

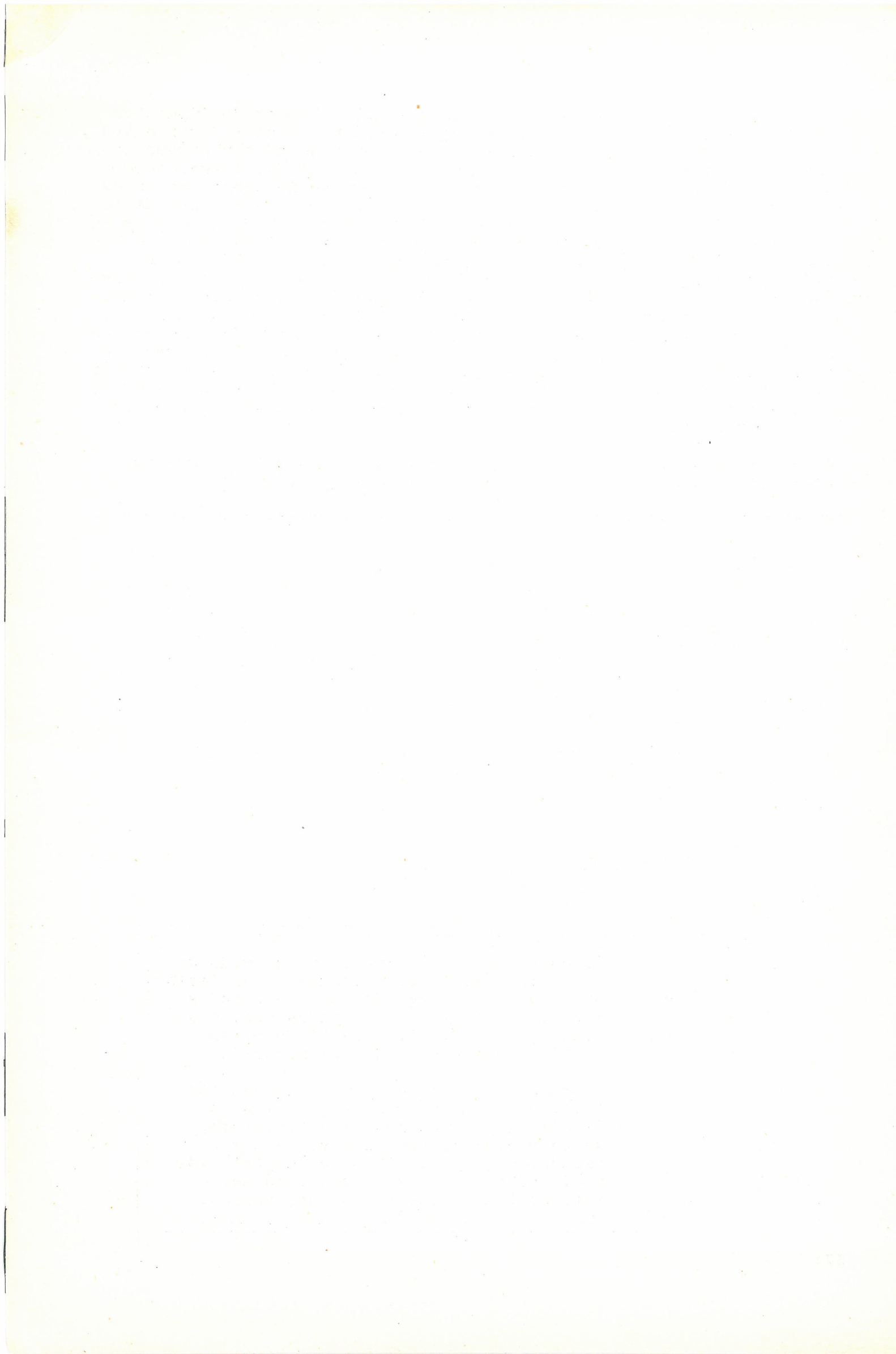
# AD INFINITUM

CIENCIA - FICCIÓN, FANTASIA Y COMIC

FANZINE DEL  
CIRCULO DE LECTORES DE ANTICIPACION  
BARCELONA

DICIEMBRE 1969 EPOCA PRIMERA NUMERO 12







# Editorial

The day has been left far behind - or, to be more exact, the evening - when four of us fans met in a bar, each one bringing his own idea of what a Circle of Science Fiction Readers should be. Much was said, discussed and planned...

That first meeting has indeed remained far behind; but it has borne its fruits. And what fruits, my friends! This 12 issue of AD INFINITUM (remember that first modest seven-leaf issue?) is the culmination of the CLA's most important achievement in this its first year of existence.

This does not mean of course that we are forgetting for a moment all our other achievements. Shall we mention that wonderful HISPACON '69, of which all of us who were lucky enough to attend it will always keep such a pleasant memory? And what about the start of such friendly relations between us and all publishing firms, and what is even more important, between us and all Spanish fans and those in the rest of the world?

And while leafing complacently through the twelve issues of our beloved fanzine, those of us who watched its birth and then saw it growing up until now, when it has reached its first anniversary, we cannot fail to think about the small CLITOR, the spaceship which month after month has visited the homes of all SF fans, taking to them our message of friendship and real comradeship, winning new adepts, informing and uniting the most distant points on the map.

On this first anniversary of AD INFINITUM, the CLA would like to publicly acknowledge the disinterested help received from all our members and friends. Thanks to them we can affirm that our fanzine has been in this year of 1969 the CLA's most meritorious accomplishment. May this editorial serve as a homage to the most sincere and open, the greatest and at the same time the most humble of all fanzines.

---

CIRCULO DE LECTORES DE ANTICIPACION

APARTADO DE CORREOS 1573

BARCELONA

All my relatives and friends have wondered, as I have done myself quite often, where these three hobbies, absorbing my life completely and to which I sacrifice any other thing requiring my attention, may come from. Giving a precedence to one over the others is something extraordinarily difficult, for me at least, who have for a long time now surrendered myself body and soul to the delights of the three.

However, if there is an overpowering force very nearly obsessing me, it is occultism as well as terror literature. Whoever has not felt the indescribable sensation of being submerged into one of Allan Poe's blood-curdling stories, while comfortably sitting on his favourite armchair beside the fire, while outside, behind the window-panes, the furious elements of rain and lightning are accompanied by the deafening clap of thunder; whoever has never surrendered to the macabre and fascinating whirlpool of one of Lovecraft's nightmarish writings...well, whoever has never experienced the bitter-sweet taste of necromancy or vampirism, he can never even imagine my great passion for this almost forgotten genre, doomed to the exile of dark and dusty bookshelves at collectors' homes or old bookshops.

In fact, to resume my talk about my hobbies, any attentive on-looker would be able to guess them by just throwing a glance about him in my home. It goes without saying that in my library pride of place has been given to as many terror, mystery and fantasy works as have come my way. I can say truthfully that they are many. Then, ranged to perfection in their vitrines come my rare collections of small antique porcelain pieces, as well as ceramic, laque, crystal and alabaster miniatures from a great variety of epochs and origins.

Paintings are my third hobby, and in this respect I am often constrained to confess before my guests - who, by the way, are few - my strange and far-fetched tastes. My walls are covered with curious reproductions of the Dutch masters' work of irreality and absurdity, like "The Garden of Earthly Pleasures" by Hieronimus Bosch, or "Belvedere" by Mauritz C. Escher, or Carel Willink's oneiric work, and even the horrifying prints of the Venetian Giambattista Piranesi's "Prisons" have a place in my home.

All this, allied to my mystic and brooding disposition, has given rise to a kind of mysterious aureole around my personality. Disquieting, this is what they probably think of me all of them. However, this fact has not prevented me from having some good friends with whom, though ever so seldom, I have been able to discuss the themes that are usually forgotten in everyday conversations.

... ..

A strange event that happened in my life not long ago has just come to my mind. I was browsing about at the shops of old booksellers' in search of a copy of the legendary "De Vermis Misteriis", the chief work of obscurantism of all ages, if we are to believe the most renowned experts on the matter.

I remember, as clearly as if it had been yesterday, that tired of roaming for hours on end around the old quarters of Barcelona, looking at every volume in the dusty bookshops, I was on the point of abandoning my quest when I stood breathlessly still in the last of them before a thick volume bound in a leather which onee must have been red and on which the title I just mentioned could hardly be deciphered. My excitement mounted considerably when at that very moment I saw a well-dressed gentleman take the coveted book in his hands and leaf through it with apparent interest. I tried to hide my feelings by dedicating my attention to some XVIIth century prints;

well aware of the unwelcome stranger's every gesture. He sensed my interest at last, and addressed me with a pleasant smile:

- Excuse me, sir - he said - I may be mistaken but I gather you are interested in learning whether I'm planning to buy this rare book.

- You are not in the least mistaken, sir; in fact, my interest in the book you have now in your hands is so great that I would readily give anything for it - I replied, a little embarrassed at my own inexcusable attitude.

- Well, taking into account that we could hardly find another copy in Barcelona, nor, I'm afraid, anywhere in this country, it follows that one of us will have to relinquish it. And you will agree that, at the moment, I am the obvious would-be owner.

It was evident that the stranger was enjoying himself, and his smile, which at first had struck me as pleasant, was then becoming the most conceited and irritating smile I had ever seen. I was on the point of turning away from my exasperating acquaintance when he brusquely changed his attitude, addressing me with a grave expression:

- Please, sir. I beg to be forgiven for my stupid joke. The book is yours if you want it. An identical copy has been standing for years on my bookshelves, and I can understand perfectly the great value it represents for any connoisseur.

- It's me who must apologise for my behaviour - I said - but it's taken me weeks to find this treaty and nerves got the better of me when I realised my search could be in vain.

- Please don't apologise. Incidentally, and even at the risk of choosing the wrong moment, I'd like to introduce myself. Professor León Varela, at your service. My house, and all it contains, is open to you. I would be honoured if you cared to visit me any afternoon, and I would show you my library and some very rare volumes in it which would doubtlessly interest you.

Any one of my friends would have been flabbergasted to see me accept that unexpected invitation. But that tall and distinguished gentleman impressed me with his personality and sincerity and I readily agreed to an appointment.

... \* ... ..

The professor's house, in a secluded neighbourhood, awoke from the first moment a mixture of surprise and envy in my heart. It was a solid structure from the end of the last century, two-storied and vast. He bade me welcome in his library, and I must own it surpassed in all respects my library at home of which I had always been so proud. It was a great room with coloured window-panes and a thick carpet covering the floor. All along the walls were the bookshelves, which surrounded the windows and the fireplace, where oak logs were sputtering gaily.

Professor Varela received me clothed in an elegant red silk robe, and stretched a bony hand I did not hesitate to shake. The room smelled Dutch tobacco and oak wood. After his welcome he pointed to the rarest of his books, some of which aroused my admiration to such an extent that I congratulated him warmly for the great treasure those volumes represented for a bibliophile.

- Yes, my good friend, you are right. My library is worth a fortune and you can be proud of having seen it. Nobody, in the last ten years, has entered the room - he said to me during dinner.

The dining room can hardly be described with words. It was very dimly lit by two heavy candelabra of embossed silver standing on the table. My host turned out to be a really eccentric character. He was a mixture of medieval gentleman and nouveau riche in our own epoch. In spite of his manners, conspicuously distinguished, there was a plebeian touch in his exaggerated vanity concerning his house, his library and his belongings. To speak the truth, I was very reticent that evening but referred, several times, to certain delicate subjects, and blessed in so doing the professor's

susceptibility.

This attitude of mine, which all my acquaintances know so well, created an unpleasantness between us, an awkward situation reaching its climax when I suggested that, owing to my great love for the pictorial art, the almost total absence of paintings on the walls of the house was a discordant note in such elegant surroundings. My host, visibly annoyed, got up from his seat with flashing eyes. For a moment, I felt a strange fear, but it soon vanished when I watched his expression reverting to the one of proud sufficiency to which I was gradually becoming used.

- Sir, - he said - the pictorial art has a sanctuary in this house. If I have not asked you to enter it, it's just because I was unaware of your tastes. Now, if you wish, I'll ask you to visit the upper floor with me and watch the paintings to which I attach a great value. I think it's only fair to add that I'm a painter, and in my leisure hours I have done some paintings which have never been shown to the public, but have deserved the praises of the connoisseurs to whom I have had the pleasure to show them.

And giving me no time for a reply, he took one of the candelabra and led the way to the staircase. I followed in silence until we reached a magnificent room with a costly ebony floor and some precious curtains of the softest velvet.

The paintings in this room were not many; but a glance at the signatures convinced me of their unquestionable quality. They were not reproductions, but original paintings surely worth an extraordinary amount of money. My surprise satisfied the professor, and it was then when I noticed a strange gleam in his eyes, a mixture of wickedness and insanity which sent a chill down my spine.

- I'll show you some of my paintings. Nobody but me, their creator, has ever seen them - and he drew aside the velvet curtains I have already mentioned, discovering his horrifying work.

It was an oil painting of my own library, lit by a spectral cold glimmer apparently coming from the tiniest pores of the walls and the paintings, conferring to the latter a kind of eerie life and reality. Willink's dark precipices seemed ready to give away their unnumerable secrets. The "Prisons" appeared colder and more impressive than ever and the dreams of Bosch acquired a new oneiric life.

But the worst of all was my own image, sitting before the fire which added a more sinister gleam to my countenance. My face, decomposed by a supposedly unexpected death, showed wide-open eyes and a mouth agape with uncontrollable terror. Professor Varela's painting was nothing but madness, death and nightmare.

Horrified, I stepped back, and I stumbled against the author of that monstrosity. On looking into his eyes I knew his identity, at last I knew who he was. Screaming like a madman I ran out of the room and almost rolled down the stairs; panting I reached the street. The night's cold air gave me strength to leave that awful place.

... ..

Once at home I could not refrain a shiver on entering my library, but when a good fire was kindled and I had a glass of brandy in my hand, I calmed down a little. Suddenly I remembered the copy of "De Vermis Misteriis" which was responsible for my sinister adventure. With a gasp I took it from one of the shelves and threw it into the fire, where it slowly burned into cinders, spreading a vague smell of moss around the room.

I presume that thus I was saved, at least for a while, from my horrible fate, so faithfully represented by the professor's mad brush. For I almost forgot to add that in the macabre painting he had shown me, my corpse's wrinkled hands were holding the old volume with worn-out covers of a vague red colour. I think this will explain, making the necessary allowances, all about my subsequent behaviour.

I apologise for not revealing to the reader of these lines the real identity of the professor; but it could be possible that the reader met him and felt the irresis-

tible temptation of asking him to show him his paintings...Well, he would then feel like me, who alone in my house, surrounded by my books, porcelains and paintings, I'm always waiting at night for a strange effulgence to come from the walls announcing me the imminent visit of the most horrible and cruel guest one can expect to have.

---

DANGER OUTSIDE

by

Jaime Rosal del Castillo

---

Determinedly, he opened the sliding door and took a step towards it while adjusting his mask. First things first: one, two, three inhalations...the good functioning of the valves had to be tested. They were working to perfection. There was no danger, the initial test was satisfactory...His clothes came next...mechanically, he touched his walking clothes. It was made with an elastic fibre, poreless, and it fitted the body through a series of hermetic zippers.

- Right - he thought - No fissures...

Inside his clothes safety was complete, but the fibre's lack of pores caused the wearer to sweat in excess. This circumstance made it uncomfortable. Luckily, the outfit was not yet compulsory for permanent use, it was just for the outside.

The doors closed automatically behind him...Now began the odyssey. He had to go outside. Inside there was no danger...outside, all depended on your obeying to the letter the rules issued by the World Health Cabinet. The least negligence could mean death. The atmosphere of the outside was highly toxic, and if a little of that rarefied air entered the lungs, the blood was poisoned and it could be the end. The Health Cabinet rules had foreseen everything...Life and death depended on their being fulfilled scrupulously.

He started walking with determined steps. He disliked being exposed for a long time to the dangers of the outside. There was another difficulty: once out of the buildings, the atmosphere was tainted by greyish hues, an eternal "pea soup" enveloped everything, a fact making visibility almost inexistent and finding one's way a very difficult matter. It was enough, however, to follow the pilot lights in order to reach the desired height. The danger of getting astray was thus reduced to the minimum...the only really dangerous thing was that the valves ceased to work...But he always followed the Health Cabinet rules and proceeded to a detailed examination of his outfit before going outside.

Some lights in the background warned him that he had taken the right direction. He would soon reach his destination. Three hundred metres straight ahead and then turn to the right...He quickened his step...he wanted to arrive as soon as possible. Darkness was almost total, but he was used to it. He glanced at his phosphorescent watch; it was half past eight. The sun must have risen at six...but it was already night. It was an eternal artificial night. "Good God - he thought - when will all this be over."

He noticed suddenly that the oxygen was not flowing naturally. He stopped, paralysed by panic. He knew what that meant. He began sweating profusely...a cold sweat moistening his whole body. No, he could not let himself be overcome by fear...

He touched the valve in a rapid gesture. In spite of his gloves he felt the membrane of the diaphragm going normally up and down. The valve was working well. What could it be then? His brain quickly revised the rules of the Health Cabinet: making sure there were no fissures in the walking clothes...the good functioning of the val-



ves...the pressure level in the oxygen pump...That was it...he cursed himself a thousand times when he remembered he had not changed his pump for a whole week. And this could mean the end for him. How could he forget about it? He remembered now that his neighbour had offered to accompany him to the Supply Centre, and he had forgotten all about it. Such a thing was really unpardonable.

An unpleasant emptiness in his stomach suddenly invaded him. He noticed a nervous shiver shaking his whole body. His legs were no longer obeying him.

Through the thick glasses of his mask he saw the lights of the place for which he was heading. Some two hundred metres were the distance separating him from it. He was already more than halfway. What could he do?...Going back was suicidal; he could not do it because the shelter's doors did not open from the outside, it was just an emergency exit to be opened only from the inside. He had but one alternative: to run ahead...to try reaching the shelter in front of him. It was the only means of survival. The distance was not great, but if he ran he would be burning too much oxygen and...He must try; if there was a single way out, that was it.

He started running. After a few metres he noticed a weight on his lungs. The oxygen was not coming in sufficient quantity. He had been careless and now he was paying for it. The sweat was running down his face and he could not even wipe it.

A deafening noise was coming from his right...it could be a helijet...he could not distinguish the flashlights...yes, it was a helijet, and the pilot was not very sure about the way...it was difficult to see through that thick shroud. He remembered the alarming statistics of the accidents in the last years. His instinct made him throw himself to the floor...he had not been wrong...the helijet passed over his head...a second of hesitation could have cost him his life.

He got up unsteadily. The additional effort had made him waste some oxygen, so valuable in his circumstances.

The pressure on his lungs was unbearable. He swayed and fell headlong...Then he got up again...and resumed his way, now more slowly. It was as if he were drunken. His feet advanced mechanically, as an automaton. His blood irrigated his brain with difficulty. His sight was getting dim. The shelter lights looked far and imperceptible...It was the end.

Without knowing why, he turned to the right. His body stumbled against a metallic door. The entrance to the shelter. His strength gave out and he fell, his hand holding the door handle.

... ..

He awoke in a white, high-ceilinged room. His eyes were slow in getting used to the light. He was in hospital. He felt weak, very weak. It seemed given him a complete desintoxication cure. He was giddy. The door opened.

-My friend - the doctor said - you can be satisfied. You were born again today. Another minute and you were lost.

He tried to smile, but could not make it.

- A few days' rest and you'll be like new - the doctor added - But the Health Cabinet will sanction you, of course. The rules, you know, you were not careful enough and you must be punished for it...

The patient nodded. "Yes - he thought - the Health Cabinet rules must be observed scrupulously. The health of the Earth inhabitants depends on it...I'll pay the fine with pleasure. A conscious citizen must not roam about in the streets running the danger of intoxicating himself with the gases from the helijets."

.....

The vegetation, strong-hued, the leaves wearing an armour of long, poisoned thorns, disappeared brusquely after a few metres. The path went on. The small procession left the hostile shadows of the wood and came to a halt near its border. The sun sent forth into space flames of a gigantic size: eruptions doubtlessly due to the explosion, some years before, of photonic engines on the star. The heat was made more unbearable by the dampness of the wood. All the men protected their faces with their hands.

Ahead of them, at a distance of some metres, a wall of white stones raised itself, curiously clean, without a blade of grass in the broken crevices. This wall was interrupted by the path, which here was getting wider. Through the opening appeared a white and ochre universe, of volumes aligned in a long perspective: a totally mineral world, burned by the furious sunrays and where only dust, in variable rolls, created an impression of movement. There began the Dead World. The City was in it.

Stev felt the sweat running down his back. The Patriarch had started a speech to which he was long past listening. He already knew the conditions of the Ordeal. He would be the first to enter because Kathe was engaged to Kurt, the best hunter, and he had taken her away from him. A little after, Kurt would enter the City. The last one, or the only one to leave it would be Kathe's lord, the owner of her tender eyes and her adolescent body. The Patriarch had ceased speaking and was looking at him. Stev threw a quick glance upwards: vertically above them, at a height of some kilometres, a motionless mass was hanging, a second sun as dark as the other was resplendent. It was Belzebuh, the stabilized satellite which during the whole of the war, and even after it, had ravaged the region with its deathly rays. Now the permanent bomb was inert, but all the kingdoms of life had been damaged. The universe where Stev and his tribe lived was an insane world, in full mutation, where everything was incomprehensible and dangerous. The few surviving men and women were mutants endowed with powers they themselves knew little about. The most inundated area, where the secondary radiations had been most permanent and the mutations most improbable, was the City. In fact, nobody as yet had been able to leave it; that was the reason why entering it was considered the Great Ordeal. Women in the tribe were very scarce, and there were too many men for the group's meagre resources.

Stev glanced furtively at Kurt's imposing height. His only weapon was a long dagger. Kurt was an E.P. at seventy per cent; a psychic with an emission power sufficient to paralyze; the dagger did the rest. Kurt turned around and Stev lowered his eyes, disturbed by an atonic look, due to the absence of the iris.

The Patriarch said to him: "Go!". Stev touched the old fulgurant hanging from his hip and started walking along the path. Once he had crossed the wall of dazzling stones all was silence and immobility. The only noise that reached his ears was the muffled sound of his steps on the blinding dust of the avenue. Tall buildings towered on both sides, of which only the stone remained, as if washed by acid.

Stev lowered his mental barrier and prudently inspected his surroundings. He was an R.P. at eighty per cent, which meant a perfect receiver, which was extremely rare. He did not possess any emission power, and therefore, any means to attack. His mental barrier was more of a camouflage than a protection and Stev, well aware of the fact, had taken good care of his old fulgurant. He perceived no definite sign of life but, as a kind of background, he noticed a cruel, cold presence which seemed

to emanate from the very stones. It was not an animal life.

Stev went on advancing. There was not the least symbol of life around him. The bodies of the thousands of people who had died there, wooden objects, materials, plastics, all had disappeared leaving no trace. The avenue along which he was progressing was perfectly straight, interrupted at right angles by smaller streets giving the impression of being circular and concentric.

He stood still and looked quickly around him. Kurt had not crossed the wall yet, for he would have detected him quite easily: he did not possess a mental barrier. However, ahead of him on the left he felt the slow pulsation of a primary kind of life completely unknown to him. It would surely be an animal. He resumed his walk carefully, unlocking the safety bolt of his radiant pistol.

On the dust of the avenue, some steps in front of him, were strange semicircular lines. The centre of the phenomenon seemed to be a darkskylight on the ground. Stev raised a foot and introduced it for half a second into the semicircle. A kind of whip, with the appearance of damp leather and provided with a series of hooks, came out with unbelievable speed from the skylight. The strap lashed on the sand, missed Stev's foot by an inch and disappeared through the opening hidden behind a flashing cloud of dust.

Stev located a considerable increase in the frequency of vital pulsations in the being living in the cave. It was a mutant animal, but he was unable to determine the race to which it belonged. He prudently avoided the mortal perimeter and went on advancing towards the centre of the city. It was imperative that he wait and surprise Kurt, who would surely escape the living whip.

The reverberation from the walls and the sand was burning his eyes. He took his left hand to his eyebrows. Again, inspecting his surroundings, he felt the cold power that was not animal. He also noticed another semicircle, smaller than the others. The beast was probably younger or its mutation more recent. He felt tempted to use his fulgurant, but he had but a few charges, so he threw instead down the opening his old wrist counter which had been blocked on the red zone the moment he had entered the City. The same whip came out whistling, cracked furiously against the wall and the ground and suddenly disappeared leaving a trace on the white stone. Silence reigned again and Stev once more started walking, fully convinced of the animal's deathly efficaciousness.

The avenue came to an abrupt end in a circular square covered with the same dusty sand. Similar avenues formed a star around the square, flanked by buildings with stone arches that looked as if they had been recently sculpted. In the middle of the square was a circular pond, in the centre of which stood a steel needle. Vertically above it, at a great distance, like a shell calcined by its own energy, the black satellite hung motionless.

Stev got near the pond, surprised at its relative depth. At the bottom, on the dust, lay a blackened, burned, hard corpse, which must have been absorbing those mortal rays for months on end. Stev, bewildered by the discovery, bent over it; the pond edge gave way under his hands. He lost his balance and, unconsciously, opened his mental barrier. A very near wave, perfectly human, of a melodious tonality, penetrated his brain:

"It was necessary; it's been too long now, I could not wait any longer."

He fell, and the impact made him lose consciousness.

... ..

There was an ashy taste in his mouth. His head ached. He opened his eyes; it was dark. The moon, which reflected the furious ardour of the sun, was shining sweetly in the sky, where the tormented structures of the deathly satellite were outlined in black. He sat up with care: he had not broken anything. He approached the wall of the pond.

The upper edge which had given way under the pressure of his hands was now at the level of his eyes. The blackened steel was intact.

The wave swirled in his head:

"It was me! It suffices to work on the molecular cohesion of the steel during a few tenths of a second..."

Stev turned round, the fulgurant in his hand. The corpse at his feet was still. Stev yelled:

"On your feet! Quickly!"

He stamped the corpse's leg with his foot. The member dissolved like dry clay in black mounds of petrified flesh and bones.

"It's useless! My body has died a hundred times, devoured by the radiations. Listen! I wish you no evil, my members get dry but my spirit is alive. I recovered consciousness some months ago and possess certain strange powers but I am a prisoner of my corpse. It is imperative that you deliver me, I don't yet know how, perhaps leaving a little place for me in your spirit. You are a receiver, I have intense emissive powers. With your body and our two spirits we shall be strong. Accept!"

Stev, speechless, stared at the black, dusty head.

"My name is Andr", said the other.

Stev, his fulgurant pointing at the corpse's head, bent down:

"How can I deliver you!" he asked.

"I don't know exactly; come near and open your spirit, you must absorb me."

The dead man's split head was very close. Stev lowered his mental barrier, his nerves tense, ready to shut his spirit in. He felt just a little dizzy, and then the wave, very close, already sounddd in his skull.

"Thank you, Stev; I shall be your friend. Let us get out of here, I know the City. Its dangers multiply at night. Come!"

Stev jumped over the edge of the pond. He had total control over his muscles. He just had with him a little, friendly voice of variable tonality.

He walked fast. The avenue was lit by the moon and by the curious greenish phosphorescence emanating from the stones. He had no time to ask Andr for an explanation: emerging from a side street, a huge dark mass of resonant metal was barring him the way. Before his eyes, the lower part of the black half-sphere opened, baring the steel jawbones. At both sides, led by two metallic arms, advanced the articulated claws. Andr's voice shouted in his brain:

"It's a phagos, a robot; his mission is gathering and destroying the corpses. It is not working well. Inspect him, quick!"

Stev mentally penetrated the robot's mass. He saw the complicated electronic mechanism, the acids boiling in the monster's womb, the metal corroded by radiations and the electromagnetic memory of the robot. He read the deteriorated circuits: "...destruction of all the animal and vegetal organisms presenting characteristics of...on the condition that..."

The claws surrounded him and with a clanking of tired metal began closing in on him. He had no time to press the trigger of his pistol: in fiery letters the robot's memory transcribed: "...on the condition that it is still."

Andr's voice intimated him:

"Gesticulate. Move your arms. Quick!"

Stev started a frenziéd dance under the moonlight. The monster seemed startled; its iron claws withdrew. Dull detonations resounded inside its mass, which was brusquely receding. The robot's body clashed against a house, the façade of which softly collapsed. Completely disorientated, the machine disappeared in a side street, accompanied by horrible metallic noises.

Stev had gone one step forward when, before he could thank Andr, he felt the presence of the Being. From the huge gap in the collapsed house a whitish mass was slowly emerging, with the gigantic eyes of an octopus. The Beast, in all likelihood the

mutation of a Saurian, had the body of an enormous larva, precariously sustained by four atrophied members. The eyes, big as a human fist and vertically split, were looking at Stev without winking. A round orifice below the eyes was opened, and the hooked whip that had missed him so narrowly before came out swift as an arrow. The fulgurant fired ceaselessly; then the white blade from its handle sunk into the mass of the animal. The tongue lashed desperately on the ground, ripping Stev's trousers to shreds. The monster then withdrew in a last spasm. Stev, not caring about Kurt's probable presence, who might be hiding in an ambush, started running.

It was very close to the wall, against a part of it shining with a strange greenish phosphorescence, that he found Kurt. His head was hanging over his chest, and his arms were grotesquely twisted, as if his hands, close against the stone, were nailed to it. His posture was that of a crucified.

Even before Andr could invade his head with a scream, Stev had touched Kurt's arm with his left hand, while protecting himself with his right one, armed with the fulgurant. The man's skin was as rigid and cold as the stone. An intense cold absorbed the warmth in Stev's arm, which got progressively hard; at the same time he felt coming from the stone a terrible hunger for warmth and animal life; a dull pulsating of life caused the greenish flashes of increasing intensity to oscillate. Then his hand was brusquely disengaged from the contact with the petrified corpse, whose arm had suddenly disintegrated. Andr's faltering voice was saying:

"The Malignant Stones; the most horrible of all mutations; they absorb all life...all matter...move your arm!"

Rubbing his insensitive arm, Stev thought:

"This is the second time that I owe you my life."

"It's also mine that I was saving", said the wave ironically. In Stev's head two silent laughs exploded...

The procession of judges, doubtlessly scared away by the night, was no longer there. They must have given up hope of ever finding him or Kurt. With his fulgurant raised, and his rigid hand hanging down, the man whose name would be uttered with respect around the bonfires, Stevand, the Great Mutant, walked down towards the camp in the valley where the lights were shining, and where a young mutant girl was waiting for him with her eyes full of tears.

---

FROM TIMES GONE BY by Eduardo Miller

- Please, Officer, will you show me the way to the offices of the Intergalactic Congress?

- Straight ahead, and when you reach the end of the avenue, turn to the left."

(But the Arturian possessed eight arms in circle around his body and he walked sideways).

....

Newton-12 sat down to rest under a luxuriant tree in Sigma-3. Suddenly an apple fell and it was propelled towards the stars. This paved the way to the discovery of the law of antigravity.



I should know myself, better than anybody else, whether I have really betrayed my husband. However, all I can say amounts to some vague suspicion. The heroines in American novels give themselves, in the course of a cocktail party, to some perfect stranger, and forget about it all the day after. But, what about me? after six years of exemplary marriage, with no excesses of drink, table -- or love, for that matter. But this peaceful existence suits me well; and is there a more peaceful fate than mine as the wife of a country lawyer, in a village? Raymond has his books, his dogs, the house and, who knows? -- let us be broad-minded -- his secretary. As for me, I have my cat, my garden, fashion magazines and an adorable home of which I take infinite care. I shall acknowledge an only sin: auction sales. Raymond's work enables him to learn about them and he warns me. Thus I collect Jersey porcelain, plentiful in the region; unfortunately, antique dealers are also fond of them.

One day I heard that old Thais had died. She lived at one end of the village, surrounded by old curtains and empty bottles. Our mutual relations were like those existing between two mothers-in-law whose children have married beneath them: they behave with dignity but occasionally stoop to softness when talking about "the children"...In our case, the children were Thais' she-cat, wooed three times a year by my cat Flavius, a huge Tom-cat, gold and amber-streaked, short-haired and split-eared.

I love him passionately, a reason sufficient for my husband to abhor him. In his absurd fits of jealousy he can make quite a scene if he happens to see Flavius lying on my bed. And perhaps he is right, judging by the last events!

Thais, who lived alone and on a meagre pension, added to her income with fortune-telling. She enjoyed in the village a well-established reputation as a sorceress; her appearance, apart from her qualifications, confirmed it.

After her death I did not miss the sale by auction of her possessions. I was attracted, because I had seen it on her mantelpiece, by a blue and golden Jersey vase.

Would-be buyers were not precisely enthusiastic and I bought, at a laughable price, a lot of nondescript objects which I hastened to inspect on reaching home: a coffee-pot with no lid, several broken plates, the Jersey vase and a white metal box. There was another box inside the looks of which surprised me, for it was of finely-carved bone or ivory, and the work seemed Chinese. Some sailor or other had probably brought it from one of his voyages.

I opened it: there was a layer of green paste at the bottom, of a very aromatical perfume. I sunk one finger in it and then moistened all the others in order to inhale the perfume more deeply. After that...

After that I woke up, eight days later, in the hospital, with a nurse at my bedside. They told me I had been in a cataleptic state all that time; the doctors confessed their total ignorance of the causes.

I came out of this peculiar sleep as fresh as a rose and was allowed to go home at once. My excellent aspect reassured my husband who, lacking a better explanation of the facts, thus dismissed my adventure: "You women are always inventing something!" and then muttered:

"You slept for us both: I couldn't sleep a wink in the whole week. Your stupid cat seemed to have gone mad. What serenades! to a little she-cat come from nowhere. She disappeared only this morning: good riddance!

I was with my back to the light, a fact which prevented Raymond to see me blush. Because I kept such an intense memory of my sleep that it by far surpassed reality: it all started with the box and me moistening my fingers. Then the whole world suddenly turned round, in a whirlwind of moons and stars, and there was an abyss, and a fall, and the abrupt peace, the coming and going of slow, long waves all along an unknown shore...

Normality seemed recovered in the familiar frame of my room, which looked transformed, lacking depth, curiously discoloured. All the furniture seemed to have acquired gigantic proportions; the bedcover folds were like so many cliffs. An impulse coming from another will than mine sent me in a leap towards the window-sill... and then I understood.

As if shedding a derisive appearance, I had relinquished my womanly shape. Now I was a black she-cat, marvellously free and full of the desire to love. With a hoarse, modulated moan in my throat I jumped out into the garden. In the shade of a shrub, Flavius was waiting for me.

And there, for eight whole days, I danced the ancestral play, advance and withdrawal, seduction, and at last the happy defeat, the offering to the vanquishing male.

This I lived with the body and the soul of a cat; but the images I am now evoking I can judge with a fully human spirit. And I softly put my hand at the nape of my neck where the cat's savage bite is still burning.

And him, does he know, does he remember, this Flavius purring while he nestles down on my knees?

I turn my eyes from him; I turn them also from the great cactuses on the window-sill, which look now like a Freudian symbol; contrariwise from women, they say that she-cats give birth in pleasure and love in suffering - and now I know from experience that it is true!

My adventure could have ended here, and be thus explained away: Thais, the village sorceress, possessed in her ivory box a "sabbath unguent" producing hallucinations, and turning the sorceress into a cat.

Meanwhile, three seasons have gone by.

I'm lying in the hospital once more, in full lucidity and more serene than the doctor, who is restless and predicts the unforeseen.

It's been unforeseen, all right.

I have given birth, without the least pain, to four red-haired baby boys, lively and well-formed, except for an anomaly: this vertical iris crossing their green eyes.

.....

On the occasion of this our first anniversary, the C.L.A. wants to thank publicly all those friends and fans who, month after month, have offered us their kind and disinterested collaboration.

We also want to point out once more that all the stories, articles, drawings and poems sent to us will be joyfully received and given our most careful attention for their subsequent publication. We shall be waiting for your contributions to our fanzine AD INFINITUM.

.....

A WOMAN ASTRONAUT'S FAREWELL

BY

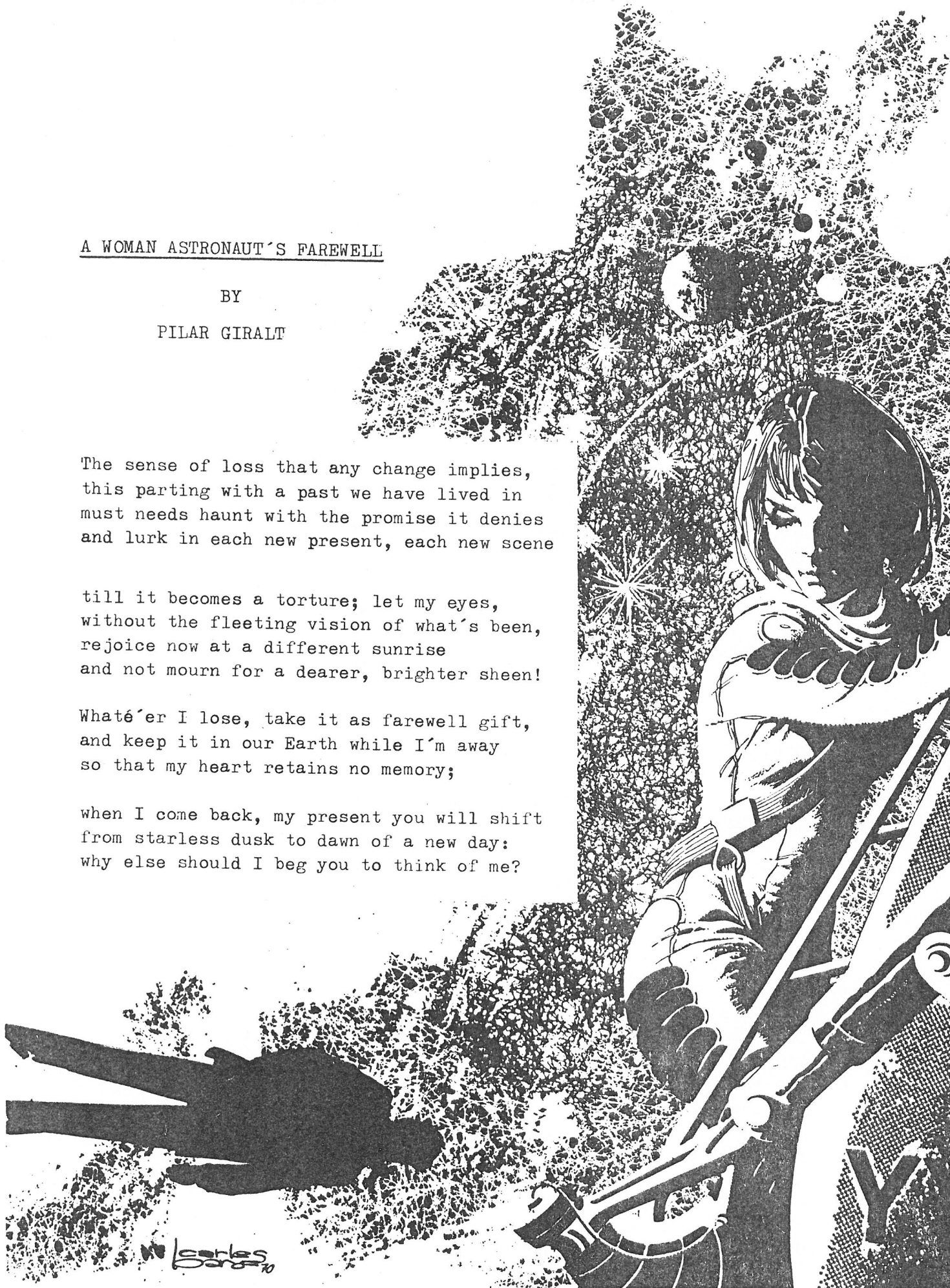
PILAR GIRALT

The sense of loss that any change implies,  
this parting with a past we have lived in  
must needs haunt with the promise it denies  
and lurk in each new present, each new scene

till it becomes a torture; let my eyes,  
without the fleeting vision of what's been,  
rejoice now at a different sunrise  
and not mourn for a dearer, brighter sheen!

Whaté'er I lose, take it as farewell gift,  
and keep it in our Earth while I'm away  
so that my heart retains no memory;

when I come back, my present you will shift  
from starless dusk to dawn of a new day:  
why else should I beg you to think of me?



Illustrated by Carles Baró.

- There is something here!

- There is nothing here!

The argument between both men threatened to become endless.

They had finished loosening the last layer of stratified earth in the first hours of the afternoon, and they no longer had a reason to postpone their quibbling. It had become particularly violent after the final analysis of the operation, and matters were made worse by both scientists' peculiar temperament.

One of them believed that the result was obviously negative. The other entertained no doubts as to its positiveness.

- Please read! I'm only asking you to read! To read well and without prejudice!

- It's precisely what I'm doing! I'm reading and that's what it says! It is not what we were looking for.

- It is!

The expedition of the Royal Institute for Preservation and History occupied an extensive stretch of ground, availing itself of a horizontal displacement in the rocky mass of the mountain. At first it had been necessary to broaden the theatre of operations, so that the whole team could be grouped and interconnected. Cables were spread on the ground without an apparent order, gray, powerful and dirty, but giving nonetheless the needed feeling of force and efficaciousness.

At the beginning no special signal had been detected, in spite of the categorical reports given after a previous exploration. It had only been during the last days of work with the dredgers that the expected signs began interfering with the programs, until the perforating machines stopped of their own accord, from lack of specific orders.

- I did not stop the machines! Why did they? Because they were not programmed...? This simply does not happen, my dear colleague, it has never happened. They only stop when they don't know what to look for, that's all. And they fail to know it when something new gets into their clutches. Absolutely new! We've got it!

Disagreement was once more rotund and passionate. The handing out of final graphs went on as vigorously as it had begun some hours before.

- What do you make of it? - asked one of the lookers-on to another.

- We have separated seventy-one elements. More than the normal. It's a good work.

- I'm talking about the unknown one...the new factor.

- Oh. Well, I...

- Didn't you notice?

The second worker looked up, startled.

- Notice?

- I haven't talked about it to anyone. There is something here.

- What?

- It depends on what it was before.

- You don't know?

- No.

- Primitive people came, and there were ritual dances and sacrifices, and things like that...I was chosen to program it.

- A kind of cult?

- Yes, but very primitive.

- I see...



- See what?
- These machines won't register it. We should try with another kind.
- We have already connected all of them...
- Not the psychical ones.
- In the heart of the mountain?
- You said people came here.
- Then you think...?
- I'm sure of it.
- And these two...?
- They are both right. There are no recognized strange elements, but the machines we brought down do not work when they detect other things. These two are no more than scientists...
- What about us?
- We shall have to tell them. We might have found the key.
- What do we do next?
- Wait till they are gone. And then come back with our men.
- You are right...

Four months after abandoning the study of the excavations, the pertinent memorandum was published. In synthesis, its two hundred and seventy folios said that more than three million tons of earth and rock had been removed from the north-western slope of the Sierra del Perdón, where at last it had been possible to expose the remnants of an ancient civilization, flourishing under the protection of those impregnable crags.

This information was completed by means of sketches, drawings, interpolated perspectives and photographs, all of which giving an almost exact impression of what must have been the buildings serving as abode to those primitive men. They were represented as solid, massive and tall, with huge empty spaces in their interior. The photographs taken of the intact remnants were in glossy colour, and the rests could be seen of great interior walls sculpted by hand.

Seventy-three elements, and not seventy-one as was believed at first, went in to compose this human work, and no modified molecular structures had been found, or power planes, or adhesives. These data situated the building date between the years 1.000 and 1.600. No human trace of any kind could be found, a fact indicating that the area had been abandoned by its inhabitants a long time before nature, or a cataclysm of some sort, had taken an active part in the actual interment.

As a side issue it was stated in the report that the obtention of such scarce data represented an economic loss in view of the capital that had been consigned to the search.

- And that's all. Had you read it?

On the same spot, before the naked ruins of the discovery, the two men who had discussed the matter on the last day of the works, stood clothed in the protecting outfit of mountaineers.

- Yes. Say, hasn't one hour passed?
- Almost two.
- We can start now.
- Aren't we going to wait?
- No. Let them come when they wish. They'll see the tapes.

The psychical machines were connected, one after the other, the engines started working and reached the required degree of heat.

- No reflections at all.
- Connect program two.
- Here's something!
- Put in number three!



- There! We've got it! We've got it!
- Program four!
- Stop!!

On the screen appeared great masses of luminous beams, small, white, scintillating in their motion...

- What are your feelings?
- Peace, joy, vehemence, confidence. They are many. The illusion is almost compact...

- Same with me. It's extraordinary. What is it?
- People who love...
- How many?
- Millions of them!
- Impossible!
- Let in factor time! We had forgotten...The red light! The wires will melt!
- Where did you hide it?

But there was no answer. The first man was lying motionless just there, with a hand thrust into the sensorial glove.

His face emanated light, real, tangible light, light measurable in quanta!

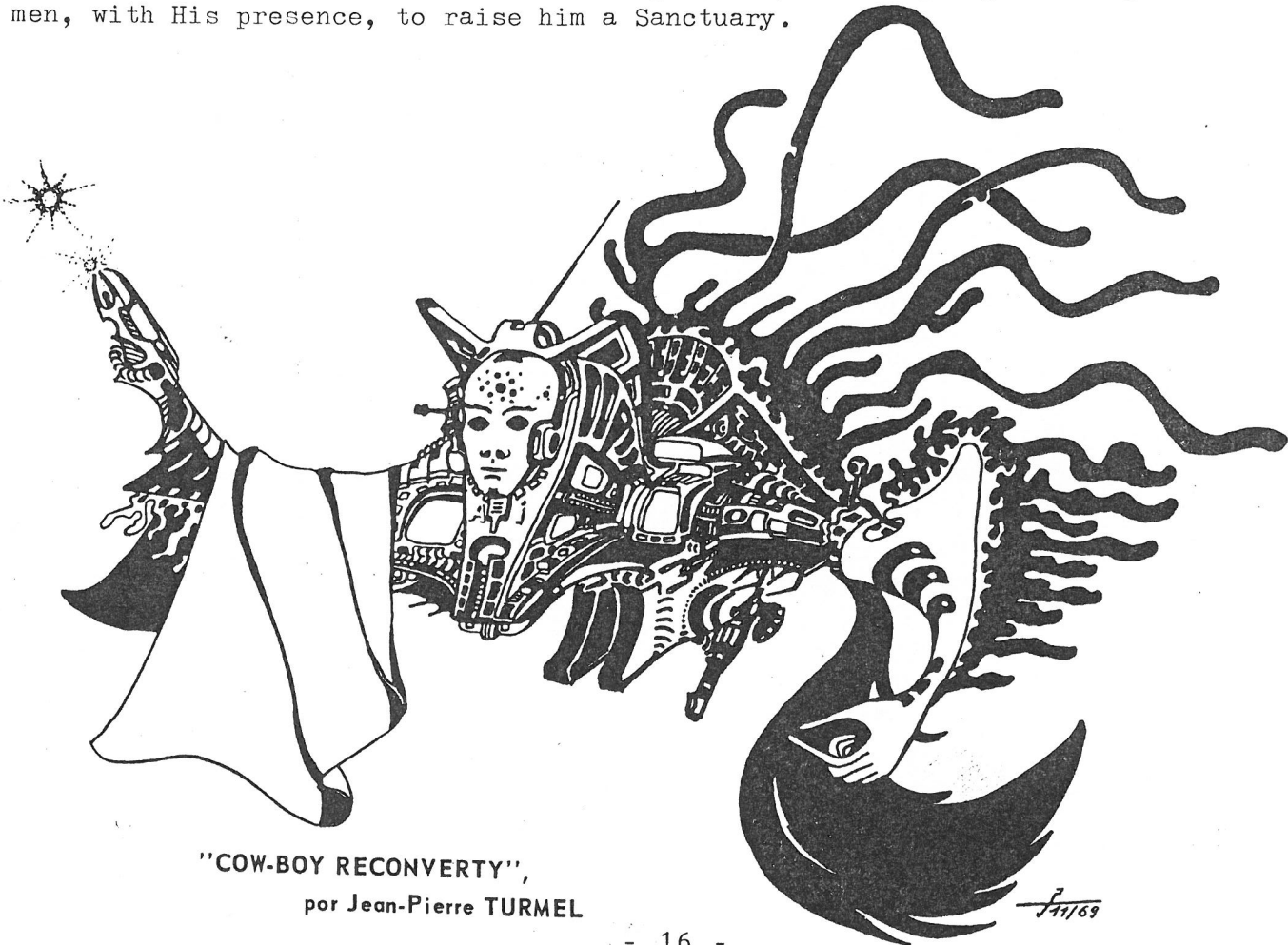
- What's the matter? What's the matter with you? I could connect in time...I thought you had done it...

The words were like tranquil murmurs.

- I should have taken your sensibility into account...I should have known you were too anxious to try...Where are you?

The lost man, the man, was wandering along the well-kept, sparkling pavements of a spacious park, full of greenery, full of peace.

He walked in light, in faith, invaded by the thousand psychical radiations left floating by the personal adoration, bound to time and space, around the miraculous and dear remembrance of a loving Spirit who had prompted the primitive men, with His presence, to raise him a Sanctuary.



"COW-BOY RECONVERTY",  
por Jean-Pierre TURMEL

The old man was calling him again, and Pedro hastened to his side.

- What is it now, grandfather?

- These people disturb me, I can't hear - angrily said Señor Viller, gesturing vaguely toward the window and adjusting the audiphone of the stereoscene to his ears - The broadcasting system "Exodus" is emitting an orchestra arrangement and they prevent me from hearing well.

Pedro drew up the window blind and shouted to the people that inevitably invaded the garden.

- Be still, my friends - he yelled - my grandfather wants to hear some old music. He's very old, keep silent, please.

And he didn't say aloud what he was thinking, that grandfather had not long to live, that they must put up with him, as one always had to with old people. That he himself did not feel like shouting either, and he could not understand why they did. Shouting was useless, even talking was useless; what purpose did it serve? To retell Democritus' or Lord Rutherford's old nonsense? They would do better to remember Malthus, although it was already too late. Besides, who was he?

He gave up further lucubrations. Silence was achieved, for a short while, and the old man could hear his music to the end. In the meantime Pedro glanced at the old books on the bookshelves his grandfather insisted on dusting every day.

- Did they cease disturbing you, grandfather? Is the emission over?

- Yes, it's over. They emit every week, at this same hour - Señor Viller replied, and getting up from his chair he went to lean on the window-sill, his fists against his smooth, emaciated cheekbones.

- There are so many people already! - he said - Thousands, tens of thousands before us. And straight ahead and far beyond that. Hundreds of thousands. And then millions. And farther away still hundreds and thousands of millions. And each individual, think of it, Pedro, each one of these people believes himself to be the centre. Each of them thinks for himself, and about his own people, his relatives, his friends; if he has any, each of them placing himself in the centre of some concentric waves, the lines of which cross and intercross with the lines of our own waves...and what are they thinking? Tell me, what are they thinking?

- That the others are in their way. That's what we all think.

- Of course! - complained the old man - Because wars were forbidden...! And illnesses were cured!

Pedro did not take him seriously. He knew old people got impossible, the best was to let them alone, as long as they didn't get to be too much of a nuisance. Grandfather wondered why people invaded private gardens. They had not much reason to complain, for, who could still possess a private garden nowadays? The Viller family and a few others living in the country, far from urban concentrations. The news bulletins said that all traffic had been definitely suspended for eighty kilometres around even the least important cities.

- The world is an ant-hole of men - wailed Señor Viller in anger.

- And what can we do, grandfather?

- I don't know, my son, I don't know! - shouted the hairless old man, leaping to the next window - We are all young, even beyond ninety. We all want to live until we are old, but reaching a decrepit age is so difficult now...

- This is called progress, grandfather - bitterly remarked Pedro - The hormone control, the polyvalent vaccination at the precise moment, you know - and his voice turned harsh, pathetic - but we shall start dying sooner than that, and more quickly...when there is no place left.

- But this is a monstrosity, my son!

The boy was on the point of giving an answer when the door into the room creaked and opened violently. A group of people fell across the threshold, the first ones. They were adult men and women, because children had been already trampled upon.

A crowd was approaching along the path, while other dense groups were getting near across the meadow, marching on the crushed shrubs. A multitude was covering the distant hills.

- There is no place for them, grandfather, no place! - Pedro was shouting to his angry and frightened grandfather.

People were filling the house, and the other houses, and all the fields. And the whole Earth.

- What do you want, live alone? - yelled a bearded, sweat-covered man being pushed by the crowd, his chest against señor Viller, making him withdraw to the opposite wall.

- No, not alone... - moaned the old man - But...not like this...

- Take care, take care - shouted the others - We mean no harm, but they are pushing us onwards...!

Señor Viller, crouching on the floor, was trying to take hold of the invaders' legs in order to stand up. Some of them were falling upon him, suffocating him, not letting the air reach his lungs.

- No, not alone...Oh, my God...!

People stepped aside a little, unaware that the old man was no longer breathing.

Pedro understood, and told the people about it. They had not killed him, despair had come before them and given him his freedom. Pedro knew that his grandfather did not want to live alone, he only wanted to be allowed to think, to be allowed to do something, or just nothing, just to be left in peace!

But grandfather had not been allowed to die sooner, the wonderful medicines of this time beyond the twentieth century had prevented him. He had to die, as Pedro himself was to die a little while later, crushed by the people.

.....

THE CLAY-FOOTED IDOL

by

Luis Wigil

.....

It cannot be helped: I read in the paper about an SF film being shown, I feel a thrill of anticipation, I find the required spare time in an - I can't understand it - ever tighter schedule, and here I am in the cinema.

Unfortunately, in most cases, the result cannot be helped either: when I come out I am cursing all the gentlemen appearing in the film.

It cannot be denied that the majority of films belonging to our favourite genre are not worth the celluloid on which they have been printed.

Why?

One is instantly reminded of that film - even the most profane will understand that I'm referring to "2001, a Space Odyssey" - and asks oneself: "Why don't they

do more films like it?". And the answer is that they really could do them, but that they can't afford to.

I remember the various occasions on which I went to see this very film - valuable things should be enjoyed gradually and slowly - and the people who watched it with me. They were not many. Only once, the first night, was the theatre full, but then many première tickets are not paid for.

Many friends of mine do not agree with me on this, assuring me that when they saw it the theatre was packed, but this is only natural on holidays or the day before a holiday, when any theatre is full. But on weekdays...

Another argument in favour of its success is that "everybody" has seen it. True, I shall admit that most of my friends have seen it. But this means only that we move in a fairly homogeneous social stratum as concerns tastes; and a survey of the other social layers would certainly prove this argument to be false.

It was a failure. This is the real - and unfortunate - truth. And it was a failure because being a gigantic spectacle, costing millions of dollars, it should have taken a real success for the producers to extract a benefit.

This is why I'm afraid no more films in that category - so costly - as 2001 will ever be produced. At least not in capitalist countries, where the invested money is always expected to render a profit. On the other hand, it is possible that in the socialist countries spatial epics continue being filmed, if not for a profit in roubles, for the sake of propaganda. An end served admirably by a good film exalting the sovietic cosmonauts.

The fact that "2001" did not stay longer on our screens than any other more modest production is in itself alone enough to condemn the future development of costly spatial epics.

Where does that leave us?

It leaves us with a clay-footed idol. A genre with great argumental possibilities and small chances of being made use of. It leaves us with...

With cardboard decorations and some newsreel scenes lent by the NASA.

The sad thing about the whole matter is that there is a way out; that SF films could be much more than Japanese rubber monsters or American-Italian women astronauts in a scant bikini. SF films could be based on a thousand arguments - possible arguments - currently being published in SF publications.

A good plot in the purest SF tradition can be converted into a film with a minimum of expenditure, as long as it is treated with the necessary honesty and professional ability.

I am reminded of Mario Bava's film "Terror in space". Though afflicted with several argumental inconsistencies - specially obvious to the fan - it had a kind of dignity which had been achieved at a small monetary cost.

It is likely that taking Asimov's "Foundation" to the screen would result in exorbitant cost; but Bradbury's "Martian Chronicles" are pure science fiction too, and they could be filmed with a modest income.

In both cases I have referred to stories with a spatial theme, involving the logical manufacturing of macquettes, but there are other stories not requiring this specific type of set-up, as the unforgettable "Charlie", which was awarded a prize for its excellence.

But with "Charlie" we reach the heart of the question, since this film was not considered as belonging to SF, nor was it labelled as such in its propaganda.

The reason for this is that in cinematographic circles, science fiction films are just the classical ones with spaceships, Martians or monsters. This is the crass error of appreciation which, together with popular indifference to good spectacular films, is going to prevent us from watching high-quality SF productions.

There is always an audience for Japanese films about monsters, as there is another - or maybe it is the same - appreciating the pseudo-spatial nonsense in which

some lovely young ladies bare their legs in their pretended invasion of our planet; but there seems to be no audience - at least not in sufficient numbers to make it profitable - for the expensive films about good science fiction.

Therefore, until some unexpected phenomenon makes it clear to cinema producers that there exists a kind of science fiction liable to be filmed with modest economic resources, we shall be doomed to watch the class B movies currently disgracing our screens.

Movies which, inevitably, I shall go to see when they are advertised...just in case.

---

METAMORPHOSIS OF THE INSPIRATION

by

J.L. Caballero

---

It is like a fantastic voyage through a glass tunnel; dizzily progressing in speed one reaches the ultimate sensation, the border between the real and the impossible, and then every event is in the realm of fantasy. Light is broken in a thousand different appreciations.

It is like a gigantic whirlwind with great wheels of light and colour turning round at once; hundreds of many-hued rays and stars kindle your eyes in an ecstasy of the imagination. And the most wonderful thing is speed, everything passes by refusing to be observed, but it is no longer necessary for each second brings a new appreciation.

An explosion of light pierces the mind to its foundations, and these sensations turned into swift projectiles cut through the glass tunnel at exorbitant velocity, bypass you and transform your vertiginous travel into a sense of impotence, while, just as if you were the centre of a sphere, thousands, millions of light points encircle your sensations.

When this turning round becomes unbearable, when the rays are transformed into something solid, all seems to have reached its end, white tonalities at unheard-of speed are blurring all outlines; and then, as if there were no difference between speed and quiet, the gigantic sphere dissolves in multiple rivers of intense whites, of soft, brilliant, pale or vivid whites, the immense and impossible whiteness surrounds you, calls you and frees you after the oppression of colour.

Calm follows movement, the white immensity follows the concert of colours, velocity is no longer necessary, nor is movement, in spite of the deep swift disturbance everything rests, the sight is lost in the immense plain; your feet, when running, seem to make no progress because nothing gives the impression of space.

You look up and down and around you and there is nothing, nothing but an endless infinite whiteness.

There can be different sensations: of power, greatness, centre of the pure orb, difference in front of equality, pride.

Or perhaps of loneliness, poverty, dreadful monotony; it can be...resurrection, limbo, pure nihilism, deception of the senses or, simply, sensation.

But when the spirit is allowed to roam about the white immensity for a while, itself invested of a white unknown greatness, ecstasy or insanity come. Because it is



important to know that there is no hope, that even though you run you shall never watch the whiteness get yellow, that after a long wandering you shall not watch the yellow being dyed red, after the whiteness you shall not reach the fire; nor shall you reach the world after the solitude.

But the immensity is also important, and when mad with terror you cover your face with your hands and scream, or when overcome by infinite whiteness you close your eyes, on opening them again everything will be changed.

You will be then in the wood of transparency, before you will be hundreds, thousands of ideal figures without body or image; an oppressive yearning to be, a traitorous awakening of desires will hit you with rigid gestures in time, searching in your mind for the transparent reality they lack.

It will be absolute nothingness populated by dreams of thin transparency, of impotence, oh absolute impotence to possess, to dream, even to see.

However, all is like a great voyage, and as such it is over soon, with a sense of vertigo.

The ochre sweetness of blue surrounds you then, it is made of columns, of rolls and distant corridors like a temple devoted to peace.

Then you float, your limbs disappear and only a deep soul is left, yes, deep; you have reached the border, gone beyond it, you have crossed the frontier of bluish tonalities, you are part of them and feel at peace...an oppressive peace, a calm hemming you in.

You feel exceptionally tired. You walk, move with difficulty, you are sunk in your appreciation of the blue, you relax at the celestial touch of the columns, at the turquoise of the distant ceiling, and you are fascinated by the floor lost among navy blue hues.

And when you almost believe in it, when you feel resigned to colour, all is suddenly changed and as if naturally the blue floor begins getting dark, fine black drops like dying suns begin gliding down the columns and the stairs, and all the blues dissolve in drops, black as despair. One after the other all tonalities are invaded by black thoughts. Like tears, frustrated sensations or disappointed hopes the intense blackness of the drops destroy the blue peace. For a few seconds long as an anguished eternity you watch the limit of two sensations, two glances, two impressions; if only you chose...but blackness takes you, terror, slow despair, a new strange fear making you cry for peace. At last all is darkness; a cruel silence hurts, invades the mind. The swift play of colours is over, the freedom of white, the oppression of blue. The suspicion gets light and important, ephemeral phantasies of sound people the loneliness.

At first it is a vague whistle, coming from everywhere, you look for it, you guess it will get to be unbearable, it grows continually, it embraces the immense black space, then gets into your brain like a fine needle that grows and grows; you cover your ears but the sound is in your mind; insane and crying you run through the blackness and it vanishes abruptly, leaving no trace. Then there is laughter, soft, noisy, cynic, gay laughter in the blackness, of which you are an infinite part, and you feel the call, the excitement. Sound and movement grow and grow.

Then a distant thunder, blackness is being invaded by something new and powerful.

A cold song, then a rhythmic knocking, and the thunder invade the silence and the blackness; it is light, a new light with no colour, no white, just light, familiar and strange. You turn round with everything, the thunder becomes a stream of ideas and death is drowned in waves of light. And at last the Sun destroys the rest of darkness, and clear and strong like a powerful lightning, freedom pierces through the chaos of colour.

After that, beyond the reality of your soul, everything is at your feet: colour, light, and you are stronger than the sea, the shadows, and death.

The only remarkable event related to science fiction which has taken place of late is the matrimonial outrage perpetrated by Carlos Buiza against the SF-girl Gaviota (Sea-gull) Mercedes Valcárcel, author of some inspired fantastic stories. The event took place on December 13th.

The insolation ceremony was celebrated at the San Francisco el Grande Church, after which they played the organ for us, as is usual in the circumstances. The assistance was announced of a great many aliens, but only the assiduous came. The SF representatives were also very few: PGarcía, Garci and Frabetti.

On the 17th there was a small meeting in "Las cuevas del arriero" ("The caves of the muleteer"), democratic seat of the first national miniconventions, in order to discuss the HISPACON '69 before some interested people who could not go to Barcelona. Among those present were: Juan G. Atienza (I write complete names so that it looks as if we were many), Enrique Jarnés (alias H. Jarver, father of Diego Valor), Arturo Mengotti, J.L.M. Montalbán and Carlo Frabetti.

A fanzine-magazine (or if you prefer, a magazine-fanzine) is at present in the gestation process, which will be talked about a great deal. It will be exclusively devoted to essays, reviews and organic information.

And this is all, or about all.

A telekinetic embrace to that fandom,

Spartacus

.....  
BOOKS - CINEMA - TV - RECORDS - BOOKS - CINEMA - TV - RECORDS - BOOKS - CINEMA - TV  
.....

The constant and numerous demands we have received concerning the creation of review columns will at last be attended in this issue of AD INFINITUM. From now on we hope you will send us your sincere opinion on any SF work you read, see or hear. They will always be signed, since, being a personal opinion, the C.L.A. may or may not agree with the views exposed and cannot be held responsible for them.

BOOKS

ALIANZA EDITORIAL, nº 194, H.P.LOVECRAFT & OTHERS  
"THE MYTHS OF CTHULHU"

It is very difficult for me in this instance to write a dispassionate and impartial review, since it is a well-known fact that I feel a great admiration for Lovecraft, admiration based on the geniality of his work and the mysterious attraction surrounding his name.

THE MYTHS OF CTHULHU are a magnificent compendium of a whole mythology created

by the masters of terror and SF themes. Stories by Algernon Blackwood, August Derleth, Ambrose Bierce, Lord Dunsany, together with some by the genial Lovecraft, acquaint us with the activities developed by that circle of authors so well known by the Anglo-Saxon peoples: the Lovecraft Circle.

The stories chosen are really brilliant, and comprise from the most poetic naturalism to the most unsuspected abysses of cosmic terror. Excepting some two or three of the stories, all the others had never been published in our country, a fact which, together with the magnificent prologue, we owe to the erudition of Dr. Rafael Llopis, compiler of several anthologies in Spanish which are up to the standard of the best ones abroad.

In short, a volume worthy of occupying pride of place in any library belonging to the terror and SF literature fan. In spite of its density one reads it straight to the end, and it is, in my opinion, one of the best books of Alianza Editorial, which slowly but surely are building a collection of very interesting and distinguished works.

Angel Rodríguez Metón

---

"THE PAPER HEROES" by Luis Gasca

In the European style, and at a European price, the Catalan firm Táber has just published "The paper heroes" by Luis Gasca. In a big format and profusely illustrated, it comes to follow the European trend initiated a few years ago.

The contents, I'm sorry to say, are not European. "The Paper Heroes" is a conglomerate of comic characters only related to each other in that they are part of the same mass media, besides being all made of paper. Tarzan and Barbarella go hand in hand with El Coyote, Donald the Duck and Cuto. There is no chronological or matter order; they have been printed as haphazardly as they have come. It is, then, just a succession of characters, each of them enjoying the benefit of some lines, headed by its own logotype, and consisting of an article and the reproduction of some vignettes.

The articles in all the chapters are more or less an amplification of what Luis Gasca publishes currently in "El Correo Español-El pueblo Vasco", and while they are correct for a newspaper and their periodic publication, for which mission they are very well-suited, they are insufficient for a book in the style "European way of life". Well documented - as always with Sr. Gasca - and in many points revealing for the initiated, a 50 % of the characters are superficially discussed, and the possible social-politic implications have been absurdly overlooked.

Is it a book for the expert on mass media or for the general public? In his "Preamble", Luis Gasca states that he doesn't intend to be exhaustive, and that his only aim is reminding the reader of "forgotten memories", "inciting him to look in that possibly subsisting attic for yesterday's writing-books". Judging by the simplicity with which he treats his themes, we agree with him that it is intended for the general public. However, contradiction often comes up: the data and illustrations which are taken for granted - as in the "MAD" page satirizing Flash Gordon - result in as many incogniti for the general public.

The illustrations are no more of a success. Except in some cases - which, in contraposition, are a model - the illustrations are poor in the sense that they obey to no selection and are not in the least representative of the character being dealt with. In those characters whose profession in the comic is undressing - as Sadoul said - this poorness is accentuated, as in the case of Male Call, Barbarella and Little Annie Fanny. One misses the footnotes under the illustrations,

which are inexistent and which, when the comics have been drawn by several artists, would help avoid a logical confusion.

Gasca promises us for this same series - Comics Collection - three further volumes, one of which will probably be "Fantastic Women", which he is currently preparing. Let us hope that they won't be, like this one, just consumer's goods. Let us hope that what these books intend to achieve: - the dignification of the comics genre - may not be damaged by the desire to please the consumer at any cost. Luis Gasca is endowed with all the qualifications needed to avoid these errors, and what is even more important, to raise the intellectual level of our beloved comics, instead of letting them fall into a worthless category.

Very good, in general, this edition by Táber, a firm we should congratulate for their interest in the image and popular literature world, and successfully accompanied by Joan Costa.

José Ignacio Fontes de Garnica

---

There is, in the Fortunate Isles, an important nucleus of SF fans, as we have repeatedly seen in our CORRESPONDENCE column. Manuel Enrique Darias is one of them, and he has written the following short story, which might as well be called an article in praise of the comics genre; this is the reason for our including it on this page.

---

MY FRIENDS: PULL ME TOWARDS YOU                      by                      Manuel Enrique Darias

---

How could I explain it?

What arguments could I use to explain the facts?

With what words shall I describe my faculty? Transmutation? Penetration? Adaptation? To say the truth, I have no idea of how to express it correctly.

So I will say it clearly and simply: I can penetrate thin and flat surfaces. It seems a stupid faculty, but you will soon be convinced that it is not so.

I found it out by chance when I was little. I remember we had a grammar lesson I could not understand. I was desperate. Then I yearned with all my might to learn it. My surprise was great when I found myself surrounded by block letters. At first I just roamed aimlessly among the letters. Consider my bewilderment. I was having a walk along a page of the textbook. Curiosity was substituted by fear, and I yearned to come out of it. And again I found myself sitting before my book. As simple as that.

Imagine now my posterior experiments. I remember that my second, let us say "introduction", was in Velázquez's painting, "Las Meninas". I came back in a hurry. I can assure you that in that epoch people smelled very bad, and unfortunately for me, my pituitary glands have always been extremely delicate and sensitive.

As you will have observed, a fantastic world was within my reach. On the other hand, I almost forgot to mention to you that I am a great comics fan. You will then guess how often I have "penetrated" a comic strip publication.

I have written down some impressions of mine, and I intend to publish them some day. I will do so when I finish my journalism studies. I know I'm going to disap-

point many of you, for one thing is to know comic heroes personally, and another to watch them act for the reader. But it would certainly be absurd to overlook my strange faculty and consider the time I have spent preparing my book as lost.

I could give you some hints right away: that the Masked Warrior is an introvert and very brusque; that Ana María is always complaining and not very nice; that Chispita has three bad teeth; that Flash Gordon is going bald and trying very hard to hide this premature fact...I have so many things to say...

There are three characters, three good friends of mine, for whom I feel an obvious sympathy. Mike Blueberry. A nice boy. We had lots of fun in our last spree! Captain Haddock. A wonderful guy. Forever pretending a false disdain for whisky, forever at odds with his inclination for drink.

And Delta 99.

Here is the rub. I have never talked with a creature endowed with such a formidable power of persuasion as Delta. He spoke to me about his mission on the earth. About his total dedication to a world that was unknown to him. About his great interest for the universal machinery to work well. About his hate of violence, even though he has had to use it occasionally as a means of defence. He spoke to me about all this, and he persuaded me.

And this is the rub.

I do not yearn to leave the pages of Delta. This is the reason why I have never had the sufficient strength to come out of them. I have endeavoured to do so a great many times, to no avail. My concentration is weak. It is not that I dislike staying there, quite on the contrary. But this knowing that I can't come back disturbs me. I am always devising a new procedure, but until now they have all ended in the most miserable failure. I have had a new idea.

My friends, I want to ask you something. Whenever you read Delta 99, please remember that I am ensnared in it. I ask you to yearn for my return. Maybe my idea will be successful, and you will all pull me towards you. Until this happens, I want to thank you for listening.

Goodbye.

---

FROM TIMES GONE BY

by

Eduardo Miller

---

The I Total Galactic War had an absurd motivation.

In the first general conference of the inhabited worlds, the equipments for simultaneous translation did not work well. It was a second Babel at universal level.

... ..

The mad General, of whom everybody expected that he would someday push the button declaring the third World War, did push it at last. Fortunately, a mad technician had taken the electric equipment to his home in order to manufacture a television set with it.

So, nothing happened.

---



With these winter days, there's always the temptation to draw your chair nearer a blazing fire with a pile of SF books to hand, and let your mind wander off into the future; but it's sometimes better, as I've been doing, to put on a pair of thick boots and set off across the countryside under its veil of winter snow, and see it as it was before civilization came.

Maybe it's what most SF lacks; but it's often necessary to turn from thoughts of how we shall survive the future, to how we managed to survive in the past. For Man himself has changed very little; and despite what the SF writers tell us, he'll change very little in the future. Maybe, through genetic engineering, the body will change; but the drive, the ambition that characterised Prehistoric Man's ascent up the evolutionary ladder will still be there, unchanged; even as it is today. And, to quote one bitter prophet: "Civilization has only given us the means to throw bigger and better rocks at each other."

Looking at my shelves, though, I can see very little SF connected with the past. There's QUEST OF THE DAWN MAN by J.H. Rosny in the ACE edition, and one or two novels by Thoman Burnett Swann, notably DAY OF THE MINOTAUR and THE WEIRWOODS (both ACE); and, like most of his novels, peopled with fabulous creatures like Centaurs and yet set firmly in reality. Time-travel novels could, I suppose, come in this category; but apart from that? Perhaps it would be as well to have an interest in History, together with SF!

Philip K. Dick is an author who plays the civilization game; and yet, surrounded by all the gadgets necessary for modern living, his characters often show signs of mental stress, and often are not built to survive the age they live in. How they manage to survive often makes for an entertaining story; but at the back of your mind there's always the thought that "this could be us". And British publishers haven't been slow to cash in; with Penguin Books, Sidgwick & Jackson, Panther, Sphere and Jonathan Cape all featuring titles by Philip K. Dick on their lists. One of the latest to appear is COUNTER-CLOCK WORLD, published by Sphere Books at 5s.; which has a new twist to the usually complicated plot and counter-plot, by taking place in a world where time runs backwards, and the span of life runs from the grave to the cradle...This is from the later period of his writings, but for a glimpse of his first simple future-scapes, Sphere Books have a collection of his short stories, THE VARIABLE MAN, at 6s. which makes a base from which to begin an exploration of his work, and to catch the first glance of some of the nightmares that he has in store...

John Brunner, too, who has turned himself into a Limited Company to escape the clutching fingers of the taxman, and now has all his books copyrighted by "Brunner Fact & Fiction Ltd.", a way out that is often necessary here...John just came to mind because there was a new title by him in the 1970 Hodder catalogue, called GOOD MEN DO NOTHING. It's the second book in his new series, about a Negro spy, man-of-adventure, etc. called Max Curfew (and it seems to be the new fashion, to have a black hero...) Not SF; in fact, Hodder place it in their Suspense & Adventure section; and I would say that he's writing this series to pay the rent! And not one of his classics, but we ought to be grateful that this enables him to turn out such first-class novels as STAND ON ZANZIBAR. Penguin Books have just brought out a British edition of his American success: THE SQUARES OF THE CITY. It attracted a lot of attention, even though it wasn't strictly SF, the action being based on a chess game, with the characters taking the part of the pieces, a chess game that had actually been played.

And James Blish has come to live in England; though we must wait and see whether the different climate has any effect on his writing!

# correspondence



BY  
PILAR GIRALT

All the letters we have received concerning the HISPACON '69 - and they have been many - will be commented on in the special AD INFINITUM issue which is to appear shortly. Here, in this last issue of the year, I shall deal exclusively with those letters received before the HISPACON.

ARCHIE MERCER, who is a member of the Council of the BSFA, begins his letter by deploring the fact that my information about the HISPACON (there, it slipped!) arrived too late to be included in the last BSFA Bulletin. Then he proceeds to comment on AD INFINITUM 10. A fact in the story by Federico Sánchez, THE WALL, has called his attention. He expresses his surprise that the proprietor of no less than a Roman wall can decide its demolition without asking anybody's permission. Well, I'm sure that, even in a country like ours - where there are so many old stones - somebody would come out of the blue with sufficient authority to prevent such a crass lack of respect for our national heritage, but allowing for the fact that nothing of what happens in THE WALL is true (or so I hope) the demolition of a wall more or less is something we can't bring ourselves to bother about too much!

PATRICK NOEL, our friend from Avignon, and editor of the new fanzine LA CLEF D'ARGENT the second issue of which we have just received, and which I will shortly review, writes to give us his opinion on A.I. "I would like to congratulate two of the artists: the one who has done the beautiful cover for number 9, and specially the illustrator of the poem THE SILENT RACE. As for your columns, you have succeeded in making them alive and really international, since the themes you write about are interesting for all fans in every country. My pet column (one must always be taking sides) is the one signed by Pedro Tabernerero, I always read it first. Of all the fanzines that come my way, yours is, in my opinion, the most complete, if not for the quantity of articles, at least for their quality. As for the texts, I find their style good, but I think SF has of late taken a new direction, and authors should stop copying the themes we have come across much too often, or at least try to treat them in a different way, as Harlan Ellison has done in "I have a mouth but I cannot shout".

JEAN-PIERRE FONTANA has taken his time to answer our first letter from August 14th, but has done it thoroughly now, even including a story of his for publication in A.I. I must mention, just in case you don't know it, that Jean-Pierre was the editor of that French fanzine MERCURY, whose praises everybody sings, and whose absence is lamented by fans in the whole world.

BRYN FORTEY - from whose name you will surely guess his Welsh nationality - has at last written to us. He says in his letter: "Your fanzine is one of the best on the present SF scene, and it appears so often that you can hardly believe it. AD INFINITUM is a publication of which Spanish fandom can be justly proud." And he includes a fascinating short story of his which you will soon enjoy reading in A.I.

L.SPRAGUE DE CAMP writes in Spanish, thanking us for our last letter and announcing to us that a new book by him and his wife has just been published: "THE HISTORY OF SCIENCE FICTION IN AMERICA", by Editorial Argentina, Hipólito Irigoyen 850, Buenos Aires.

JEAN-PIERRE TURMEL is one of our best and most intelligent friends. I asked him to give us some news about his SF club in Rouen: his answer you can read in my column FANDOM...He writes that the CLA provokes his enthusiasm by the quality of its fanzine, well printed and illustrated. He praises the cover to number 10, by Carlos Giménez, whom he considers a really gifted artist. Jean-Pierre is also a passionate fan of pop and underground music, and recommends us a recent success by the English group PINK FLOYD: UMMAGUMMA, about whose perfection he writes at length. He is translating for us - he speaks Spanish! - a story by Nathalie CH. Henneberg, one of the most outstanding SF writers today.

And last, but not least, the list of new members whom we have welcomed into our fold! Many of them live in Madrid, where a very important nucleus of CLA members is forming itself. I'll name them first:

JOSE RODRIGUEZ-ROSELLO

MIGUEL BARCELÓ GARCIA, a Catalan studying in Madrid.

M<sup>a</sup> JOSE MENDEZ DE AYUSO

MARIANO AYUSO BRUNO

RAFAEL LLOPIS PARET

ANA DE MIGUEL MARTINEZ

JOSE ANTONIO VILLANUEVA ARANGUREN

JOSE SALVADOR SANTIAGO PÁEZ

MARIANO DE GUZMAN CLAVIJO

JESUS ANTONIO GOTOR, from Barcelona.

NIEVES GARRIDO MARTINEZ, also from Barcelona.

JOSE JULIAN BAQUEDANO, from Durango, Vizcaya, who will contribute in A.I. with a monthly article on fantastic cinema.

JOSE LUIS GORROCHATEGUI, from La Coruña; he is our new Coordinator in Galicia.

EDUARDO BIDASOA, from Barcelona.

GLORIA GIMENEZ, also from Barcelona.

ENRIQUE FLÓ CODINA, from Badalona.

CONCHITA GONZÁLEZ DEL CASTILLO, from Barcelona.

MARÍA GABRIELA SERRA FREDIANI, from Mataró.

JOSE M<sup>a</sup> ROVIRA AMAT, from Barcelona.

ESTHER DE PEDRO, from Bilbao.

JOSE ANTONIO BLANCO ALVAREZ, from Valladolid.

JUAN MASARNAU BRASO, from Barcelona.

FELIX JUAN BORDES, from Las Palmas de Gran Canaria.

GREGORIO MARTINEZ ABAJO, from Burgos.

MIGUEL RAMOS MOYA, from Barcelona.

JUAN JOSE CAGIGAL ULLOA, from Reus.

And now I shall say goodbye in a hurry, not without warmly wishing you all:

HAPPY NEW YEAR 1970!!!

# INTERNATIONAL FANDOM

BY

PILAR GIRALT

G.CHEVALIER writes in very good Spanish. After praising A.I. he announces the arrival of his fanzine, which is devoted to comics. It reached us a few days ago. Called NEMO and surnamed "Journal idiot", Catachemistry Faculty, it contains some short stories on different themes: horror, fantasy, erotics...Very amusing.

Another fanzine devoted to the comic strip, also edited in France, by José Fayos, is called ZINE-ZONE. José writes that it is a "digestive and relaxing" fanzine, but in our opinion it is much more than that: well-printed, highly competent, with quite a few good drawings and stories. We recommend it to all comic fans. The editor's address is: 232, rue St.Denis, Paris 2<sup>e</sup> - 75 France.

WALDEMAR KUMMING, to whom Carlos Giménez gave his permission to publish his two SPERLING pages, originally published in AD INFINITUM 7, has sent his fanzine MRU where they already appear, very well reproduced, indeed. We read the following note on the first page: "Whoever decides, on seeing these two pages, that they are the work of a professional, he will have guessed their quality correctly. They appeared for the first time in AD INFINITUM 7, the fanzine edited by the very active Spanish SF club, CIA, and they are signed by the well-known Spanish artist, Carlos Giménez. Many thanks to him and Pilar Giralt for letting us reproduce them here."

LOCUS, Charlie & Marsha Brown's fanzine, from New York, explains to us the preliminary phases of the American fans' trip to Heidelberg to attend the HEICON '70. Already during the St.Louis Con last summer a questionnaire was distributed asking about would-be parting points, length of stay, etc. An agreement was reached with the travel agency Tradewinds. In order to maintain prices at a convenient level, all the propaganda, inscriptions and organization was confided to fan publications. The agency will keep in contact with airline companies and will take care of all individual travellers as well. Two groups have been organized, one from the West Coast, baptised "Heicon Charter West"; the other is the "Heicon Charter East". The obvious reason is, of course, geographical: while some people live in Washington State, others live in New Jersey. Applicants must submit the number of their Heicon membership card and a deposit of \$ 50 per person. In April \$100 must be paid, and the rest (some \$40-\$50) any date prior to June 15th. The exact cost will depend on the number of travellers. The departing day will be August 7th, 1970, from New York. The arrival at Frankfurt will be seven hours later. They will go back to New York on August 30th.

And we go on with LOCUS because in their fanzine review column of the November issue there is a note on AD INFINITUM: "35 pages, offset, no price given. In fact we have two fanzines here, one in Spanish, the other with the English translation of the text. Good reproduction. Number 7 is devoted to comics, but in other issues they treat different themes. Interesting sample of foreign fandom. I wonder what they'll do with all the LOCUS I sent them."

Well, at the moment, Charlie, Marsha, you see what we're doing with them: copying from your interesting fanzine.

HORIZONS DU FANTASTIQUE, edited by Dominique Besse, is a French magazine of considerable density and quality. It embraces all fantastic manifestations in art, literature, cinema, etc. Really good stories and a bravo for the numerous illustrations, which are really superb.



When I wrote my review on OLTRE IL CIELO, the magnificent Italian magazine devoted to aeronautics and scientific fantasy, I quoted the wrong address, since that of the redaction and administration offices is the following: CORSO TRIESTE 10 - 00198 ROMA. Besides many articles on scientific matters, well documented and actual, and accompanied with a great profusion of good photographs, the magazine contains SF short stories, reviews of new publications and films, etc. Warmly recommended.

I want to give you some information on the new SF club founded in Rouen by our friend JEAN-PIERRE TURMEL and a friend of his called RENE NICOLAS. The club dates from April 1969 and is, therefore, just three months younger than the CLA. In so short a time they have performed the following feats: projected Chris Marker's film, LA JETÉE, which was lent to them by Marker himself; a lecture by Jacques d'Argent on the theme "COSMIC CITY" (the project of an utopic city); an evening of experimental pop and underground music (intimately related to SF and fantasy); projected two films by the Czech director, Karel Zeman, "Fantastic Adventures" and "The Baron von Drac". For 1970 they are preparing two or three artistic exhibitions with fantastic themes in a Rouen art gallery, one of them with illustrations by Salvador Dalí for Dante's "Divine Comedy"; a lecture on SF by Jean-Claude de Repper; and another lecture on theological SF by M. Gaumy, an erudite Rouen gentleman; an SF composer will present his records and taped works, his name is Paul Boisselet; and the films FORBIDDEN PLANET, THE WAR GAME and DR.STRANGELOVE will be projected. They also plan to edit a fanzine. Not bad for such a short time; a great applause for Jean-Pierre and René.

And now important news from Avignon. The editor of LA CLEF D'ARGENT, Patrick Noel, has sent the second issue of his fanzine of which a complete review will appear in A.I. shortly - asking me to take note of the following: the next LCA issue will be a bulky 120-page special issue, in which stories by many different authors will be included, as well as many drawings, and a ten-page SF comic strip in the style of SAGA DE XAM or LONE SLOANE, will be introduced as a first series.

Patrick is looking for bookshops interested in selling copies of his fanzine.

We congratulate our friend from Avignon (which city, in case you don't know, is a twin of our own Tarragona and Tortosa) and predict for him many successes and satisfactions in his magnificent work with a fanzine of the quality of LA CLEF D'ARGENT. Patrick's address is: 7, Avenue Richelieu - Tour 29.51 - 84 Avignon.

A Canadian comic fan, J.L.Mansfield, is very interested in having correspondents sharing his tastes for an eventual exchange of comic fanzines and books. He wrote us only recently and has already sent to us some samples of comic publications. Our dear member Antonio Martín, who is the director of the only Spanish magazine entirely devoted to comics, BANG!, has already contacted him and sent him some copies of his magazine and other Spanish publications. If you are interested in corresponding with him, just let me know and I shall give you his address.

Many of my foreign correspondents have written to ask about the price for AD IN-INITUM. We have never indicated a price for it for the simple reason that it is free for our members. But we have shortly been asked to reprint some of our earlier issues, and this circumstance has compelled us to put it on sale. The price is 25 pesetas a copy. There! now you all know the worst.

Please address all your letters to: Pilar Giralt, Apartado de Correos 1573, Barcelona, Spain.



# COMICS

BY PEDRO TABERNERO

Our friend Pedro Tabernero has invited this time Javier Rodríguez-Piñero to send us the following commentary on comics.

The truth is that the hour has struck for the comic strip to be on its own. Born to delight the coloured childish world, it has grown to unsuspected proportions. Comics have by far surpassed their pioneers' expectations. They have hastened to reach their goals and even gone beyond them, impetuously rushing into the intellectual world, and the vanguardist literature. People in literary circles can't go on ignoring their importance, their possibilities as an art, their evident esthetic meaning and their transcendence as an expressive form.

The comic strip has reached and interested intellectual circles, a fact conferring it an honour that it not always deserves.

As a mass phenomenon it really has an influence; it is already measuring its forces and being made use of by more or less selfish groups. How far does the consistency of this so-called drawn literature go? Is it qualified to fulfill a task, to be, as a work of art, educative? The categorical answer is in the affirmative; as an esthetic manifestation it is already asserting itself with such emphasis that many consecrated artists are focussing their attention on this peculiar artistic expression which, until a short time ago, appealed only to the childish minds of children, or the childish minds of adults. Suddenly, something has broken loose, something inherent in the comic strip that has just been discovered: from the stammering little comic, a new branch of the expressive arts has been born. Yes, but it seems as if this fully grownup, beautiful comic lacked a head; is it doomed, as the bust in the fable, to lack brains? For, let us be truthful: this phenomenon, born into a consumer's society, deserves a better fate, deserves

it because it's able to conquer it, as a literary expression, as a means of educating the masses, as a form of social influence. It looks, though, as if it were not improving, as if, like a primitive film, it were but a series of sequences from which one must guess the possibility of new angles, or of movement. Like some verses without context. There is no depth, no consistency, it lacks a harmony to fulfil the task we should expect of it. We should not accept, as many do, the mere contemplation of the drawings, the poor mixtifications of the dialogues, uttering far-fetched ideas or resurrecting repressed Edipuses or Electras which only betray the mental laziness of the writer, feeding the hungry fan with disgraceful reproductions of the classics - classics of an art that is just beginning and which has yet to reach its golden age-; and to this series of drawings they add a few notes at random and call them essays forcing us, poor fans, to swallow it all I can understand an interest to philosophize around any cultural manifestation, I can even respect it, but it seems despicable to take advantage of any circumstance in order to win fame or any material gain. Interest should prevail on behalf of the comic, as an art, helping and fostering its social implications. Everything can have a social mission and fulfil it, from the steam engine to the comic strip.

One must praise the effort of many to dignify it; much has been done in Spain in this sense, giving it rythm and coherence, but if we want to really help it develop, preventing it from falling into a mere pastime with erotic undertone we must try to improve, improve, improve

We could of course start with all the abounding negative trends; not only the opportunist essays, from which one or two pop out and then vanish into nothingness, which is what they are. Also these belicist exaltations, the military triumphs of conceited heroes, idealizing old-fashioned attitudes and morals, which are harmful and should not be put up with. We know that, insofar as it is a product for the masses, it cannot be totally snatched from mercantilism, which in the end will maintain it in existence. But we should all endeavour to protect it from massive commercialism, and above all not accept that it serves the interests of a handful in detriment of its quality. The cinema is an essentially commercial phenomenon, but it at least has succeeded in preserving what art there is in it, keeping it concrete and apart, to the point that even the least brilliant cinema-goers are beginning to discern between a cinematographic work of art and the clumsy contrivances of thoroughly mercantiled producers. Well then, our dear comic strips, pseudo-intellectualized, lack precisely this very drive, this isolation; it must be organized as a separate creation, availing itself of the same commercial means but always in keeping with the kind of art it is.

Its mission as a literature of evasion must be complied with, as it is beginning to do now only partially; as well as playing its part as a means of communication, of education and keeping the pace with evolution. Once the old patterns are destroyed, society renews itself, and the comic strip, just as music and the cinema, must climb to the place where it belongs.

I believe that the comic is being born now; what we have previously seen are the forms and the elements to be used in order to reach the ultimate result; and thanks to the efforts of a few honest artists in the past, and of even fewer ones in the present day, this ultimate perfection will be reached. Some discreet glimpses in Saga or Epoxy, and some praiseworthy endeavours at national level, about which I will not be more precise for fear of forgetting somebody and offending him by it, should make us feel confident, but do not be misled into thinking that we are satisfied: we are at the stage of the Altamira caves paintings, but with less ingenuity and less quality; much is yet to be achieved, and I'm confident that it will.

I have already said, or rather, written, that the comic strip will finally occupy its rightful place, but we must avoid the harder way, the slow getting out of the clutches of commercialism. Our duty is to conceive it pure, to deliver it pure, to prevent it from becoming a mass product until it reaches the mass. Culture forms for the mass must not necessarily be, as many think, cut down to a low standard, as a kind of précis of famous works or musical pieces more or less select. On the contrary, culture must be delivered to the mass in its authenticity, not in a golden frame or on glossy paper, but in its beautiful nakedness, for only thus the individual in the mass - you and me and anybody, for we all are part of it - accepts it in gratefulness. The comic strip possesses infinite resources: let it realize them.

# THE TRANTOR GAZETTE

BY

RAMON CORDON

We had promised to write about the HISPACON in this AI issue. But we have changed our minds and are going to edit an extraordinary issue, instead. The CLA likes things to be well done, and we want to proclaim the success of the HISPACON '69 as it deserves. Please be patient for a little longer.

.. ..

The year 1969 has been full of good news for the Spanish SF fans. The creation of the CLA, the celebration of the HISPACON, and now come the first CLA social premises in Barcelona, at this address: calle Valencia 613. We are at present busy with its decoration, and you will shortly be invited to its inauguration. We hope our example will be imitated in other cities of Spain. Coordinators, take good note!

.. ..

Copied from the SF Technical Vocabulary, by Jaime Rosal del Castillo and Luis Vigil, and distributed among the assistants at the HISPACON '69:

FANDOM - Name given to the nucleus of SF fans, editors as well as simple readers, but united under the common denominator of trying to do something for their hobby. There are no passive elements in Fandom. It is essentially dynamic.

For this reason we shall ask once more for your collaboration. Send stories, drawings, jokes, and cinema, TV, music and book reviews. We know quite a few members who just dare not, and it is them we are addressing.

.. ..

But even if you can't write or draw, you must stop being PASSIVE and turn DYNAMIC, by just talking about SF to your friends, thus winning new members for the CLA. If each one of us brings in only two of our friends, our numbers will triplicate in a

short time, and this will mean more money to edit our own books, arrange exhibitions, organise cinema seances, open new premises in other cities...in a word, to put a great deal of our projects into practice.

.. ..

In order to be able to inform our members, we ASK all Spanish publishers to send their catalogues of new editions, books, magazines or comic strips. And if they send a copy we promise to write an honest review and help in their distribution.

.. ..

The CLA is getting better organised and winning its members' general responsiveness. We are glad to be able to inform you that Alberto Español is our brand-new administrator. The budget of the HISPACON '69 demonstrated the indispensability of this office. We congratulate our friend Alberto, whose new task, involving considerable tact and sacrifice, will make all our projects feasible.

.. ..

Other offices and the persons holding them will be announced shortly.

.. ..

In this issue we inaugurate a new column: "Science Fiction in..."

You will find in it book and plaque reviews. We repeat: please send your opinion on everything you may read, see or hear concerning SF. Of this will depend the interest and readability of this new column.

.....

.....



