

Call for Papers
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Open to receiving manuscripts for the 33rd volume, 2026, until THE 24th of JULY 2026 at
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The topic of the 33rd volume:

Illnesses, Epidemics and Pandemics: Literary and Linguistic Perspectives

The motivation for choosing this topic stems from the enduring power of illness as a mirror for individual and societal values, fears, and aspirations across different historical moments. By tracing how disease, epidemics, and pandemics are imagined and articulated in literature and language, we can illuminate how individuals and communities construct meaning around vulnerability, contagion, and resilience. This project also offers a fertile ground for interdisciplinary dialogue, bridging literary analysis with historical, medical, and linguistic perspectives to reveal how discourse shapes public perception and policy in times of health crises.

Possible thematic directions (not limited to these):

- Literary representations of plague, cholera, tuberculosis, the Spanish flu, HIV/AIDS, COVID-19, etc.
- Disease as metaphor: suffering, alterity, stigmatization.
- Narratives of quarantine and isolation.
- The sick body: aesthetic, ethical, and political dimensions.
- The impact of epidemics on the collective imagination and on narrative forms.
- Comparative literature: intercultural and cross-cultural perspectives.
- Intersections between literature, medical history, and cultural studies.
- Metaphors and images: disease as war, disease as invasion, quarantine as frontier, the virus as the other, etc.
- Stigmatization and othering: who is guilty, who suffers, who is marginalized (the elderly, minorities, vulnerable people).
- Temporality and memory: how literature articulates the past of the pandemic, collective memory, traumas, and the anticipation of a post-pandemic future.
- Isolation vs. community: themes of enclosed space, loneliness, but also solidarity, digital networks, and alternative forms of socializing.
- The role of literature as critical/oppositional discourse: literature as a response to policies, official discourses, manipulation, fake news, etc.
- Digitality: how online literary forms emerged due to distancing, what the digital environment changes—the author-reader relationship, the performativity of the text, etc.
- Discourses of disease and epidemic: linguistic analysis of medical, political, media, and literary discourses (terminology, rhetoric, persuasive strategies).

- Metaphorization of disease in language: cognitive and cultural mechanisms of metaphor (disease as war, invasion, punishment, purification, test, etc.).
- Pragmatics of pandemic discourse: speech acts (warning, prohibition, legitimation), the construction of authority and obedience.
- Medical terminology between specialization and vulgarization: the circulation of medical terms in everyday and literary language.
- The pandemic as a linguistic event: neologisms, semantic shifts, re-semanticizations, and lexical borrowings that arise in epidemic contexts.
- Digital discourses: the language of the pandemic in social media, online journals, blogs, comments, memes.
- Contrastive and intercultural perspectives: linguistic and discursive differences in representations of disease across languages and cultures.

Selected Further References:

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Sontag, Susan, *Illness as Metaphor* (1978) și *AIDS and Its Metaphors* (1989) – Romanian translation *Boala ca metaforă. SIDA și metaforele ei*, Ed. Vellant, 2014.

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Wald, Priscilla, *Contagious: Cultures, Carriers, and the Outbreak Narrative*, Duke University Press, 2008.

Wohlmann, Anita (ed.), *Metaphor in Illness Writing: Fight and Battle Reused*, Edinburgh University Press, 2022.

*** * ***, *Infernul cotidian. Imaginarul bolii în literatura română* — coord. Emanuela Ilie Editura Eikon, 2025.