

## EDITORIAL

### **Incursions into the Imaginary Vol. 15(2)**

*Incursions into the Imaginary*, Vol. 15(2), presents a comprehensive exploration of magical realism through twelve studies written in Romanian, English, Spanish, and French. Organized into five thematic sections, this issue showcases magical realism's versatility across diverse languages and cultures and highlights its unique blend of reality and fantasy, making it a powerful tool for understanding both contemporary and historical narratives.

The opening section is devoted to two studies that explore the themes of time and space within the framework of magical realism. In her study *Time, Space, and Magical Realism: Salman Rushdie's East, West, and the Juxtaposition of Temporal and Spatial Landscapes*, **Corina Mariana Mitrulescu** delves into how Rushdie skilfully manipulates temporal and spatial boundaries, weaving historical periods and fragmented linearity to create layered landscapes that reveal the complexities of cultural displacement and hybridity. Through these juxtapositions, Rushdie's work explores postcolonial themes of alienation and identity within contrasting settings, from London and New York to the streets of Bombay, effectively blurring the line between reality and fantasy.

**Alina Bako** situates magical realism within the Balkan literary context in her work written in Romanian — *Balkan Magic Realism: A European Literary Network*. The author illustrates how the genre has been adapted to reflect regional influences, creating works that embody both national and transnational identities. Using Danilo Kiš's *Encyclopaedia of the Dead* and Ștefan Bănuțescu's *Book of Metropolis* as key examples, Bako explores the emergence of a Balkan World Literature, where magical realism serves as a lens through which the complexities of Balkan culture,

history, and identity are reframed in a European literary network.

The second thematic segment examines the structural composition of narratives within the framework of magical realism. **Felix Nicolau** presents Mircea Cărtărescu's use of mythological archetypes and stylistic complexity in two of his works, focusing on themes such as the grotesque, sublime, and pathos. In his study, *Cartaresquian Mythology and Stylistics in Solenoid and Eminescu: The Chimerical Dream*, Nicolau explores how literary critics like Alex Ștefănescu and N. Manolescu have responded to these texts, creating a foundation for analysing the unique narrative style and innovative approach in Cărtărescu's writing.

**Liliana Danciu** contributes to this section with the paper titled *Reality and Fiction – Coordinates in the Prose of Mario Vargas Llosa*. She discusses the dual forces of reality and fiction as expressed in Vargas Llosa's portrayal of the human condition, moral norms, and social constraints. Through analyses of novels like *Eulogy of the Stepmother* and *The War of the End of the World*, Danciu highlights how Vargas Llosa's characters often grapple with the tension between individual desires and societal limitations, revealing an intersection between personal rebellion and broader cultural themes.

**Maria Mureșan's** contribution, *The Allohistories of Magic Realism: Franz Roh and the Magic Realist Mode*, contextualizes magic realism within a historical and theoretical framework, drawing on Hayden White's concept of narrative as shaped by tropes rather than causal progression. By tracing Franz Roh's original conception of magic realism, Mureșan explores how this genre merges the fantastical with the realistic, allowing narratives to incorporate myth, folklore, and surreal elements to reflect the phantasmagoric political realities of the 20th century.

**Alina-Liana Pintican Petriș**'s paper, *Imaginary Ekphrasis in the Work of Pierre Michon*, shifts focus to the descriptive techniques in Michon's novels, where landscapes and portraits embody both memory and myth. Pintican Petriș explores how ekphrasis in Michon's work transcends simple description, positioning the rural and elemental as mirrors for personal and historical reflection. Through this approach, Michon brings modest, often overlooked characters to life, imbuing the narrative with a deeper sense of identity and connection to place.

The third section of this issue is devoted to studies examining markers of identity within magical realism. **Petru Ștefan Ionescu**'s paper, *At the Crossroads of the Real and the Fantastic: A Comparative Study of Identity, History, and Destiny in Salman Rushdie's Midnight's Children and Angela Carter's Wise Children*, examines how Rushdie and Carter employ magical realism to blur the boundaries between personal identity and collective history. Through a comparative analysis, Ionescu explores Rushdie's portrayal of postcolonial identity, symbolized by the "midnight's children" whose supernatural qualities mirror India's complex national identity, and Carter's use of performance and theatricality to illustrate the fluid nature of identity and social constructs.

The paper written jointly by **Maria Holhoș** and **Andra Gabriela Holhoș**, *The Representation of Moscow Urban Reality in The Master and Margarita by Mihail Bulgakov: The Magic Having a Corrective Role*, investigates the blending of supernatural and urban spaces in Bulgakov's Moscow. Their research highlights how the novel's magic elements reveal the paradoxes of modern reality, with the transitions between real and imaginary spaces underscoring the novel's syncretic character. This magical interplay allows Bulgakov to embed subtle critiques of society, using the supernatural to challenge

the reader's perception of reality and address complex social themes.

The fourth section addresses a range of diverse topics under the theme of *Varia*. **Lucian Vasile Bâgiu's** research, *Facets of Some Wrecks: The Saving Civilization*, offers a comparative analysis of salvation narratives in *Lord of the Flies*, *Friday*, or *The Other Island*, and *Foe*. Through a study of shipwrecks in these novels, the author examines how the notion of salvation within European civilization falters on deserted islands, challenging the optimistic closure of the Robinson myth and reflecting a modern crisis in consciousness and cultural ideals.

In a change of format, **Oana Benedicta Feher's** interview with Rodica Gabriela Chira, translator of the bilingual volume *Despre oameni și colivii / Des hommes et des cages*, provides insight into Chira's role as both translator and traductologist. The conversation sheds light on the challenges of translating a contemporary work that captures the psycho- and sociolinguistic atmosphere of the Covid-19 pandemic, with emphasis on how poetry, filtered through Chira's unique perspective, reflects a present-day cultural reality shaped by global events.

**Raluca-Denisa Nicoară's** paper, *A Brief Comparative Approach on the Female Figure in the Dramaturgy of Lucian Blaga and Valeriu Anania*, explores the mytho-symbolic portrayals of femininity in Blaga's *Master Manole* and Anania's dramatic work of the same name. Nicoară's analysis contrasts Blaga's archetype of the "angelic" feminine with Anania's "demonic" characterization, illustrating the complex roles of women as both creators and disruptors. This comparative study highlights how each playwright uses feminine figures to explore themes of sacrifice, rebellion, and transformation within the sacred-profane dichotomy.

The final section is dedicated to the review of *Corp de teatru (în cinci rochii strălucitoare)* [*Theatre Body (In Five Shining Gowns)*], the latest volume by Cătălina Florina

Florescu, a Romanian scholar and professor at Pace University in New York. Authored by **Diana Alexandra Avram (Şandru)**, this review presents Florescu as a diasporic writer who remains deeply engaged with Romanian cultural and social themes, continuing to write in her native language and bridging geographic divides to connect with her Romanian audience. This 2024 volume, her second collection of plays in Romanian, has made a strong impact on the contemporary Romanian theatre scene, featuring works that have been both nominated and awarded for their contributions to the field.

In closing, *Incursions into the Imaginary*, Vol. 15(2), brings together an admirable collection of perspectives on magical realism, each adding valuable insight into the genre's ability to engage with themes of culture, history, and identity. The works in this issue show just how versatile magical realism can be, helping us to see new layers within complex narratives and offering fresh perspectives across different languages and regions. The authors' reflective research highlights the continued relevance and adaptability of magical realism in today's world. Together, these studies enrich our appreciation of how magical realism not only unites diverse traditions but also invites us to expand our understanding of storytelling itself.

**Andra-Iulia Ursa**