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**The lost reality**

**The misplaced reality**

**The mistaken reality**

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**SUMMARY**

This article aims to analyze the short story "The Lost Machine" by José J. Veiga, highlighting some characteristics of fantastic literature, with a focus on realism. fantastic or magical realism. From this analysis, the aim is to understand how the insertion An unusual element – the machine – in everyday life functions as a mechanism of criticism. social. Thus, the study highlights the role of the fantastic as an instrument for reflection on the Society and its contradictions.

**KEYWORDS:** Fantastic realism. José J. Veiga. The Lost Machine.

## 1. Introduction

Humans have always coexisted and continue to coexist with phenomena that are not always... explainable by natural laws. Such phenomena have been and continue to be a source of intrigue for diverse societies and cultures. Man feels the need to seek explanations for what He cannot understand and, therefore, resorts to stories: legends, tales, accounts, etc.

Some of these stories surface in the human mind and are preserved throughout life. time and they become immortal. Turning to Greek myths, we can cite the myth of Hercules; China has its dragons; and Brazil has its folkloric myths: Iara, Saci-Pererê, Caipora, The headless mule, the Curupira, the Boto, etc., which were preserved by part of the population. Brazilian. All these stories are marked by supernatural, inexplicable events.

Given how prevalent such stories are in cultures and literature, we cannot fail to...

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alongside the themes that involve the mysteries that permeate the human imagination. There are countless Novels and short stories that address the question of the inexplicable. To analyze this theoretical line, In modern literary theory, we have a branch of analysis and reflection on the subject: literature. Fantastic.

Therefore, this article aims to briefly present some characteristics of The fantasy genre, more specifically, fantastic realism or magical realism. For this, It was necessary to define a specific focus, since, despite being a little-known genre, there are... a vast body of work in this area of fantasy literature, with authors such as José J. Veiga, José Saramago, Murilo Rubião, José Luis Borges, Gabriel García Márquez, and Julio Cortázar. That Therefore, our study will focus on the author José J. Veiga, more specifically, an analysis. from the short story "The Lost Machine," in which, by introducing an unusual element into everyday life... a small community — the machine — without providing explanations about its origin or In this context, a social critique is drawn regarding the imposition of useless technologies that serve no purpose whatsoever. They are added to certain populations.

## 2. The fantastic and magical realism

The origin of the fantasy genre was marked by the exploration of fear and fright, however, Over the centuries, it has been transforming. According to Rezende (2008):

From the 18th century onwards, Fantastic Literature was associated with works that possessed a a theme linked to 'ghosts' and 'supernatural beings'. At the end of the 19th century, this The definition of fantastic refers to themes linked to 'horror' and 'fear' that these narratives... caused a stir in the reader. In the first decades of the 20th century, definitions of this genre were... They multiply, with the terms 'fantastic', 'supernatural', 'marvelous', 'strange' and 'horror', which are confused, without a characterization that would distinguish between them and differentiate the types. (REZENDE, 2008, p. 25)

However, over time, distinctions were made. CASTEX (1951), by For example, it presents the distinction between the fantastic and the marvelous:

> The Fantastic is not to be confused with the conventional fabulation of mythological or fairy tales, which implies the expatriation of the spirit. On the contrary, it is characterized by a brutal intrusion of mystery into real life: it is generally linked to morbid states of consciousness which, in the phenomena of nightmare or delirium, project before themselves the images of their anxieties and terrors. (CASTEX, 1951, p. 08)



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The author makes the distinction by comparing the fantastic and the marvelous. The definition – the brutal intrusion of mystery into real life – is of paramount importance, since it constitutes The basis for all definitions of fantasy that have emerged since this author.

Initially, according to the theories studied, fantastic events should be of the order of the impossible, the inexplicable, according to the natural law of things, that is, that which escape or They break with reality. It should also be understood that this event... unusual, so that it could represent something impossible, it belonged to a realistic painting in narrative, that is, it would need to be accepted as reality, so that there would be Internal consistency with what is being narrated.

This perspective evolved until the 20th century, taking on a new narrative. more subtle. Volobuef (2000, p. 109) states that the fantasy genre has abandoned the succession of surprising, frightening, and exciting events to delve into spheres more complex themes. Thus, fantasy narratives began to deal with unsettling subjects. For modern man: existential anxieties, technological advances, and social inequality. Therefore In this way, we see that the fantasy genre ceases to be merely an entertainment narrative, because "It does not create fabulous worlds, distinct from our own and populated by imaginary creatures, but reveals and problematizes the life and environment that we know from day to day" (VOLOBUEF, 2000, p. 110). Based on these considerations, it is possible to affirm that the fantasy genre is not stagnant. because it is constantly evolving and addressing increasingly critical issues for society.

The fantastic originates from a lack of understanding of the reality presented in the narrative. According to Volobuef (2000), at first, the reader feels disoriented, since there is not always justifications and/or explanations for the events are left, and narrative gaps are left for to be filled in by the reader, which makes him actively participate in the search for meaning. "The text "It plays a kind of game with verisimilitude." Thus, the fantastic emerges before the uncertainty within an environment considered familiar (daily life). Thus, because it contains Critical themes and complex plots, Volobuef (2000) states that the fantasy genre "surpasses the boundaries of trivial literature.

In the mid-20th century, a movement called Realism emerged in Latin America. Fantastic, Magical Realism, or even Marvelous Realism. Many consider that... Magical Realism is a Latin American response to European Fantasy Literature. However, The Latin American fantastic model differs from the fantastic current. European. Irlemar Chiampi, for example, states that:



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> The fantastic is content to fabricate false hypotheses (its "possible" is improbable), to depict the arbitrariness of reason, to shake cultural conventions, but without offering the reader anything beyond uncertainty. The fallacy of external and inadequate probabilities, the impossible explanations – both within the realm of the mythical – are built upon the playful artifice of textual verisimilitude, whose purpose is to avoid all assertion, all fixed meaning. (CHIAMPI, 1980, p. 56).

Thus, in fantasy narratives, some elements are part of normality for the characters, making "real" situations that, according to the laws of nature, would be considered supernatural.

In contrast to the "poetics of uncertainty," which is calculated to provoke estrangement in the reader, the Magical realism displaces any emotional effect of chills, fear, or terror on the... unusual event. In its place, it posits enchantment as a discursive effect relevant to A non-antithetical interpretation of the diegetic components. The unusual, from a rational perspective, leaves From being the "other side," the unknown, to becoming part of reality: wonder lies in reality. The objects, beings, or events in fantasy that demand the playful projection of their probabilities. In magical realism, external and unexplainable elements are devoid of mystery, not... doubtful as to the universe of meaning to which they belong. That is, they possess internal probability. and causality within the scope itself (CHIAMPI, 1980, p. 56).

The most vibrant period of magical realism was the 1960s and 1970s, when... Technology and superstition were prominently featured in the imagination of the general public. This style also made history by conveying messages against dictatorial regimes. which were in effect in some countries.

The most acclaimed authors in magical realism are Gabriel García Márquez, Nobel Prize winner for Literature, and Jorge Luis Borges. Brazil also has its own authors of this caliber. Such a unique style: Murilo Rubião and José J. Veiga. For our study, we will consider only the Brazilian José J. Veiga.

## 3. José J. Veiga and magical realism in the short story "The Lost Machine"

Brazilian writer, born in Goiás, Veiga is considered one of the most important Representatives of Brazilian magical realism. He was a broadcaster for some time at the BBC, in London, and wrote several books, such as Samba de Reis Barbudos, Os pecados da tribo, A Lost machine, The little horses of Platiplanto, among others.

Veiga's style is quite peculiar; Rezende (2008) describes it as follows:

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> We can say that Veiga captures facts from reality and transforms them into scenes governed by the fantastic. The creativity of this author, then, it can be affirmed, lies in the facts that he manages to distort in order to capture, through a supra-reality (Bessière), the dynamics of how society functions; and it lies in the great acceptance of his works by critics and readers (REZENDE, 2008, p. 17-18).

This definition accurately reflects the story being analyzed, because in "The Lost Machine," we have a text that presents, in an entertaining way, serious criticisms of our society; that is, the author It can show us the dynamics of how the society we live in functions.

The events are simple, nothing out of the ordinary; for example, we notice that the The fact that the machine appeared in the city is not something supernatural, because someone (it's just not known who) was involved. Who could have ordered the machine and not announced that they were the owner of the large object? Or it could be the result of a delivery error, as the narrative's title itself suggests. – a machine that was diverted – and, by chance, ends up being left in a small town of backlands.

What matters most to us regarding the arrival of this machine are the facts that... They change; the machine gains everyone's prestige:

- Of the pious old ladies,

Even the old ladies from church, who pass by in the early morning and at night, coughing and praying, saw They turn their faces to the side of the machine and make a subtle curve; they're practically crossing themselves.

- From the children:

The children, who, as you know, are not ones to respect mystery, tried to take advantage of the situation. New! Without asking anyone's permission (and who were they going to ask?), they removed the tarp and started climbing up. in groups up the machine - even today they still climb up, playing hide-and-seek between the cylinders and columns get tangled in the teeth of the gears and make a terrible racket until Someone needs to come and set them free; scolding, punishments, and beatings are useless; the children They simply fell in love with the machine.

- Even from men who think they're brave:

Brutal men, like that Clodoaldo you know, who shows off by taking down a bull. By the horns in the market courtyard, they treat the machine with respect.

The machine causes bewilderment and unease among the population, which, in a certain way... Form leads us to a profound critique of materialistic society, and not just of... materialism, but also the overvaluation of technology. Here, we clearly observe the a shift in focus in the creation of the fantastic, as Volobuef (2000, p. 109) states.

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that the fantasy genre has abandoned the succession of surprising, frightening events.
and exciting for delving into more complex thematic spheres. In "The Lost Machine",
For example, we have a fantastical narrative that turns to a reflection on...
In the context of society, the text addresses issues that are troubling for modern man: technological advancements,
which are represented in a critical way, since the machine that appears in the small town is enormous,
Full of paraphernalia, but the only use it ends up having is to distract the population; a false
"utility," considering all the time, effort, and attention that the population directs towards
with the large object.

On all civic holidays, the machine is now an important part of the festivities. You
Do you remember that, in the old days, holidays were celebrated in the bandstand or on the football field?
But today everything happens at the machine. During election time, all candidates want
to hold their rallies in its shade; since that's not possible, someone has to be left out; not everyone
They conform, and conflicts always arise. Fortunately, the machine hasn't been damaged yet.
in those asparagus, and I hope it isn't.

Thus, the fantastic emerges due to uncertainty amidst an environment that was...
considered familiar (the daily life of the small town), which is altered by the unexplained arrival.
of the great machine:

You always ask about the news from this backwoods region, and finally, I can tell you something.
Important news. Listen up, my friend, we now have an impressive machine here.
which is exciting everyone. Since she arrived — I don't remember when, no
I'm very good at remembering dates — we've hardly talked about anything else; and, in the way that
People here get fascinated even by the most childish things; it's amazing that nobody has...
Still fighting over her, except for the politicians.
We are so used to the presence of the machine there in the square that, if one day it were to collapse or if
If someone from another city came to pick her up, proving with documents that they were entitled to her, I wouldn't even...
I know what would happen, I don't even want to think about it. She is our pride and joy, and don't think I'm exaggerating.
We still don't know what it's for, but that's not very important anymore.

The preceding excerpts confirm that the machine's arrival in the city was, initially,
This is a source of great curiosity for the population, because, in addition to knowing nothing about its origin, it also
It was not understood what its real function would be; that is, the stranger bursts into the daily lives of those
People, but they don't seek explanations. This stranger then begins to coexist with the
The machine becomes part of that territory, a naturalized resident of that area.
in addition to becoming an object of contemplation. In this sense, it is observed that, although there are



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Despite the characters' acceptance of the "unusual," unease and questioning remain.
in the reader. Furthermore, the short story under analysis reflects on technologies accepted without
questions that lack meaning or function for certain communities and that,
Nevertheless, they are imposed upon them. In this way, the short story "The Lost Machine" is configured as
magical realism, as it is constructed from real facts, under a rational perspective, in a
Current reflection on the society in which we live.

**Final considerations**

Based on the analysis carried out, we observe that José J. Veiga's fantastic style is
marked by a serene narrative, with simple language, that allows the issue to shine through.
existential. The analyzed text is constructed with apparent naturalness, revealing a strong
A critique of society, which, in a way, does not question everything that is imposed upon it.

Considering the passage from when the machine arrives in the city:
"As is usually the case on such occasions, the men were in a bad mood and did not..."
They wanted to give explanations; they deliberately bumped into curious onlookers, stepped on their feet, and didn't...
They apologized; they threw grease-stained rope ends over them; those who didn't want to
"If he gets dirty or hurt himself, he should get out of the way."

We observe that if we compare this situation with the arrival of any type
Regarding technology, we noticed that there is an identification with our reality, since there is no
In this direction, technology is imposed without explanation, leaving us unaware of its workings.
arrival, and if we want to understand how it works, we must look for adaptations,
Updates, improvements, in other words, we are the ones who must adapt to the "machines".
making us submissive to them, however, we don't always understand them and sometimes we remain like
the inhabitants of the small town depicted in the story, seeking utility for what is not always
Yes. The new always sparks curiosity and sometimes overrides emotional bonds, leaving-
Among the alienated. The inhabitants of the small town focus all their attention on a machine and do not...
They question the fact, they simply accept the arrival and permanence of the large object that...
It incorporates the new reality (the machine in the middle of the square).

Regarding the irruption of the fantastic, or magical realism, in Veiga's work, according to
For many scholars, "it is gradual, beginning subtly and ending densely, approaching the absurd."
and the grotesque, to highlight existential reflections, without commitment to the truth.
"absolute." In the text analyzed, we note that, although reflection of a social nature is prominent,



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There is no use of absurdity.

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