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A HISTORY OF
SCIENCE FICTION
AND FANDOM IN
ARGENTINA

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A BIT OF HISTORY:

We'll have a review of what has happened up to now in the Science Fiction sphere in this country. For this purpose, we'll divide this section into six parts or periods, taking into account those events which more or less continuously have affected the development of the genre.

PROTOTHISTORY (- 1953)

Modernism was the first articulated literary movement that began the creation of the fantastic theme, with the conscious will of writing a particular type of tale. Some of these already showed "scientific fantasy" outlines. The work of some writers comes to the forefront: Leopoldo Lugones and Ruben Dario, Eduardo Holdberg and Macedonio Fernandez, Roberto Arlt, Horacio Quiroga, Felisberto Hernandez and Francisco Pirlis, and latterly, Jorge Luis Borges, Adolfo Bioy Casares, Silvina Ucampo and Julio Cortazar.

Lugones and Dario, notably influenced by Edgar Allen Poe, attempted to investigate other dimensions, not only for their literary possibilities, but with a serious interest in the occultist and theophysical streams, and in the case of the Argentine writer, with the (at the time) revolutionary theories of Einstein.

In Lugones' case he had created two books of fantastic tales and science fiction: *LAS FUERZAS EXTRANAS* ('Strange Forces' - 1906) and *CUENTOS FATALES* ('Unfortunate Tales' - 1924), besides having written essays with fantastic elements.

Also with such influences, the Uruguayan Francisco Pirlis (1847-1933), founder of the Piriapolis watering place, published in Montevideo *THE TRIUMPHAL SOCIALISM, OR WHAT MY COUNTRY WILL BE IN 200 YEARS* ('El Socialismo Triunfante O Lo Que Sera Mi Pais Dentro De 200 Anos') - 1898, an extensive utopia planned on a reasoned socialism and based on the ideas of Moses, Aristotle and St. John.

In talking about *LABORATORY DREAMER* by Eduardo Ladislao Holmberg, Roberto J. Payro states that Eduardo Ladislao Holmberg was at the same time, founder of the Natural sciences and of SF literature in our country. In his second text, *THE MARVELOUS TRAVELS OF MR NIC-NAC* ('Viaje Maravilloso Del Senor Nic-Nac' - 1875), he gave an explanation worthy of Edgar Rice Burroughs: his protagonist travels to Mars by not eating until he starves and his soul separates from his body and reaches the fourth planet. Several adventures take place there, which are profitable to the author, starting from the similarities with our own geography, to social satire. Mars as a setting, would be repeated in *INSOMNIA*, a brief tale from 1876. In that year, he published *HOFFMAN'S CASK* ('Le Pipa De Hoffman') where the protagonist enters an unknown zone of reality due to the hallucinogenic effects of a cask; the description of the process makes it comparable with the detailed depiction of events and description of its effects, to any present text on LSD or mescaline (it brings

to my memory the later works of Henri Michaux, writing under the effects of mescaline).

After his death, a part of his work was arranged and prologued by one of his disciples, Antonio Pages Larrays, who titled the compilation FANTASTIC TALES ('Cuentos Fantásticos'), which was the only contact that there was with Holmberg's works which had been published in newspapers, magazines and books (at present, that edition is out of print and difficult to find).

Holmberg's style was influenced by the German Hoffman, not only in the story that has his name but others, such as HORACIO KALIBAN OR THE AUTOMATONS ('H/K. Y Los Automatas' - 1897), are plagued with german names, grotesque humour, and abundant descriptions of meals and wines; he weaves a net around an automaton's manufacturer, who came to distrust, in the last lines, the reality of all people, and then, of the hypothetically real world, as later would one of the best American sf writers: Philip K. Dick also do. Other influences on Holmberg are Poe, Flammarion, Verne, Conan Doyle and H.G. Wells. The last two were translated to the spanish by him. Among the extra-literary interests introduced into his work, we can find phrenology, spiritualism, Darwinism, parapsychology, psychiatry - all new themes for those times.

We have previously mentioned a part of Lugones' work: In STRANGE FORCES ('Las Fuerzas Extranñas' - 1906), he collects twelve tales and a theory on the cosmos which constitutes a fundamental pillar for the development of fantastic and sf literature in our country.

Even in Holmberg's darkest tales there predominated an essential optimism where the drama was more 'romantic decoration' than the author's true conviction; in Lugones can be seen the contradictions and schisms that mark the phasing of the 19th Century into the 20th. On the one side, he ministers to the occultist, spiritualist and parapsychological theories, and on the other hand, to the advance of more modern theories on mathematics and physics as well. So, while Lugones was a fervent follower of the scientific-spiritual school of Theosophy and of its founder, Mme. Helena Petrova Blavatsky, of whom he had carefully read ISIS WITH A VEIL and THE SECRET DOCTRINE (this element was considered so important by Canal Feijoo, that he supposed it was not only decisive in the field of his literary output, but also in the real world, till the point of having marked the day, place and import of the suicide of Lugones in 1938). On the other hand, he was the author of one of the first and finest essays on Einstein's theories: THE SIZE OF SPACE ('El Tamano Del Espacio' - 1921).

The plots of THE STRANGE FORCES follow, in several occasions, a sort of 'master tale', that has been described by Paula Speck, in a study, as follows: "a solitary scientist invites a friend (the narrator) to corroborate the results of a series of experiments. It is suggested that the investigations are diabolic or blasphemous: they infringe the sacred limits of human knowledge and depend on the help of equivocal beings, partly human. The experiment is sensible but liberates terrible 'forces' that destroy the scientist, directly or indirectly". Included in this collection are the tales: THE OMEGA FORCE ('La Fuerza Omega - on the violent powers of sound), VIOLA AQUERONTIA (where a gardener attempts to give powers to flowers), THE METAMUSIC ('La Metamusica' - on the visualisation of music), THE PSYCHON (an experiment to obtain the materialization of certain kind of thoughts). In every tale there abounds pseudo-scientific explanations with a detriment to the narrative development and to characterisation. But the other three sf tales in the book are more interesting. In AN UNEXPLAINABLE PHENOMENON ('Un Fenomeno Inexplicable') and in YUR we find a recurrent theme in that time, which we can name 'the spectre of the monkey'. One of the first literary examples we can point to is

that of MURDERS IN THE RUE MORGUE by E.A. Poe. In this case, and many more after, a monkey is used as a symbol, a condensation of primitiveness and violence. Further on, the appearance of Darwinism and its massive diffusion would apportion a more deeper meaning: the traumatic idea that the human being descends from that animal ancestor, and its psychological consequence: a mixture of fascination and terror in facing that brother, from a time so near and yet so incomprehensible. That mixture of feelings will reappear later in Quiroga's tales, to give a more emotive heat to the above-mentioned stories. In the first one (appearing in comic form recently with text by Otto Carlos Miler and art by Carlos Roume, and published in the magazine FIERRO of Buenos Aires), an Englishman sees his shadow as that of a monkey and feels that a part of his body (one of his hands) is abnormal, till the point of stretching 'the other's hand', when he takes one of his hands with the other. In the second tale, the narrator tries to make a monkey talk. Though he only attains the wherewithall to carry him to a fatal depression, he acquires his object in a pathetic, final scene, where the first words of the animal coincide with his death.

THE ORIGIN OF THE DELUGE ('El Origen Del Diluvio'), lastly, describes with a minuteness and imagination worthy of Stapledon's STAR MAKER, the world and the beings previous to the Deluge, and culminates in a sparkling, tangible nexus (a primitive mermaid in a bathtub in Buenos Aires) that joins the present from which a female medium transmits the story, with the remote age of the participating spirit.

Two other fantasies are added to these tales, without doubt the best of the book due to the detailed description of its decadent and luxurious atmosphere (THE HORSES OF ABDERA - Los Caballos de Abdera- and THE RAIN OF FIRE - La Lluvia de Fuego) and the A COSMOLOGICAL ESSAY IN TEN LESSONS, which closes the book with an extensive theory on the origin and development of the universe, supposedly transmitted by a 'casual interlocutor' in a pass in Los Andes.

The interest presented by THE STRANGE FORCES is not repeated in UNFORTUNATE TALES (1924), though three of its stories (THE ALABASTER COUP - El Vaso De Alabastro, THE QUEEN'S EYES - Los Ojos de la Reina - and THE DAGGER - El Punal) may be called SF by the documented descriptions - and precis - on the history and rituals of the Egyptians, though it is necessary to recognise that they have no narrative weight.

Lugones' influence over Horacio Quiroga was two-fold: linguistic for the fantastic part of his work, and existential and indirect for the consequences that the travelling they made together in 1903 to Misiones (a province in the Northeast of the country, on the frontiers with Brazil and Paraguay), because some years later Quiroga would dwell in that province, and the best part of his narrative work has the atmosphere that pervades the Misionere wood.

Nevertheless, the fantastic and SF elements would be permanent interests for Quiroga, and the first titles related to the theme would be published in the magazine CARAS Y CARETAS ('Faces And Masks'), such as THE FIRE GLOBE ('El Globo de Fuego' - 1907), where a couple communicate for the first time, sentimentally, with the apparition of a 'globular ray, an electric bomb' that enters through a key hole; or in LOGIC TO THE CONTRARY ('Lógica al Revés' - 1908), a disposition with an essayic tone which is confirmed in the second half of the story. In THE HANGED MONKEY ('El Mono Ahorcado' - 1907), on the other hand, the theme of Lugones' YUR is repeated: the narrator tries to make a monkey speak, and the tone becomes more frugal, as can be seen in the didacticism. It ends in tragedy too, as can be seen by the title.

Apart from these tales, Quiroga wrote, between 1908 and 1913, six works signed with the pseudonym S. Fragosa Lima, because he considered these stories were bad, being 'food money' literature. In THE MONKEY THAT KILLED ('El Mono Que

Asesino') he devises a complex theme of meta-psychosis to execute a delayed vengeance, delayed for three thousand years. THE ARTIFICIAL MAN ('El Hombre Artificial') envisages the creation of a man with all the garbage imposed by the 'Frankenstein' of Mary Shelley, and added an idea that saves the tale: experience is given to the recently created man by the transmission by means of aching, supplied by the atrocious torture of an innocent. THE WILD ('El Salvaje') is one of his best works, probably because it uses an area well known by the author: the Parana river. The narrator travels there to investigate the circumstances of a strange report by the person in charge of an isolated meteorological station of impossible torrential rains, his encounter with a dinosaur and the growing friendship with the animal. It has a deep, nostalgic tone, that can compare it to some of Ballard's tales (eg 'Regress al mar...mm...RETURN TO THE SEA?').

He published his last book, FARTHER ON (Mas Alla) in 1935. Here he tried to concentrate, in the middle of an absolute stylistic and argumentative jumble, on the theory of some special rays, the 'mi' rays, which could solidify cinematographic images giving them separate existence. Among the chaos appearing in that book, he twice mentions 'the strange forces', as a veiled homage to his master, Leopoldo Lugones.

What connects Macedonio Fernandez to the great body of sf is his way, frankly and constantly, of contradicting all the accepted beliefs, of arguing the Therapeutics, the Realism in the novels, the limits of Psychology, with such deepness and variety that results, after all, more from an encyclopaedist of new style than a narrator.

From his extensive work, the most 'finished' tale is THE CALABASH WHICH TURNED INTO THE COSMOS ('El Zapallo Que Se Hizo Cosmos'), that narrates how a natural catastrophe transforms with an ontological one in the last paragraphs. TANTALIA anticipates the later interest awakened by the growing power of perception of vegetables, though excessively loaded with philosophical significance. THE PSYCHIC SURGERY OF EXPIRATION ('Cirugia Psiquica de Extirpacion') describes Cosimo Schnitz' sensations; he is a blacksmith whose sense of futurity, of prevision, has been reduced, artificially, to eight minutes. WHEN SOLANO REYES SUFFERED TWO DEFEATS IN ONE DAY ('Donde Solano Reyes Era Un Vencido Y Sufria Dos Derrotas Al Dia') explains, with detailed description and hypothesis, a simple way to accelerate or brake the nearness of death. A SHRINKING PATIENT ('Un Paciente En Disminucion') extrapolates the death wish of doctors, in the same style as Robert Sheckley.

Among his innumerable non-narrative texts related to sf, THE INTELLIGENT DANCE ('El Bobo Inteligente') describes a country in which 'its inhabitants evolve inventions backwards, one and all', so that it passes from electricity to gas, to petrol, to brazier, to torch, and the transient puts weights on their shoulders to walk slower so as not to arrive early, and they use a clock 'invisible and epileptic, which jumps the hours'.

The two truest friends and correspondents of Macedonia were Jorge Luis Borges and Santiago Dabove. The three used to meet in the above brothers' house to discuss metaphysics, William James, theories on health and on death (this last being one of Dabove's obsessions).

In Borges' narrative work, sf is a marginal element, and when a tale is framed inside this genre, it is easier to place it close to its early years than in the contemporary scene. On the other hand, his style, his personal universe, his way of prefacing a theme in words, had become so topic and identifiable, so influential over other authors, that it can be said that a great part of contemporary sf is 'Borgean', rather than the opposite.

TLON, UQBAR, ORBIS TERTIUS (1940) describes the insidious infiltration, by bibliographical means, of a strange universe on our own. BABELON'S LOTTERY ('La Loteria de Babilonia' - 1944) shows, with Kafkaian precision, the complexity of an award and penalty system. FUNES THE MEMORABLE ('Funes el Memorioso' - 1942) is one of the tales that approaches sf; without much difficulty, it can be catalogued with the innumerable North American tales which use the same method of magnifying the brain function, memory, which, adding the substantive 'man' to the title (it could sound like 'Funes, the memory-man'). BRODIE'S REPORT ('El Informe de Brodie' - 1970) returns to the tone of Swift's travels, to describe, in a mixture of anthropologic treatise and travel tale, the strange habits of a certain tribe. THE UTOPIA OF A TIRED MAN ('Utopia de Un Hombre Que Esta Cansado' - 1975) is just a recipient for some repeated obsessions of Borges, paradoxically opposing the title of the piece by the general perfectionism of his utopian projects with his individual eccentricities; to elaborate, in a terse trade of information between two men from distant epochs, and many of the ideas that Borges expounded in many conferences and reports.

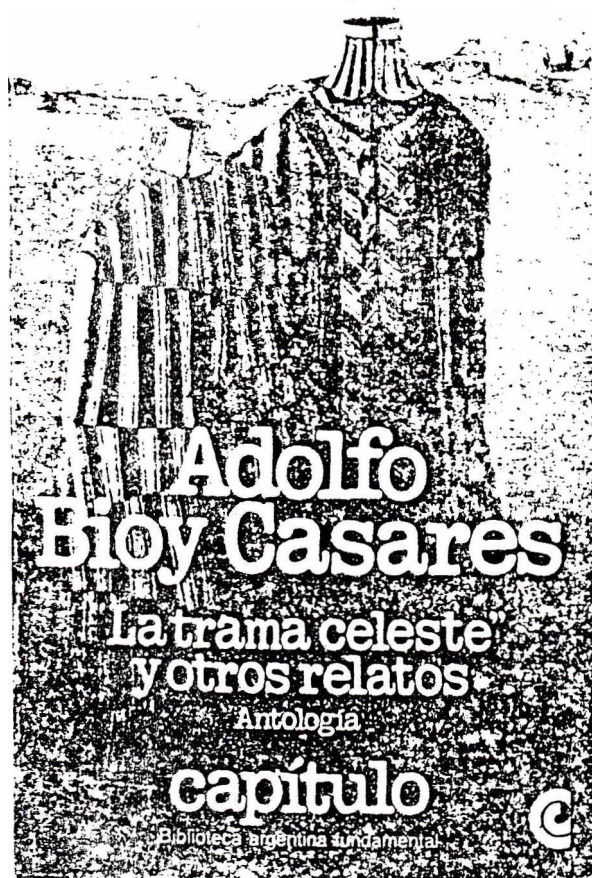
Aside from his narrative work, he propounded the work of Adolfo Bioy Casares, Ray Bradbury and Olaf Stapledon, and dedicated an excellent essay to 'the first Wells', that is to say that of the scientific novels; he noted, in the preface to a quite thick edition on the North American novel, that he 'had included themes which could not be encountered in more extensive works', talking about the police genre, sf, western and Indian poetry; he demonstrated, in that volume, that his interest was not that of a snob, in choosing so disparate authors such as Lovecraft, Heinlein, Van Vogt and Bradbury, and mentioning the importance of fan clubs and fanzines in the USA. He also declared that Wells' novels circumscribe and surpass everything that has been written afterward.

In the brief work of Santiago Dabove, DEATH AND HER SUITOR ('La Muerte Y Su Traje' - 1961) there are some samples of what Borges describes in his prologue as 'reasoned imagination', adding a new denomination to the long list of that which have tried to take over from the inadequate and apparently already immovable definition of 'sf'.

The most desiccated tale, for its duality and synthesis is BEING DUST ('Ser polvo') where a man parsimoniously transforms to a vegetable. VARINSKY'S EXPERIMENT ('El Experimento de Varinsky'), on the other hand, depends mostly on Poe's imagery, and results in being convincing to a small degree. FINIS recollects, with intensity, the Hector Servadas of Jules Verne, including the pseudo-scientific explanations for the events (infrared radiations, spectrographic analysis, etc). The theme is the change of rotational velocity of the Earth and the general catastrophe which follows, which brings it into the theme of 'post-catastrophe' that plagues the genre: social disorder, lack of the masks and psychological identities and the historical regression of all mankind. THE REMEMBRANCE ('El Recuerdo'), a very short vignette, is a poetic text which purports to have been written after, not only the end of mankind, but of all life, and which approximates Stapledon; TWO MOUTHS ('Dos Bocas') is much of a joke, wherein he mixes surreal images with satire.

And now we come to one of the authors who, with more originality and style - in my judgment - has enhanced this genre: Adolfo Bioy Casares. Though he is not totally dedicated to sf, many of his best works - as also those of his wife, Silvina Ocampo - pertain to the genre of sf. Both novels take place on an island, both have occultist themes until the end, where the secret of the apparent chaos that dominates them till then is revealed. Both have a notable Wellisian influence, and both apply a subtle, complex play of conceptual mirrors that underlie the narration itself, multiplying the narrators, the points of view and the possibilities that what is being read is false. The view of the book could be modified by the views of any previous reader to the current reader (who has the book in his hands).

In MOREL'S INVENTION, the final explanation, which arrives through the so imprecise machine of the penitentiary colony of Kafka, deceives a little, because of encircling logic which has limits in the white climate; being of such a metaphysical description that until then predominates in the text, with a coldness and indifference that preceded the development of the French "Nouvelle Nouveau". In EVASION PLAN, for a change, the brilliance of the setting helps to simplify the excessive ambiguity of the previous pages. In both, the characters are not Argentine, the landscape is some kind of white page, describing with minimal detail the islands, and the style communicates a merely intellectual intranquility, though it brings to mind images of terror tales, which except for the solid metal frame that surrounds them would fold up..



In the tale THE LIGHT-BLUE PLOT ('La Trama Celeste' - 1948) the characters begin to speak in a language recognisable as commonplace. They live in Buenos Aires, their personality mixture is totally human (mixtures that are different from the typical ones of the other literary protagonists: that predominate with meanness and obtrusiveness). That adherence to identifiable reality makes for more credibility and intensifies the central idea of the story: the transportation of a flier to a parallel universe, which lets Bioy describe in a few pages, and in tangible mode, how it would be in another Buenos Aires, in which the big differences in its past with regard to ours are obvious in subtle - but terrifying - detail: alleys which don't exist, streets with changed names, unexplainable differences in the protagonist's friends' behaviour.

THE CALAMARY CHOOSES ITS OWN INK ('El Calamar Opta Por Su Tinta' - 1962) tells again a classic humorous sf story: of the extraterrestrial visitor who instead of falling in the indicated place (Washington, the Unesco, London...) lands in a little town and is meticulously destroyed because of the meanness of its inhabitants, even when, as in this case, its origin and the possibilities of the encounter are known.

In THE ANXIETIES ('Los Afanes' - 1967) there filters the tone of Bioy's love stories, mostly consumed in a thin and slender net of jealousy, animosity and misunderstanding among three or more characters. The sf element, vital for the story, is that which gives strength to the tale, saving it from the clumsy and superficial theme that overwhelms the other stories of this type in the genre. Here Bioy treats Heladio Heller, a new representative of the fauna of the wise porteno (= inhabitant of Buenos Aires), who invents frames in which humans or dogs souls can be trapped, winning with that invention the exaggerated hate of Milena, loved by the narrator but married to the inventor, and in charge of executing the vengeance of the ordinary against the extraordinary.

THE GREAT SERAFIN (1967) describes the end of the world on an isolated, melancholic seaside where the protagonist has gone for medical reasons. The end of the story is a slow blackout, more a sigh than a breakdown, in one of the most

desperate texts of a work in which joy is expressed only in its more superficial aspects (a joke, noisy mirth, elegant jest) as if wanting to give more emphasis to the sadness. Powerful, pictorial imagery (a seaside full of dead fish, the slow disclosure of the statue of a buried serafin) reminds one of Ballard and Garcia Marquez.

The tale A NEW FURROW ('Un Nuavo Surco' - 1974) presents a strong emotion compared with the energy (as in Quiroga), here used for a new Morel or Doctor Castel, to all practical purposes. Such as in Dino Buzzatti, the sanitarium where the story is played, which is rigidly organised in rooms whose numbers indicate the degree of deterioration of the patients. As in some of Bloy's other tales, this is related by a disparate group, and progresses steadily towards the resolution of the mystery and the final sadness.

In order to shorten this listing of the local sf progenitors, and having finished with the authors who have written with more power, we'll only make mention of some curiosities from other writers, though their production is a minimal part of their global work. Such is the case of Julio Cortazar, whose texts are, in general, unclassifiable, and sometimes are very close to fantasy or sf, as in WITH LEGITIMATE PRIDE ('Con Legitimo Orgulo'), HEADACHE ('Cefales'), AFTER DINNER ('Sobramesa'), A YELLOW FLOWER ('Una Flor Amarilla'), and THE HIGHWAY SOUTH ('La Autopista del Sur'). The same can be said of Silvina Ocampo on reading her tales THE INEXTINGUISHABLE RACE ('La Raza Inextinguible'), THE WAVES ('Las Ondas'), THE TILLER ('El Verdugo'), and REPORT FROM THE SKY AND HELL ('Informe del Cielo y del Infierno'). The automation theme comes back in Leopoldo Marechal's novel MEGAFON OR THE WAR ('Megafon O la Guerra' - 1970). Some stories from THE LITTLE MOON ('El jorobadito' - 1933), written by Roberto Arlt, in particular the tale THE RED MOON ('la luna roja'), which builds an atmosphere of precise and sensible apocalypse, which is transformed in crude allegory, to its symbolic end, may be included, using the genre limits of sf very elastically. The same for MARTHA

RILQUELME (1956), by Ezequiel Martinez Estrada, a complex narration that describes a house in which misdirection and mystery are predominant, and whose limits expand till they reach cosmic dimensions. Or fragments of Ernesto Sabato's ON HEROES AND GRAVES ('Sobre Heroes y Tumbas' - 1961), especially THE REPORT ON BLINDS ('Informe Sobre Ciegos'), that nears Lovecraft in the description of some strange landscapes. Or the tales THE PRISONER ('El Prisionero'), HIBERNATION and THE TWO DEATHS ('Las Dos Muertes') of Alberto Lagunas; Alfonsina Storni's sonnet TO AN INHABITANT OF MARS ('A Unhabitante de Marte'); and the tales THE END OF THE YEAR or LOVE IN WINGS ('Fin de Ano' and 'Amor en Alas') by Syria Poletti...



MAS ALLA ('Farther On') is the magazine that created the base for a steady sf readership in our country, though it was not the first publication of the genre: it was preceded by HOMBRES DEL FUTURO ('Future Men'), which between August and October 1945 published three issues dedicated to reproducing North American sf; the material came from STARTLING STORIES, ASTOUNDING and THRILLING WONDER, including more or less scientific futures (for example, PLUTO MEN) and Eric Frank Russell, Stanley Weinbaum, Edmond Hamilton and other's works.

With its four uninterrupted years of publication and its laudable intent for the incorporation of artistic, literary and scientific local material, with a sparkling readers' mail, MAS ALLA is, up to the present day the magazine that has published the most issues (48) in Argentina.

Travel to and from different planets, travel to the past and the future, with unhuman plants and animals, and from the already known, ordinary humanity plantified in its animality, superior minds, galactic politics, changing ways, impressive aliens, ends of the world, criminals and saints passing among the stars - these were some of the themes which travelled through its pages.

But in addition to the anecdotal, MAS ALLA made schoolrooms for its readers, stimulating them, opening a road for the appearance of fan clubs.

Its format (14 cm x 19.5 cm x 184 pages) made history too, confusing a reader accustomed to larger magazines, like PIF PAF (comics), who arrived at the newstand and saw it mixed with the 'big ones'.

It was published by Abril, with material extracted from the US magazine GALAXY and with local contributions, as mentioned above. So we could read in its pages new Argentine writers such as Hector German Oesterheld, Pablo Capanna, Juan P. Edmunds, and made available were the first Spanish versions of more representative novels: THE DAY OF THE TRIFFIDS by John Wyndham, Robert Heinlein's THE MAN WHO SOLD THE MOON and its sequel REQUIEM, and THE PUPPET MASTERS; Isaac Asimov's THE CAVES OF STEEL and PEBBLE IN THE SKY; Frederik Pohl and Cyril Kornbluth's WOLFBANE; Alfred Bester's DEMOLISHED MAN and THE MARTIAN CHRONICLES by Ray Bradbury, which appeared in a series between numbers 17 and 25.

Two Argentines saved the world from each xenoid invasion thanks to a state of drunkenness: Claudio Paz made it with THE 17 COINS OF 20 (#24) and Ignacio Covarrubias concreted it through that fellow SATURNINO FERNANDEZ, HERO (#27). Common men, evading through alcohol their more or less weary and disappointed circumstances, transcended without realising the barrier of superintelligence. A corrective entry was given by Juan P. Edmunds who tells how the visitor recently arrived from the stars places his gigantic foot over the lilliputian city of Bahia Blanca (an important city in the south of the provinces of Buenos Aires), the story - DISCOVERY.

There was also detective sf, with humour and without policemen. Abel Asquini was the author; this pseudonym was that of a first rate scientist, physicist and mathematician, the radio-astronomer Carlos M. Versavsky. One such was LIO'S CRIMES ('Los Crimenes de Lio'). It is worth while to seek in numbers 6, 7 and 8 to

see THE PROTONIQUEL coming through its inventor's head due to a familiar short circuit, or to hear the sound of NEMOBIUS FASCIATU and receive the tooth of a sick dog and fall down into one's own trap, under the infrared rays of NICTALOPES.

Humour and melancholy have first place with MAS ALLA's Argentine writers. One of them, with the trite name of Juan Fernandez, invented a robot (PARTICULAR PROFESSOR) who took nutrition in tablet form; and another, Francisco Baltzer, verified that the vacationers who went in SUMMER to Mar Del Plata were not only the Argentines and foreigners who wanted to loose their money in the local casino, but since its fame had extended through hyperspatial frontiers, also some insectoids who placed their winnings in local banks (numbers 4 and 20).

An Argentine child discovered the secret of invisibility. His name was Rino and he was the literary son of Julian del Cordoba in his short story RINO'S FANTASIES (#46); of course, all was the consequence of having discovered antigravity. So Rino became more powerful than Superman, and left his invention to a 'world security organisation'... back when the UN seemed to be the solution to universal problems. But at the time De Cordoba showed us his child, he had already gathered 'primal mastery' in prehistory and had given us THE JUMP which has a writer trapped in his own fiction (#20 and 22).

At the same time that the Italian-Argentine expert Pablo Capanna explained that UFOs didn't land on our planet any more because of a mutual INCOMPREHENSION (#37) that comes from our antiquity; in a cellular humorous outline, Luis R. Torres destroyed the Earth, inhabited by NOTHING MORE THAN HUMANS. That feeling of annulling, perhaps the fruit of economical instability or apocalyptical inflations, becomes evident in Julio Almado's vision of an experiment that gets to THE DISINTEGRATED TIME (# 38); and leaves only one thing to the protagonist to affirm: 'With my face against the dust, I only say: 'I'm afraid'.' Another fear made Leo Boreas decide to DIE ALONE (# 14) as is told by Adolfo Perez Zelaschi, in order to destroy a vampiric machine which feeds on thoughts and personalities.

And it was unavoidable that, with the saturation caused by MAS ALLA, would appear the clubs. The Argentine Interplanetary Society, pioneers in rocketry in our country, organised the first Argentine Astronautic Exposition in March 1955; at that event could be seen the notable work of model maker Hector Marziano: rocket models, model planetary landscapes, homunculus with diving suits, with a thousand precious details artistically created.

In the city of Ramos Mejia, in 1955, the 'MAS ALLA Friends Centre' was formed, run by Julio Castelvi. Five years later, when the publication MAS ALLA ceased, clubs, associations, and organisations related to sf appeared and disappeared in Argentina, but though that is another story that we'll go into further on, we can only mention here the influence that MAS ALLA had in all what happened back in the beginning of it all.

There were, however, more characters connected with this magazine. One, maybe the most important of those which passed through it and is well known by his further contributions of international remembrance, is Hector German Oesterhald. He came to be its editor in the last issues (though the full team responsible for the publication was never revealed), when he published a couple of stories: the scandalous THE REINFORCED MAQUIAVELO ('Maquiavelo Reforzad'), where two enterprises compete in the making of resistant sautes and potent feminine breasts by atmospheric aspersion, and BEWARE OF THE DOG ('Cuidado Con el Perro'), with a Martian taking photographs of us, as if we were his pretended vampiric capture.

After that, Oesterheld would be responsible for the text of the comic THE ETERNAUT ('El Eternauta'), begun in a serial way back in 1957, which was, without doubt, the first extended work on the genre here.

But let us finish with MAS ALLA. After four years, it ceased publication. Its last editorial argued that due to the fact that it was an elitist publication (of the 'intellectual and spiritually privileged sector') it was economically unjustifiable to continue it, unless it dropped its quality, which would be 'a deceit and an insult which the readers would not be worthy of or would not accept, and that would cause disgust to our conscience.' With 'emotion and sadness' MAS ALLA said good-bye to its readers (who might live in Montevideo or in Santiago de Chile, Lima, Costa Rica or Barranquilla - Colombia -, Guayaquil - Ecuador -, Camaguey - Cuba -, Caracas, Paris or Moscow, and all the towns that could be imagined in Argentina), hoping that its disappearance would only be a short while. It reserved the promise of coming back 'when the interests in it would reach to a higher point than at present. And God grant that moment be not too far...'

This happened thirty years ago. Several times we've heard similar excuses, and we've also seen magazines succumb without any excuse. In its time, the disappearance of MAS ALLA created an empty place that was only partially covered by the books of such publishers as MINOTAURO and FABRIL. When seven years later MINOTAURO became a magazine, it only recovered a part of that public. EL PENDULO ('The Pendent'), which appeared twenty years later, encountered another generation.

Still today, the veteran 'masallistas' form some kind of elite that hoard their collections as a relic, though frequently have given up reading sf.

With its classic, Campbellian style, says Pablo Capanna, MAS ALLA represented an epoch. No other magazine has achieved up until now its length of publication. Times have changed, and the genre has won its place in literature, though it has some lack of originality, but if we are where we are, it is because in the beginning was MAS ALLA.

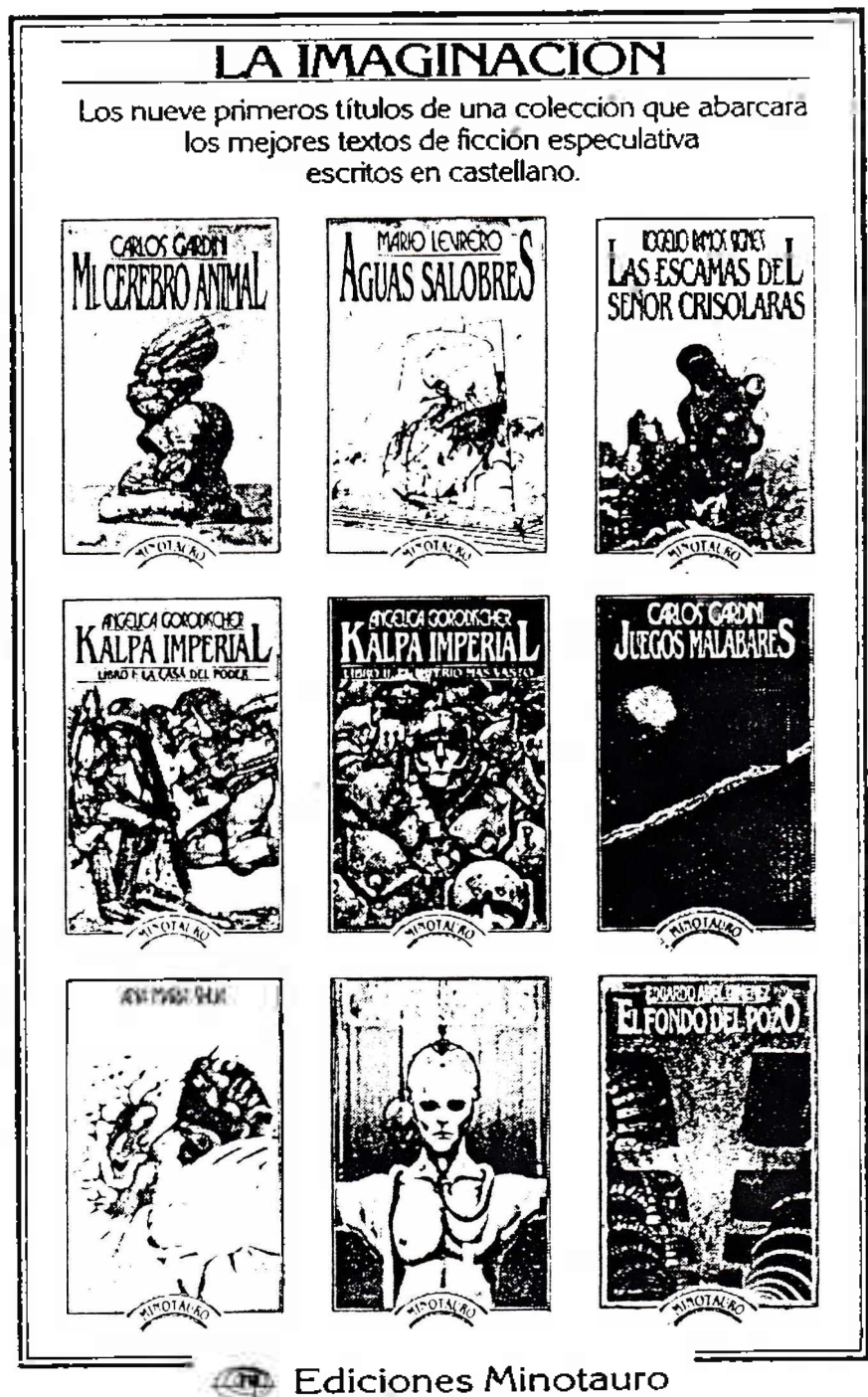
But MAS ALLA was not alone: a few months after its first issue was published, there appeared a rival: URANA, The Magazine Of The Year 2000. It was a disordered magazine, because it was said to be published in Buenos Aires but appeared in Rosario, and its only two issues were published in October and December 1953. It was published by 'Selecciones Argentinas' and was edited by Julio A. Echeverria. It reproduced material from the Italian magazine of the same name, which explains certain peculiarities in translation to the Spanish ('fantasciencia' instead of 'ciencia ficcion'; 'motoscafo' instead of 'submarino'). It was similar to MAS ALLA, but more precarious. Its price was near half of MAS ALLA, but its value was very less, and it disappeared without pain or glory, without growing to be a favoured alternative. We only make this mention because, as we'll see further on, this kind of imitation would be repeated again and again.



Before the beginning of the decline of MAS ALLA, there were already emerging those who would inherit its audience. The coming period would be under the hegemony of Minotauro Editions, with an unquestionable presence that lasts up to the present.

Minotauro was founded in 1955 by the Spaniard Francisco Porrua. In spite of the presence of MAS ALLA, what he himself proposed was still an adventure. There existed a definite audience who read MAS ALLA: an worthy conglomeration of amateur radio buffs, students, engineers and electricians; but it was very difficult to achieve the 'cult' image for the public to pay attention to.

Minotauro tried, and achieved it. The first books of its collection were novels some of which had appeared in MAS ALLA, such as THE MARTIAN CHRONICLES ('Cronicas Marcianas') by Bradbury, and MORE THAN HUMAN ('Mas Que Humano') by Sturgeon. Translations were careful and the covers were sober, being of abstract sketches instead of the habitual spacecraft. Both these novels came with the endorsement of prologues written, respectively, by Jorge Luis Borges and Marcos Victoria, whose presence removed any doubt from



the traditional reader. Distribution was also taken carefully, trying not to lose the 'masallista' audience (a pamphlet was sent to all of the MAS ALLA subscribers, announcing the first six titles of the collection).

Throughout this decade, it was Minotauro who exercised an unquestionable teaching among the Argentine audience, giving them all the genre classics: Bradbury, Pohl-Kornbluth, Sturgeon, Bester, Sloane, Simak, Stapledon, Clarke, Lovecraft, Matheson, Fowler Wright... and more recently Le Guin, Aldiss, Priest, Carter, Henderson, Ballard, Moorcock...

Beside the careful work of Minotauro, whose editions were in certain ways superior to the French ones of that time, there were others who paled with Minotauro's intent to fill the empty place left by MAS ALA, and these had a poor reception.

Certainly, in 1956 began another series by the publisher Fabril. Under the sub-title of 'Fantaciencia', appeared fourteen titles, some already published by MAS ALLA, such as DRAGON'S ISLAND ('La Isla del Dragon') by Jack Williamson. There were works by Hoyle, Asimov, Hal Clement, Jerry Sohl and Frederik Pohl.

Aimed at another audience, the Acme Agency published books for young readers (THE SPACE ROBIN HOOD COLLECTION, 1957). They were adventure books written by Clarke, Evan Hunter or Heinlein. But Acme also tried to compete with a magazine: SPACE TRAILS ('Pistas del espacio'), edited by Alfredo J. Grassi, parting from the traditional TRAILS ('Pistas'), a serial of cheap police stories. It published fourteen issues, some with old stories, some without signatures and a comic with a text as coarse as its art.

There also appeared in 1957, in the comic ZERO HOUR ('Hora Cero'), that which we have already defined as the first sf novel written and set in Argentina, though it remained in print elsewhere: THE ETERNAUT by Hector German Oesterheld, recognised today as one of the best writers in the world. It was drawn by Solano Lopez, and there were several editions (most recently, as a serial in the magazine SCORPIO). Maybe the most important feat with this comic was its staging in an familiar urban landscape (Liberter's Avenue, May Avenue, Congress, Retiro, Plaza Italia...) an apocalypse, similar to those that appeared in old novels and films referring to 'invasions'; the impression left in its thousands of readers over several generations has as its base the concrete reality the author created, without superheroes or superscience but with fallible characters, in a Buenos Aires suburb.

The official birth of what we would call Argentina fandom was registered in 1960. The one responsible was Hector Raul Pessina, who would become international spokesman for Argentine fans by way of a fanzine written in English: THE ARGENTINE SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW, that had several foreign correspondents. Through it, Pessina informed readers of the latest happenings in the USA. Later he would create a private fanzine titled EL ALIENIGENA SOLITARIO: The Lonely Alien (1969), this time it was bilingual (as in the title), and another which alluded to the fantastic cinema: OMICRON (1969). A result from his efforts was the creation of The Science Fiction Club of Argentina (1969), the first such in fandom, which also produced a bulletin.

However, a little before, in 1964, and encouraged by the success of his book editions, Francisco Porrua resolved to create the magazine MINOTAURO, characterised by the same sobriety and care that had defined his editorial line. The editorship was given to Ricardo Gosseyn (an alias for Porrua, taken from A.E. van Vogt), who would admit that it was the local edition of THE MAGAZINE OF F&SF.

Aside from the covers, there were no other illustrations, but it gave something that no other magazine before had given: biographical data and prologues that preceded each story; the audience had left off being a mere consumer, and wanted to know something about the authors. Passages from International critics were

used to lead off the editorials. All these made MINOTAURO an impeccable product, in appearance it looked more an anthology than a magazine.

Much at the same time, Porrua started an Argentina reprint of the French magazine PLANETS, alternating its publication with MINOTAURO. PLANET ('Planets') was also edited by Gosseyn and brought science articles and some sf stories. In its first period it published twenty-six issues, and later on another seven under the name NEW PLANETS ('Nuevo Planets').

Let us now return to Minotauro: its ten issues, appearing between 1964 and 1968, presented a new wave of writers: Cordwainer Smith, James G. Ballard, John Brunner, Roger Zelazny and Brian Aldiss.. Issue number nine included an 'editorial' manifesto: 'The English Scene' by Judith Merrill. The English, with Ballard at the head, promised a revolution in the genre: Minotauro orientated its editorials with this in mind.

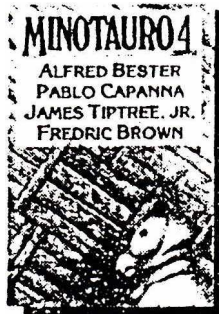
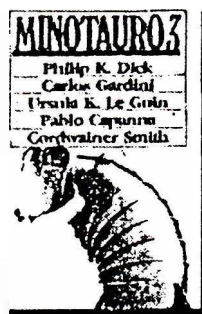
There was also a critic for the fantastic cinema: Agustin Mahieu. In the last issue there was an Uruguayan (Jose Pedro Diaz) whose 'Anthropologic Exercises' ('Ejercicios Antropologicos') would continue in other magazines (including EL PENDULO). It was planned also to create a section for book reviews, which was given over to Pablo Capanna, but that didn't get to appear before the magazine folded.

LA IMAGINACION

La ficción especulativa.
Las conjeturas de la ciencia y de la fantasía.
El pensamiento alternativo.
Cuentos, artículos, libros, cine, noticias.
Publicación trimestral de

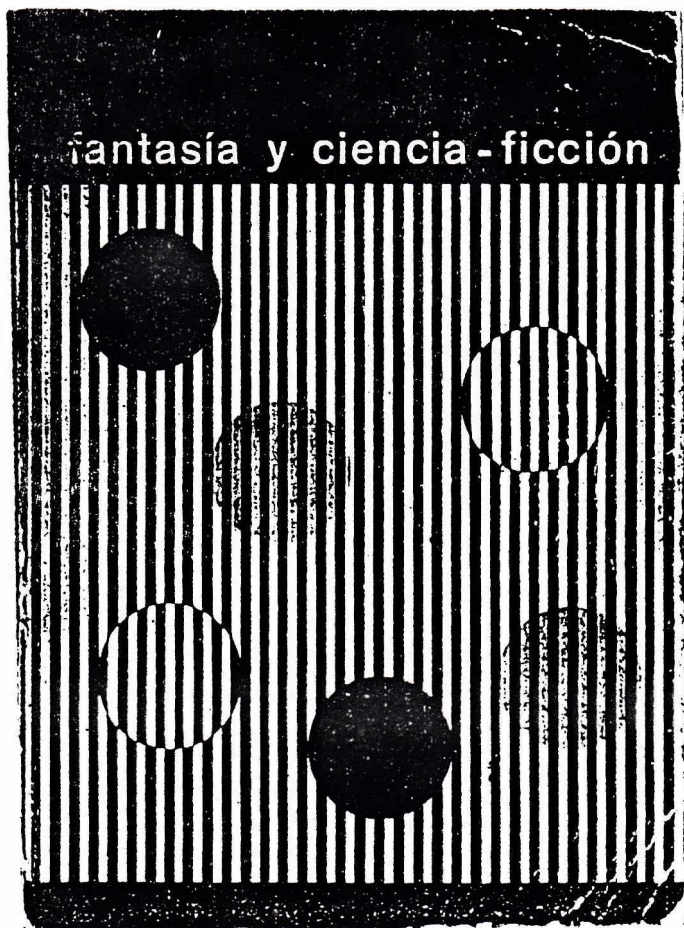


Ediciones Minotauro



A product as refined as Minotauro, however, didn't fit to the ideas of the traditional sf addict, the MAS ALLA reader. It is maybe because of that that

Oesterheld tried out another magazine... which folded very quickly. It was GEMINIS, whose two issues appeared in June and August 1965, trying to find the MAS ALLA recipe. Its material came from GALAXY, with brief notes at the foot of the pages, articles on astronautics, local artists (covers by Breccia), but with a more careless presentation than MAS ALLA. It did publish a story by R.A. Lafferty ('El planeta Paní') and the script for Orson Wells' WAR OF THE WORLDS, and included two very interesting stories by Oesterheld.



The following years were very invigorating for science fiction.

The cause may have been the boom in Latin American literature, which motivated many publishers to go in search of Argentine writers in all the fields, including those as doubtful as sf. In that time the first sf books by Argentine writers were published, two conventions were run and the creation of a syndicate was tried, with the few stable sf writers that existed.

To begin, a group of psychoanalysts that had discovered that they had a common interest in sf, met each other at the lecture given by Sturgeon, and sheltered and helped each other, later persuading Horne Publishing (which specialised in Freudian texts) to compile their stories into an anthology. With a prologue by Dalmire Saenz, *FANTASTIC EQUATION* ('Ecuacion Fantastica') was released in 1966. There were professionals like Emilio Rodrigue, Marie Langer, Grinberg, Usandivaras, Raskovski and Abadi. Of them all only Rodrigue returned to sf with *PLENIPOTENCE* ('Plenipotencia' - Minotauro 1967), a collection of tales of which the very brief *EIGHT TO THE INFINITE* stands out. Marie Langer was then co-authoress, with Eduardo Goligorsky, of a critic essay on the genre: *SF AND PSYCHOANALYSIS* (Paidós, 1969).

In the middle of 1966, Minotauro published its first book devoted to Argentine authors: *MEMORIES OF THE FUTURE* ('Memorias del Futuro'), by Alberto Vanasco and Eduardo Goligorsky. Vanasco was already a very respected writer in the literary world, and Goligorsky came from working, under separate pseudonyms, in the police genre. The stories combined a certain mix of porteno (porteno = relative to Buenos Aires) humour and satire on classical sf, with the notable influence of Philip J. Farmer in Goligorsky, and of Pohl-Kornbluth in Vanasco, who wrote the most detestable tale of the volume: *THE POET'S DEATH* ('La Muerte del Poeta'). The edition, as carefully wrought as those of foreign authors, varied in size and format in that it had fewer, but larger, pages.

In 1966 was also published *THE SENSE OF SF* ('El Sentido de la Ciencia Ficción') by Pablo Capanna (Published by Columba), recognised as one of the best essays on the genre at world level... this book should have better luck: it is now impossible to find, and it was never re-published.

In the following year we see Vanasco and Goligorsky together again with another collection for Minotauro: *GOODBYE TO TOMORROW* ('Adios al Manana'), and also a different authoress who, with the passing of time, would become the most innovative figure in science fiction in the Spanish speaking world and who also



stands out at the International level: Angelica Gorodischer. Her work OPUS TWO ('Opus Dos' - Minotauro) is a 'novella in nine articulated parts'. Though this story doesn't forecast the wide-rangedness of her future works, it does show the economy of her prose, the professionalism in its construction and a general literary tone, which shows she is an omnivorous reader, as she is indeed (Angelica, my 'mother', says: "I mistrust the person who writes more than she reads"). What limits her in this story is that, though solid enough, the originality of the ideas seem to make her writing feel insecure, but she creates an atmosphere and includes some of the things other authors would be censured for: general descriptions, historical moments, fantastic landscapes, action... all of which she would correct in her future works.

In this year, anthologies multiplied, created, in general, by the same method: a couple of prestigious classics, a writer invited to write st. some professional stories, and those of many friends who pursued the editor relentlessly with their unpublishable writings. Thus appeared ARGENTINE SF TALES ('Cuentos Argentinos de Cf' - Merlin, 1967) which included stories by Marco Denevi, Adolfo Bioy Casares, Goligorsky, Alfredo J. Grassi, Dalmiro Saenz, Alejandro Vignatti, and Carlos Peralta. Selection was done under the direction of Juan Jacobo Bajarlia. Flower Publishers ('Ediciones de la Flor') compiled a historical anthology: BEFORE THE SCIENCE WAS FICTION ('Antes Que la Ciencia Fuera Ficción') chosen by Alejo Ueautier and J. Davies, who rescued Holmberg, Cervantes, Leopoldo Alas 'Clarín' and Enrique Méndez Calzada.

Grassi and Vignatti, later, composed another anthology: SF: NEW ARGENTINE TALES ('Ciencia Ficción: Nuevos Cuentos Argentinos' - Calatayud-Dea, 1968), including Marco Denevi, Carlos M. Caron, Eduardo Azcuay, Osvaldo Elieff, and Juan J. Bajarlia, who later on would come back with his MONSTERS STORIES ('Historias de Monstruos' - De la Flor 1969), and FORMULA OF THE ANTIWORLD ('Formula al antimundo' - Galerna 1970). Goligorsky, present in all these anthologies, compiled his own: THE ARGENTINES IN THE MOON ('Los Argentinos en la Luna' - De la Flor, 1968), maybe the most balanced.

With the passing of time this group became diluted. Vanasco wrote outside of sf doing general narratives and essays; Goligorsky went to Spain, where he had published UNDER THE SHADES OF THE BARBARIANS ('A la Sombra de los Barbaros' - Nueva Dimension); Vignatti went to Venezuela, where he soon died; Denevi and Saenz never came back to write sf, and Bajarlia devoted himself to criticism, only returning very recently to write again.

There was another try with a magazine - 2001, A TIME OF ANTICIPATION ('2001, Periodismo de Anticipación') published by Enrique Loracono. Specially devoted to UFOs, it published some sf tales, to incline it towards the 'counterculture', with more opportunism than conviction. It passed on without pain or glory. Other approximations were seen in THE NOTEBOOKS OF MR. CRUSOE ('Cuadernos de Mr. Crusoe' (only one issue), which included the comic JULIA in the style of BARBARELLA, with text by Carlos del Peral and art by Guillermo Thiemer; SKETCHED LITERATURE ('Literature dibujada') published by Oscar Massota went the same way. It appeared in November 1968: it reproduced episodes of Flash Gordon and Mort Cinder (of Oesterheld - Breccia) previously published in the magazine MISTERIX (1962), as well as the comic NEUTRON by the Italian G. Crepax.

The magazine that could not be published in Argentina, was born in Spain: NUEVA DIMENSION ('New Dimension') began to appear in 1968, and took the leadership of the genre for the Spanish-speaking audience during the following years, always publishing Argentine authors, some of whom debuted in science fiction: Graciela Parini, Sergio Gaut vel Hartman, Norma Vitti... and it even devoted a special issue to MAS ALLA.

We also had conventions - two conventions!!

In December 15 and 16, 1967, the First Argentine SF Convention took place in Bs. Aires - Bairescon. Books and workshops with Vanasco, Goligorsky, and Porrua were exposed to the public's gaze. It was presided over by Pessina and also present was Fernando Pujadas (President of the 'Antelae' Club of Mar Del Plata).

In the following year, the marplatenses (=inhabitants of Mar Del Plata) organised what would be the major Argentine sf convention: Mardelcon. They were assisted by Pessina's people and by La Plata's Fantasy and SF Club (presided over by Osvaldo Elliff). It took place between 26 and 28 July 1968. Writers, editors and distributors attended and the UFO investigation centres and air-space magazines had displays. The Mar del Plata municipality and local TV showed interest in its development. There were expositions, allocations, debates and the performance of plays; Dr Armando Cocca spoke about Space Law; science fiction genre limits were discussed. There was also a story contest: awards were given to Magdalena Moujan Otano, Osvaldo Jorgensen, Ana Ibanez de Lopez Leclube and Cayetano Ferrari. The winner, Magdalena Moujan Otano would give further cause to talk in Spanish-speaking countries when her stories appeared in NUEVA DIMENSION (Spain), especially for the celebrated GU TA GUTARRAK (in Basque - we and ours - the story told of the origin of the Basque people as the result of a paradoxical travelling in time by a group including a present-day Basque scientist - among whom was the authoress, of course, resolving by chance the mystery that at present still veils this people and their language), which provoked the ire of dictator Francisco Franco, who seized the issue of the magazine containing the tale.. (well, he had prohibited talking and writing other languages than Spanish in Spain; nobody could express themselves in Catala, Basque, Galician, Asturian: once again ethnic minorities were crushed under totalitarianism).

Coming back to the convention: here there was present a young man recently arrived from Uruguay - Marcial Souto, who was soon to depart for the USA and was made by acclamation 'Argentine Fandom's Plenipotentiary Ambassador' to the World Convention. He departed and was lost for some years. When he came back he gave many talks... We are now finished with Mardelcon, but we'll mention that the organising club made use of the occasion to present their magazine ANTELAS.

Meanwhile, in Rosario, the magazine EL LAGRIMAL TRIFURCA appeared, devoted to general literature and poetry; it published stories, notes and articles on sf and fantasy. It published 13 issues up to 1976 and was published by Francisco and Elvio Gandoifo.

In 1969 we saw the nationally produced film INVASION, directed by Hugo Santiago by arrangement with Jorge Luis Borges and Adolfo Bioy Casares. Principal characters were played by Lautaro Murua and Olga Zubarry. It is in black and white and runs 124 minutes.

The golden '60s were ending and there wasn't any more publishing news nor sf magazines till 1973.



THE CRITICAL ESSAY.

Aside from the specialized magazines, criticism in the genre scarcely exists in our country. We haven't progressed from the simple comment.

One of the few critics who has maintained a permanent level of exposure and has had a verified insight on the stories and novels published in Spanish, is Pablo Capanna. He has worked his criticism, in both interviews and in articles, into magazines such as EL PENDULO or MINOTAURO or CRITERIO (a magazine for Catholic bishops in Argentina).

In 1966 EL SENTIDO DE LA CIENCIA FICCION ('SF Sense') first appeared. In those days, criticism was a virgin field all over the world. There were collections of criticisms, histories or subjective visions like those of Kingsley Amis. Against such a background this book provoked amazement. A professor of philosophy, Capanna put forward one of the first objective deliverances on the genre in any language. He firmly split the belief that science fiction was complete in itself which, in a field that, at the same time, thinks it is, and believes it is not because of its boundless nature, and has replaced this with a conviction in sf in its literary, historic, religious and philosophical aspects. It calls attention to the acute consciousness of the literary genre's development or its philosophical system and the relation of the creative with the social, which isn't limited to the sociological or to the political. Everything is sustained by a precise but never overdone management of information.

Later, in 1973, Capanna published LA TECNARQUIA ('Technarchy'), which only marginally relates to sf, mainly because it describes the consequences of technological explosion in human society. It's more an ecological work than an sf one. It's a very important work inside the growing field of Argentine prose. At last, he has taken Cordwainer Smith's work, from EL SENOR DE LA TARDE ('Lord Of The Evening'), to analyse it in its multiple levels, in what we can call the definitive work on the subject.

"The exercise of intelligence is not the most direct way to success", says Elvio Gandolfo, referring to Capanna: his first book only had one edition, and is impossible to find today. LA TECNARQUIA, in spite of its weight in a field scarce of structural essays, didn't receive much comment, and the essay on C. Smith was at least seven years making its way around from publisher to publisher without being accepted for publication.

With regard to Goligorsky and Marie Langer's work SF AND PSYCHOANALYSIS (1969), we can say that this approach is interesting more to psychoanalysts than to ordinary readers. Goligorsky centred his work on how sf reflects social reality, or at least, that sf which he considers "adult sf". Marie Langer tries to expose the relationship between sf and the psyche. Both authors place importance of their objective (sociology and psychoanalysis) over the central theme (sf). Reports, statistics and psychological texts are quoted more than sf works: the narrative bibliography that they quote doesn't exceed by much the boundaries set by the Minotauro collection.

Upon reflection, the reading of the GUIDE FOR THE SF READER (compiled by Anibal vinelli in 1977) is much more rewarding. His thinking is nimble, and though there are some holes or errors in the information, the volume fulfils the modest proposal of the authors: "to offer an ordered panorama - of primary easiness - which in no way pretends to compete with the diverse essays from a historical, critical and even philosophical perspective, analyse literature". The ideal reader is the young person, who is taking his first steps inside the genre. The style used is that of the period and has a 'fan' theme, and the opinions given are informed and firm. Space constraints heavily limit the possibility of considering many works and authors, but the chronological order and the inclusion of indexes, used as a consulting guide, makes the finding of names and dates easy.

On the other hand, critic and translator Belgium Bernard Goorden analyses in the essay NUEVO MUNDO, NUEVOS MUNDOS ('New World, New Worlds' - 1978), LatinoAmerican sf, giving special emphasis to Argentine output and delivering a general review of the scarcely known output of countries like Cuba, Mexico or Peru. The same occurs with further anthologies compiled by Augusto Uribe: FANTASTIC LATINOMERICA (Ultramar, Spain, 1984), where selection is more 'Argentine' (there's only one short story by the Brazilian Andre Carneiro). In both books, in spite of the brevity of the introduction to the anthology, the objective is highly commended: to inform about the performance on this side of the planet, and of obtaining a deeper diffusion of our works in Europe.

Yet maybe the most representative and succinct note about the present state of sf in our country can be found in Marcial Souto's introduction to his anthology of Argentine sf (published by Eddeba in 1984) and the opinions of authors included therein.

And maybe those opinions express what is latent in most fans that already some of them have dared to expose: that is the case of Norma Dangla, Eduardo Carletti, Raul Alzogaray, Pablo Fuentes, Marcelo Figueras, Monica Nicastro and Luis Pestarini, whose articles and comments are, mostly, adjudicated and truthworthy, the same as their stories, as is the case of those given to the narrative as well.

