decide at times what is Magical Realism and what is not, but there are many characteristics inside Magical Realism that helps us to decide what is. One of the characteristics is that "we recognize this world, although now- not only because we have emerged from a dream- we look on it with new eyes" (Roh). The artist achieves this characteristic by "the amalgamation of reality and fantasy" (Leal). However, in Magical Realism both the reader and characters of the novel must accept the unreal as real.

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