

EDITORIAL

Incursions into the Imaginary Vol. 15(1)

The journal *Incursions into the Imaginary*, Vol. 15(1), takes readers on an exploration of the multi-dimensional world of magical realism. This issue features twelve engaging studies in Romanian, English, and French, each uncovering the connections between literature, culture, art, and philosophy. Organized into five thematic sections, the collection covers a broad range of topics—from the foundational ideas of magical realism to its expressions in different media, cultural perspectives, and even therapeutic storytelling.

The first section, In Honorem Maria-Ana Tupan 75, opens with a critical exploration of the foundational elements of magical realism in European and Latin American contexts. Maria-Ana Tupan's study, *Mircea Eliade and Alejo Carpentier in Light of R.G. Echevarría's Ontological/Epistemological Binary in Magical Realism*, investigates the roots of magical realism as both a literary and visual art form. The author highlights how figures like Mircea Eliade and Alejo Carpentier drew upon German post-expressionism, surrealism, and dadaism to contribute to this "ontological scandal" of reality's re-imagination. Tracing Franz Roh's conceptualization of "Magischer Realismus" from his influential 1925 work to its rapid adoption and adaptation by thinkers like Ortega y Gasset, Tupan reveals how the new aesthetic bridged disparate modernist movements, paving the way for an artistic hybrid that challenged conventions of identity and realism.

The second section comprises two studies that explore the progression from magic to magical realism. **Sibusiso Hyacinth Madondo**, in *The Representation of*

Witch(Doctor) and Sage in Literature and Society, explores the blurred boundaries between the witch, or witchdoctor, and the sage across cultural narratives. The author discusses how, contrary to modern conceptions that view the witch and sage as separate figures, one tied to superstition, the other to intellect, they were once unified as conduits of wisdom and mysticism. Through linguistic and historical analysis, Madondo illustrates how figures traditionally seen as supernatural in Western discourse, such as the druid or the shaman, held revered roles encompassing both sacred and scientific knowledge, embodying a wisdom that modernity later partitioned into opposing identities.

Iuliana Păunescu (Voroneanu) provides an insight into *Realism, Magic and Metamorphism in Lostrîța*, where she discusses the nuances of magical realism as portrayed in Vasile Voiculescu's novel. She identifies key elements of the genre—such as the blending of fantastical events with a credible narrative, and the distortion of space, time, and identity. Furthermore, she argues that by introducing the motif of the double, Voiculescu intertwines the real and the supernatural in a way that maintains the semblance of normalcy, thereby preserving the narrative's illusion of reality even as it transcends everyday limits.

The third thematic section, which presents **magical realism across literature and art**, begins with **Diana-Adriana Lefter, Lavinia Geambei, and Bogdan Cioabă's** *Forms of Absence in Isabel Allende's La Casa de los Espiritus: The Book and the Film*. The authors analyse the portrayal of absence in both the novel and its film adaptation, examining how magical realism expresses Latin America's dualistic cultural identity. Their comparative study emphasizes how absence—manifested in silence, death, and the imaginary—becomes a powerful

narrative device in both media, creating a twofold world that defines and shapes the artistic representation.

Gabriel Dan Bărbuleț contributes to this section with the paper *Conversational Implicatures in Magic Realism Movies – The Green Mile*. Using Grice's Cooperative Principle, the author investigates how dialogue in Frank Darabont's film subtly conveys meanings beyond the explicit, thereby deepening the audience's engagement with the narrative. Through a corpus analysis of dialogue, the study demonstrates how conversational implicatures amplify the portrayal of supernatural elements, moral complexities, and thematic motifs, enhancing the viewers' understanding of the magical realist elements within the film.

Cristina Matilda Vănoagă's study, *Theatre and Circus as Background for Magical Realism in Angela Carter's Novels*, looks at how Carter's novels, *Nights at the Circus* and *Wise Children*, use the theatrical and circus environments to blur the line between reality and illusion. The author highlights how these settings allow Carter to introduce elements of magic within the ordinary, crafting characters whose identities are shaped by these illusory worlds. The paper argues that Carter's use of these environments as instruments for magical acts intensifies the ambiguous line between the ordinary and the fantastical, further defining magical realism's unique space in contemporary literature.

The fourth section deals with configurations of time and space in magical realism. In her study, *Perception of Places in Magical Realist Novels*, **Delia-Maria Radu** examines how sensory perception shapes space in magical realist novels, focusing on *Midnight's Children*, *The Passion*, and *Nights at the Circus*. Drawing from Paul Rodaway's perception theory and Mezei and Briganti's

ideas on domestic spaces, the study explores how sensory details not only define external worlds but also reflect the characters' inner lives, enhancing the depth of magical realism through a layered sensory experience.

Cristina Ilea Rogojină's analysis of space in Angela Carter's *The Bloody Chamber and Other Stories* explores how Carter uses physical surroundings to evoke atmosphere and tension, drawing deeply from familiar fairy tales. By examining the symbolic role of the chronotope, where setting not only shapes characters' personalities but also connects to their memories and identities, the study shows how Carter's detailed environments become dynamic elements that amplify themes of gender, power, and identity. Through close readings of *The Bloody Chamber*, *The Courtship of Mr. Lyon*, and *The Tiger's Bride*, Rogojină argues that the dilapidated castles and mansions symbolize both the decline of patriarchy and the renewal of traditional gender roles, with transformed spaces reflecting a shift toward healing and growth after corruption is purged.

Amalia Mărășescu examines *Real and Magical Spaces in Salman Rushdie's Midnight's Children: The Kashmir Valley and the Sundarbans*, each blending real and magical qualities. Mărășescu employs Michel Foucault's concept of heterotopia to discuss these spaces, which are isolated yet permeable, gaining full meaning when characters step outside conventional timelines. The analysis highlights how the Kashmir Valley, with its timeless landscape and personified elements, and the resistant Sundarbans, where symbolic death and rebirth play out, function as both real and enchanted settings. These spaces embody agency, resisting intrusion and serving as timeless refuges where characters seek unconventional resolutions.

The last three contributions in section five explore magical realism in therapeutic novels. **Laura Măcineanu** investigates the therapeutic qualities in Salman Rushdie's *Haroun and the Sea of Stories* and *Luka and the Fire of Life*, emphasizing three key levels. First, the novels highlight storytelling as a means of restoring joy and vitality to the world, with tales acting as a form of magical remedy for real-world problems. Second, Măcineanu discusses the therapeutic value of reading itself, suggesting that these stories allow readers to escape stress by entering a more comforting, alternate reality. Finally, the paper touches on the therapeutic nature of writing, noting that for Rushdie, the process of storytelling serves as a personal form of therapy. Through these perspectives, the author illustrates how Rushdie's narratives offer healing for both readers and creator, reaffirming the power of fiction as a restorative force.

Gabriela Chiciudean examines the use of both magical realism and "hallucinatory" realism in Laura Imai Messina's novels *What We Entrust to the Wind* and *The Secret Lives of Colors*. Magical realism, which extends beyond its Latin American origins, introduces a surreal layer to everyday life through unexplained, fantastical events. In *What We Entrust to the Wind*, Messina depicts the 2011 Japanese floods, creating a nightmarish vision of humanity's fragile struggle against nature, which evokes a hallucinatory sense of the surreal. In contrast, *The Secret Lives of Colors* explores two opposing perceptions of colour through characters with unique vision abilities, drawing readers into distinct, subjective worlds. Across both novels, characters confront hardship by retreating into alternate realities, ultimately finding their way back to normality through acceptance, love, and resilience.

In the final paper of this issue, *Mental Illness, Identity, and Philosophical Inquiry in Susanna Clarke's*

Piranesi, **Andra-Iulia Ursa** examines the diverse interpretations of *the book* as readers relate it to mental health, identity, and philosophical themes. The analysis highlights how readers often view the protagonist's experiences through a psychological lens, finding parallels with dissociative identity disorder, schizophrenia, and even the experience of living with long-term illness, such as long COVID-19. However, the author argues that the novel offers a broader commentary on enchantment, perception, and the balance between knowledge and feeling, drawing from thinkers like Rudolf Steiner and Owen Barfield to underscore a philosophical perspective on consciousness.

In conclusion, *Incursions into the Imaginary*, Vol. 15(1), offers an inviting journey into the depths of magical realism, showcasing the genre's ability to reveal new layers of meaning. We warmly encourage readers to immerse themselves in these studies, where the dedication and insight of the authors bring fresh perspectives on how literature, art, and culture intertwine. This collection is not only a valuable resource but a reminder of the power of magical realism to explore the mysteries of the human experience.

Andra-Iulia Ursa