



# Unraveling the Real: The Fantastic in Spanish-American Ficciones

*Cynthia Duncan*

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In literary and cinematic fictions, the fantastic blurs the lines between reality and fantasy. Lacking a consensus on definition, critics often describe the fantastic as supernatural, or similar to, but quite different from fantasy, science fiction, and magical realism. In *Unraveling the Real* Cynthia Duncan provides a new theoretical framework for discussing how the fantastic explores both metaphysical and socially relevant themes in Spanish American fictions. Duncan deftly shows how authors and artists have used this literary genre to convey marginalized voices as well as critique colonialism, racism, sexism, and classism. Selecting examples from the works of such noted writers as Jorge Luis Borges, Julio Cortazar, and Carlos Fuentes, among others, she shows how capacious the concept is, and why it eludes standard definition. Challenging the notion that the fantastic is escapist in nature, *Unraveling the Real* shows how the fantastic has been politically engaged throughout the twentieth century, often questioning what is real or unreal. Presenting a mirror image of reality, the fantastic does not promote a utopian parallel universe but rather challenges the way we think about the world around us and the cultural legacy of colonialism.

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