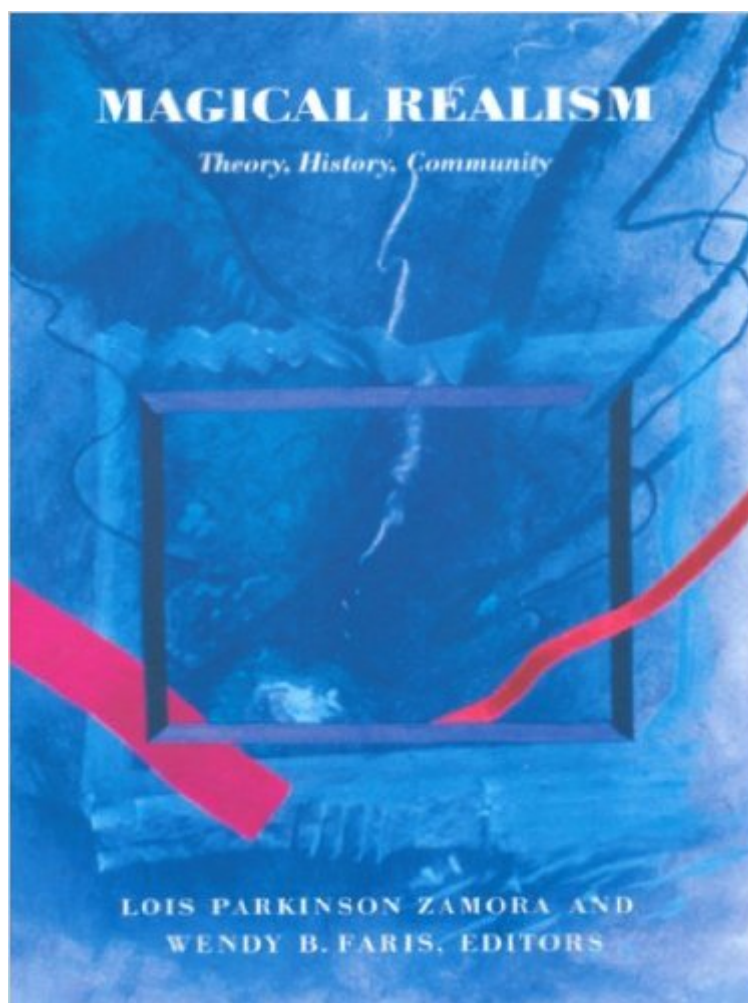


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Magical Realism: Theory, History, Community



Synopsis

Magical realism is often regarded as a regional trend, restricted to the Latin American writers who popularized it as a literary form. In this critical anthology, the first of its kind, editors Lois Parkinson Zamora and Wendy B. Faris show magical realism to be an international movement with a wide-ranging history and a significant influence among the literatures of the world. In essays on texts by writers as diverse as Toni Morrison, Günter Grass, Salman Rushdie, Derek Walcott, Achebe, Gabriel García Márquez, and many others, magical realism is examined as a worldwide phenomenon. Presenting the first English translation of Franz Roh's 1925 essay in which the term magical realism was coined, as well as Alejo Carpentier's classic 1949 essay that introduced the concept of *lo real maravilloso* to the Americas, this anthology begins by tracing the foundations of magical realism from its origins in the art world to its current literary contexts. It offers a broad range of critical perspectives and theoretical approaches to this movement, as well as intensive analyses of various cultural traditions and individual texts from Eastern Europe, Asia, North America, Africa, the Caribbean, and Australia, in addition to those from Latin America. In situating magical realism within the expanse of literary and cultural history, this collection describes a mode of writing that has been a catalyst in the development of new regional literatures and a revitalizing force for more established narrative traditions—writing particularly alive in postcolonial contexts and a major component of postmodernist fiction.

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Customer Reviews

If you agree that magical realism is a world-wide phenomenon, rather than a mode limited to Latin America, this is the text for you. It achieves a balance between the history and the critical application of magical realism, and it covers magical realist texts that are neither time- nor geography-bound. Best of all, it will lead you on a wonderful search for new works. While you might not agree that all the texts mentioned can actually be classified as "magical realism," you will learn how subjectively the term is appropriated in modern criticism. When you finish this book, you invariably have arrived at a much clearer definition of magical realism for your personal application of the term.

Dr. Zamora was my professor at the University of Houston and this text is wonderfully anthologized to bring the reader into the world of magical realism. The world of magical realism is not questioned or fabricated, but co-existing with us. The boundaries of what is real and what is not is blurred. Texts that question the plausibility of events is not magical realism, rather it is fantasy. For instance, Harry Potter series is magical and wonderful in its tales but the world is oblivious to their existence. No one questions or wonders how it is possible that there is an old man with enormous wings, but instead wonder what he is, an angel or a man (Gabriel Garcia Marquez's short story "A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings". This book is seminal in the introduction and collection of essays covering magical realism and why it chooses this message of delivery. I am hooked on magical realism, or as Marquez terms it for himself "social realism", since it is fascinating that these postcolonial writers use magical realism to convey a history of blurred boundaries. I think many former colonized people will identify with the displacement they feel in being from neither here nor there, but from both here and there, a term known as hybridization.

I'm not an English major so I am in no position to give a review on this book. I bought it because I was looking for information about magical realism for the general reader. This is a scholarly book for a college graduate. Hoping to get some suggestions about other books to read; however, I really haven't done more than glance through it at this time.

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