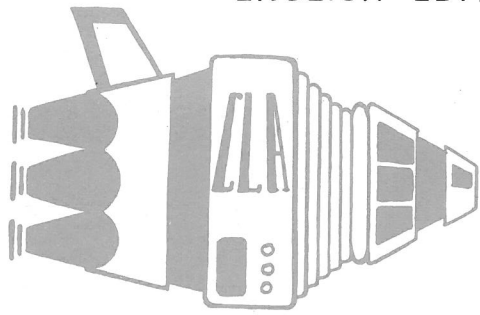


ENGLISH EDITION



AD INFINITUM

CIENCIA - FICCIÓN, FANTASÍA Y CÓMIC

FANZINE DEL
CÍRCULO DE LECTORES DE ANTICIPACIÓN
BARCELONA

E N E R O 1970 • EPOCA PRIMERA • SEGUNDO AÑO • NUMERO 13





Editorial

To each new Year, a renewed life. The CLA managing Board held a general meeting. New decisions were taken, and new plans for AD INFINITUM were discussed and agreed upon.

Very briefly told, this is the little history of this issue with the lucky number 13, which has kept everybody waiting. While remaining faithful to the same size and contents of the first twelve issues, enjoying such a great success in national and international fandom circles, we have tried to correct some defects, impart to it a little more interest and quality and...stick to the new budget assigned to our fanzine.

For instance, the gloss paper covers. In the process of binding last year's twelve issues we noticed that the thick cardboard covers were an obstacle: the resulting volume is not too easy to handle. We have, therefore, introduced this novelty in order to avoid this inconvenience at the end of this new year.

The illustrations in issue n° 12 have been widely acclaimed by our readers. So we have even tried to improve on them this time.

Anything else? Well, we are confident that the contents in this issue will be far more explicit than ourselves. We shall be waiting to hear from you, with advices, suggestions and opinions. Don't forget this is your fanzine.

About all further CLA activities during this year 1970, you will be amply informed by THE TRANTOR GAZETTE, as well as by the plentiful letters you so often receive from us, and which are a proof of our Circle's constant interest in its members.

And last, but not least, all of us who are responsible for AD INFINITUM are fully determined to be more punctual with publishing dates; but in this, as in everything else, we also need your help. Please send stories, poems, news, illustrations...and we shall soon be appearing with unfailing regularity.

AD INFINITUM

He had waited for time immemorial, for so long that he could not know the exact time; centuries and milleniums had passed by in the garden of the timeless hermitage, streaking his hair with white. However, he kept on waiting, his eyes always intent on that one leaf which would not fall; forever wondering why that bird did not fly, why the wind did not blow...

A diffuse light dyed the place with green reminiscences.

Centuries and milleniums had come to a stop here. No sign of life. Still clouds. The wind dared not blow, and the sun dared not shine.

Some leaves and branches were waiting for time to move in order to fall.

Eternity could be understood.

Light was scarce, flowers sad, fotons moved slowly...with little energy.

He had been waiting for something to happen during millions of years, he had learned to touch atoms, to notice the movement of fotons, to capture sonorous pressure with his fingertips, to be soft as a young maiden...In his tactile hypersensibility he could know at any moment where each of the atoms of his body was; he could give them all an identity.

He wanted to go back in time, return to his world of questions...

He was waiting for something to happen.

He wondered why the leaf did not fall.

Why did the bird not fly!

Why did the rose not smell!

From a dark corner came a melancholic symphony...

... ..

The leaf fell. Suddenly.

Some footsteps were heard. They broke the secular peace. Light became blinding... the poor light of a slow world had blinded him...had there been chaos in the immortal spirit of the night somewhere back? ...of the night with ardent lights...in the night of the blind telepath, perceiving thousands of polichrome colours transmitted by the minds of other universes...minds speaking in colours...colours which the future man, when he becomes a monster with unlimited senses, will see in the unbelievable chromatic scale of a complex universe...

Bright metapsychic suns of the sideral depths invaded his soul with an extraordinary ecstatic light.

Ritual dances absorbed him. Songs of the soul opening the secret sources of the forgotten psyche.

Lights and sounds combined in a certain sequence capable of dominating man; make him fly in cosmic spaces...ingravid like a dream in mauve..and in an opaque cyclon a pair of eyes...some columns emerged from the water and stretched up to the sun...

It was light

It was cloud

It was colour

...in the wake of the idea of absurdity...in the wake of the optical illusion of reality.

Happy bones lying under the Sun.

Happy in their unconsciousness.

- I would make you of star matter.
- Would that intelligent gas be able to love in a strange suprasensibility of solitude?
- The gigantic dwarfs walked among the daisies...and the cosmic troglodyte devoured lilies between the metamorphoses of the diffuse zone...
Some footsteps were heard.
It was the footsteps.

Plexar of B.



THE SILENCE OF THE SEA

by

Angel Rodríguez Metón

He loved her so much!

I have never told you my friend Andrés' story. I would like you to get acquainted with it. Andrés is the typical mature man, worldly and fond of life that you so often meet in the big cities. He likes his work, for which he feels the kind of mild interest with which he regards all other things, and also, well, he just lives. He lives, I know it, whatever remains of a life broken by grief. I believe nobody understands Andrés better than I do. Everyone thinks that the memory of the accident in which he lost his wife has remained far behind, faded away by the ten years that have elapsed since then; but this is not so, for even in the most crucial moments of his business transactions or in the heyday of his social engagements, Andrés is forever thinking of María. He will remember her always. Surely you understand: she was so sweet! Twenty years of age and a whole world at their feet...

You must see him alone. He stares at his favourite books and dusts them, one by one. Then, after a long moment's doubt, he chooses a thick volume and, sinking down on an armchair, becomes absorbed in his reading. Sometimes he plays the old living room piano. He tries Chopin or Mozart, not too carefully, with the casual, melancholic air of true music lovers. Then, as if against his will, he strolls into María's room, their room during that short and happy year of their marriage. And I am the only one, because I have seen him doing it so often, to know with what pain and melancholy he caresses his wife's clothes, how he smells the air with tears in his eyes, hoping to recapture María's soft, sweet perfume. And how, with trembling hands, he holds her picture, where she smiles, blonde and beautiful.

I am the only one to know about the secret agony of his tears and the hoarse mutterings of his love. Then he is silent once more, devoid even of suffering, like a man possessed, forgetful of himself and his surroundings.

It is then that he needs me, and I go and speak to him.

- Hallo, Andrés.

- Hallo, old man - he says in a subdued voice - you see, I can't forget her. And he smiles sadly. I try cheering him up, reviving certain circumstances in his life, leading our conversation towards other subjects.

- Listen, Andrés. Your friends' party, wasn't it tonight?

- Oh, yes, it was. But I'm not going. I don't feel like it, I'm fed up with this daily comedy as a man of the world.

- Come on, Andrés, you can't mean it...

- I'm not going. Tonight I feel like reading until morning comes.

But I don't give up. I know him well and I know that if I leave him, his gaze will wander across the written pages and every detail, every sentence or word will remind him of María, and make him suffer. I attack from another flank.

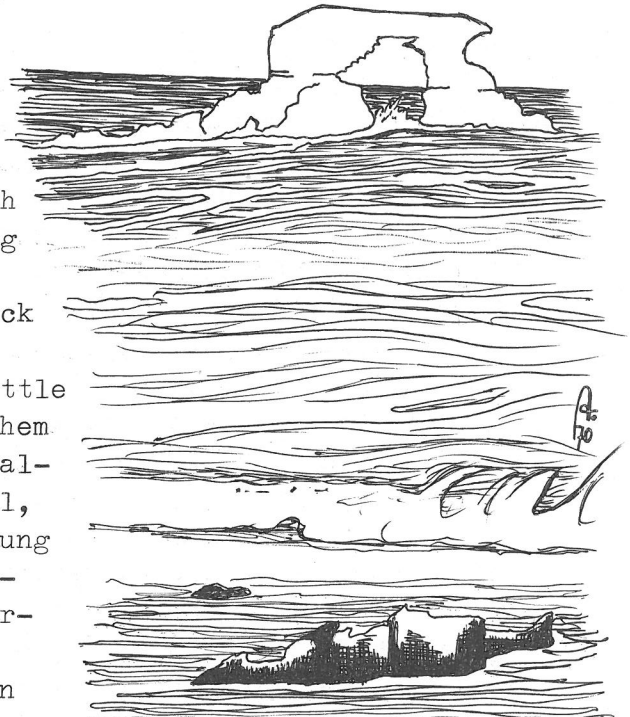
- Say, Andrés, tonight we're going to the movies. It's a long time since I saw a good film, and I believe there's something worthwhile running at the Coliseum. Let's go!

- No, you old devil! All right, we'll go to the party and I'll get rid of you.

Andrés is like this. He can change his mind in a moment. I think that, in his way, he's also fighting against the memory of his wife and looks, just as I do, for any possible way out of his labyrinth of grief.

.....

It is a lively party. The house is large and beautiful; it is soon filled with gay feminine laughter and deep men's voices. Champagne has been abundant and some shrill music has added to the effects of alcohol. Andrés is dancing with an attractive young brunette. In a corner, I watch them in silence, hoping in vain to see him feeling something more than disgust for his surroundings. It is a gay party. His friends clap him on the back in merriment or wink at him in complicity. Andrés smiles, and women look at him admiringly and a little sad because their sharp feminine instinct tells them that his contented expression is but a mask concealing his wounds. And the party goes on and on. Well, it is always the same. Occasionally he takes a young lady with him, as a living memory of the last frivolous hours; but it only happens through my intervention, after I have egged him on in the hope of seeing his cold blood thirst for someone else than María. María...



Today's young lady has wondered why Andrés has chosen the cold atmosphere of a "meublé" instead of his sumptuous comfortable home. She knows he is a widower, living by himself. What she doesn't know is that he'll never consent to desecrate the cloister of his wild conjugal love. I could never persuade Andrés to do this. Not even Emma, who loved him three years ago and to whom he gave, gathered

from the ashes of his soul, a little warmth, could ever trespass the door of the sanctuary.

It gets harder and harder every day to wrestle him away from his memories, and very often, specially of late, fear has gripped me on seeing his distorted features in the small hours of the morning, poisoned by smoke, drink and books, searching for María in all the rooms of the house. The tousled hair over his tormented forehead, his eyes wide open from the effort...I have been compelled to fight with him in order to prevent his running blindly away into the street, like a madman, in search of his beloved one.

In the financial world, Andrés is at his cleverest. He always acts with absolute self-confidence, winning spectacular victories that bring him nearer and nearer to the top. And because he always remains cold and indifferent he has no enemies to speak of, but modest rivals who admire him and readily submit before his brilliant and pertinent attacks. But, on the other hand, he lacks real friends, being surrounded by people who of necessity must obey a superior and active mind like his. At bottom, they envy him, and are happy whenever they can get a glimpse of the deep grief devouring Andrés' innermost being.

There I must also intervene. He must be continually cheered up, driven to take new steps, not to give up his fight. Without me he would abandon and his present successes would soon be turned into lamentable failures, brought about by his indifference and detachment. But nobody knows, Andrés is great, a conquerer, the first one! Poor Andrés!

After ten years of relentless battle, I begin feeling I have lost. I notice the whole structure crumbling down, and there is nothing I can do to prevent it from happening. Andrés is going away, going to that strange world of pain and despair into which he has been gradually falling. I can no longer prevent it.

Like yesterday, on the beach. We were on our way back from a little seashore village; it was already dusk. The breeze was fresh and pleasant and the setting sun streaked the splendid summer blue of the sky and the sea with red. We stopped the car near the stretch of sand and strolled along the shore till it was night and the sea wet Andrés' shoes. I longed to drive home but Andrés was not there. Let me explain: he was gone with María and he remembered me no longer, or himself.

I saw him look up at the sky and mutter something I could not grasp. Then he cried. Always the same name: María, María! When his own voice startled him out of his rêverie, and he heard the silence answering his cry, he looked around him in shame, fearing someone might have witnessed his madness...

- Let's go, Andrés, let's go home. It's getting late.

He heard me at last, but walked to the car in silence. It was cold, in spite of the season.

Another party, the last one. I don't know where it was, for Andrés has also forgotten. But it reminds him of the old club, of his adolescence, of María.

He hears a mixture of old and new songs. Lights make him nervous and voices resound shrilly inside his brain. In his brain simmer memories and pictures, and he forgets me, forsakes me.

And women look at him, kiss him. And men clap him on the shoulder and jab his ribs with their elbows; I cannot see them winking. He walks along a corridor of

dark mirrors, dark lights and dark women. He opens a door into the sea, the emptiness and silence. He walks along the shore and cries without a voice. He looks eyeless up into the sky.

He is gone for good, and he has forgotten me, his son. The son María was in the end prevented from giving him. He would have been born two months after the accident. I have tended him, helped him from his brain, a corner of torture and horror.

It is over. Poor Andrés! He will always remember her. So sweet, so blonde, so lovely...

He loved her so much!

MEMORIES IV

by

Jaime Rosal del Castillo

"-But this Man you refer to is
a monster.

-The man I speak about is the man
of Nature."

(Justine ou les malheurs de la
vertu; Donatien-Alphonse-Fran-
çois de Sade.)

Being an armadillo implies a series of inconveniences placing me in a rather annoying situation before the other members of the animal world. In the first place, I am unable to go against the laws imposed on me by my biologic heritage and armadillos being terribly fearsome creatures I must follow the dictates of my instinct and, on the least noise, I have no alternative but coil upon myself like a ball to be protected against the approaching would-be enemy. Thus, turned into a ball, I must remain still until I feel there is no longer any danger, and this is precisely what annoys me the most because some stupid creatures, availing themselves of my helpless position, stoop to kick me so that I start rolling down. Rolling this way and that, stumbling against the natural obstacles of the ground, and again rolling, rolling down...With so much turning upon myself I invariably end up very dizzy, and on returning to my normal position, with a perturbed sense of poise, my appearance is eminently laughable to any passer-by since I cannot succeed in standing on my four legs and look as lamentably as can be imagined.

Another considerable inconvenience derives from our slow pace. Armadillos are certainly no swift creatures. In old times, when I was a rat, I could run as I pleased, come and go to the most distant places in search of my daily sustenance. But now I cannot leave my usual place of residence without facing great dangers. My area of activity has been considerably reduced and I have to be content with such food as I can find in the proximity of my den. However, there is something which can be considered an asset: I am no longer afraid of cats. Now it is them who try to evade me.

Another danger menacing every armadillo derives from the rarity of our species. The armadillo is a very uncommon animal, naturalists are well aware of the fact, and we are pursued with the futile pretext of studying our habits. They are people lacking the most elemental education and they go about with no respect whatever for the rules of cohabitation. Who are they, anyway - I wonder - and what right have they to interfere with our affairs? Then we have the zoologists, what a meddling lot! They are even worse than naturalists, since the latter are content with just observing us, whereas the former try to keep us behind bars so as to be able to study us at their leisure. They take us to their "gardens", where they keep all kinds of animals, and then examine us to their hearts' content. What do they know about us? The armadillos are very powerful, and we respect our own habits, hiding them from the strangers' view. We will never let them see us in our intimacy! They bore me and make me furious. What rubbish! I'm going to shout it to their faces some day, and maybe then they will let us be. But they won't understand, men are unfeeling and I know better than to entertain the least trust in them.

Incidentally, I have had a very lamentable experience. When I was a fly and could enter their houses (that's what they call their dens) the beasts were all the time trying to eliminate me. But this happened so many changes ago that I can't remember the means they used in order to achieve this reproachable action.

And now that I mentioned this, I observe that, regrettably, with every change I lose part of my foregoing conscience. Memory fails me to such an extent that it becomes extremely difficult for me to remember certain passages of my other lives. The only thing persisting in my brain is the evident cruelty distinguishing this creature, who has repeatedly stood before me like a monster making everybody afraid.



This is why, every time I feel a new death approaching, I entreat Him who ordains all changes, Him who, if He exists, is in every respect superior to us all, that in my next reincarnation I may not be transferred to the body of a man.

COSMONAVE

C O S M O S H I P

Spore of metal and of hope,
germ of light and dreams toward a garden
winged sperm of the male Earth / of stars
sunk in the womb of the universe.

Your wake of silence,
your exact trajectory
- virtual thread of cybernetic spider,
elongation of a dawn of the mind -
proclaims itself in the night as a hymn,
as a lineal song of open freedom,
daring reply to the complete distance
surrounding us, becoming us.

Crevice
in the compact loneliness oppressing us.
When you thrust yourself -palpitating
/ pollen -
into the virgin corolla of a fertile star,
will, perhaps, in the light of a new
/ heavenly body,
germinate a new, purer Earth, the colour
/ of freedom?
Or will, perhaps, shoot out from your
/ hard seed
new mechanic jungles,
new war mushrooms?

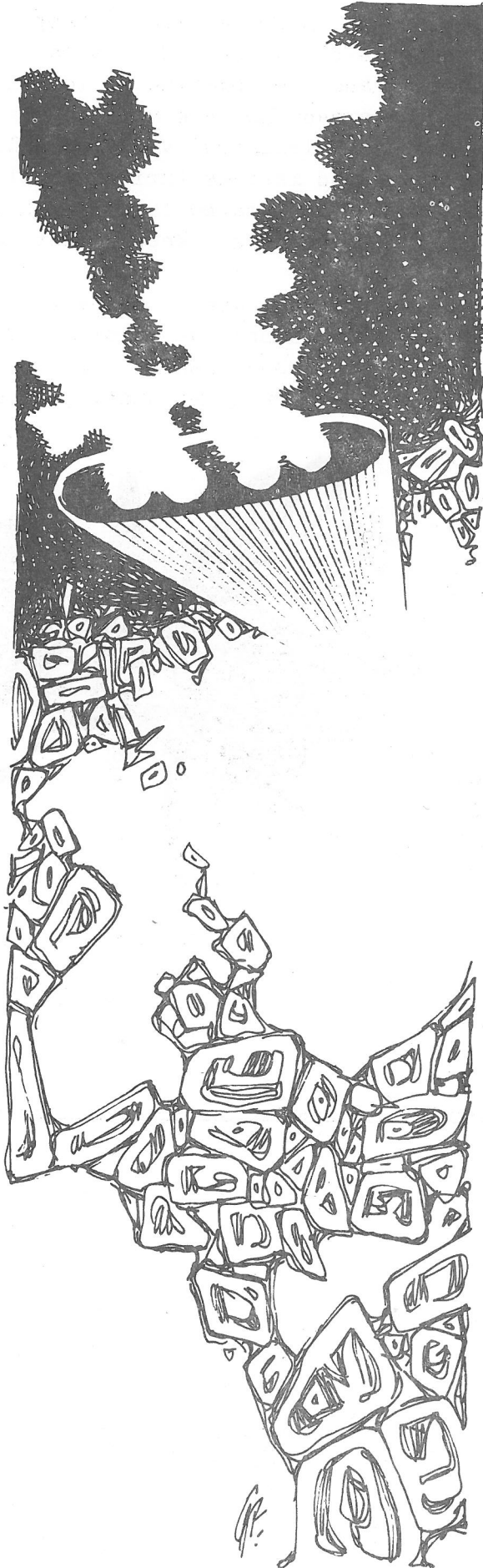
Cosmoship adding your song of silence
to the astral music,
do not blemish the clear crystal of space.
Do not propagate the evil
poisoning the Earth with no-love and
/ no-peace.
Let chains not flower from the germinal
metal
of your pure
structure

white spaceship.
Be the drowning man's bottle in the
/ sideral
sea
imploring the mercy of love and truth.
Be the wail of dawn in this somber world
which forgot the break of day.
Be the inverse archangel of man to the
/ summit,
the initial herald of the last smiles.

Search in another shore of the immense
/ night for
the transparent beings breathing light
and singing synchronies.

Search for the musical brother of man
and tell him
that in a forgotten corner of the
/ firmament
agonizes a flower
gazing at the stars.

CARLO FRABETTI



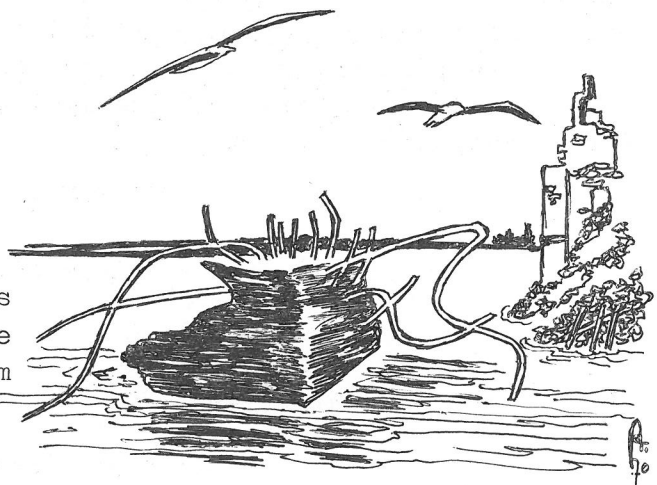
Sanctuary, 35/17/868

Shanty dear:

May it be the Great Spirit's wish that on receiving this message the Seven Small Guardians of your native Simalu keep on being the constant witnesses of your happiness. Alive as ever in my mind and heart is the happy memory of the evenings we shared at your parents' home before I left. Do you remember, too? At twilight, your parents and friends left us alone in the garden, and we lay on the ground, embraced, until the Seven Small Guardians gradually reached their full splendour, while the Great Guardian Nugor retreated behind the horizon. Then you pointed out to me the smallest among them, Muski, trying to make me believe that he was looking at us, precisely at us, with a benevolent and mischievous look of complicity. We laughed at Muski's expense, so happy that we longed to hold him in our arms. Tell me, Shanty: has Muski confided to you every night that in spite of absence my love for you is ever stronger?

Well, I'm aware that my confidence in our friend Muski's good offices is not a valuable excuse for not having sent any news to you. I can only say that all I have done lately is to lament that you're not here with me to feel the wonderful emotions I have been experiencing in Sanctuary. As you well know, I am no scientist or technician, but a writer, and as such was my presence required in Sanctuary. Do not expect, therefore, a detailed story, which you will soon be able to read in all the publications being currently prepared about our expedition. Also, you probably know already part of the results obtained from the Interstellax emissions.

But no message, not even the one you're reading now, can exactly convey to you the fabulous beauty of Sanctuary. It does not reside in any one particular detail. You know the serene beauty of the white flowers of Simalu; the magnificent green meadows of Serma; the impressive barrenness of the deserts of Gorma; the forbidding green walls of Trania; the polychromy of the birds of Ishtys. Well then: try to imagine all the beauties and marvels of the almost two hundred thousand planets known to us...together in one planet! You think it is a poet's overestimation? I can assure you it is not. In fact, you can see more different birds, flowers, trees and insects during a short stroll in any part of Sanctuary than in a lifetime of voyaging through all the planets of the Galactic Federation. Moreover, the landscape, as well as live species change completely from one place to the other, their beauty being always incredible. All this will make you understand why the Cultural Council of the Galactic Federation, which is our Supreme Government, has given this planet of Sanctuary absolute right of priority, and very few persons are as yet allowed to visit it. After a time, when specialists get to know this planet better and adequate measures have been taken to protect it from the eventual dangers involved in a massive peregrination, people from all the planets



will be allowed to visit it. It will be the Great Sanctuary of the Beauty of the Galaxy!

But there is something else, Shanty dear, definitely pronouncing this planet as the perfect galactic centre, not only of Nature, but also of Art. For there lived once an intelligent race on this planet, a race extinguished thousand of years ago by a cataclysm which, if we are to believe the many laborious investigations, was caused by an increase of radioactivity, especially in two areas where the terrible consequences can still be seen even by a layman in the matter. Such a catastrophe could be imputed to the imprudent and inadequate employment of a system of producing energy based on the nuclear disintegration of the atoms in determinate elements.

After that this world has turned upon itself millions of times in space. At each turn life has developed with a new splendour...destroying at the same time the rests of its civilization. Unfortunately, what remained were mostly old ruins of buildings which were obviously not the work of Nature, but the product of a conscious mind and a creative civilization. But now everything has changed, for during one of the numerous excavations a voluminous cylinder was found, made of a very resistant mixture and hermetically shut. When it was opened after careful measures of safety, the contents were revealed intact before the discoverers' amazement. Wonderfully preserved, as if the people manufacturing the cylinder had thought of transmitting their legacy to us through all the centuries, we have been able to admire the works which only a genial race could create. Sculptures, paintings and all kinds of artistic manifestations were assembled there. Only one of them would constitute the pride of any planet.

You will find it hard to believe, but a handful of ^{not} experts defend an alucinating theory. They say that this civilization perished, as a consequence of a technological error or a casual catastrophe, but because of a deliberate battle among its inhabitants, who employed atomic energy as a means of destruction. This fact would explain the maximum concentration of radioactivity registered in two specific points of Sanctuary, identifying both zones as the respective centres of the enemy parties, which were, as a consequence, the principal victims in the said battle.

Apart from its revolting nature, this idea strikes us as being decidedly absurd. In fact, it is impossible to admit that a race inhabiting the most beautiful planet in all the Galaxy, surrounded by such beautiful things that they can be compared only to the works that this same race was capable of creating, could ever destroy itself for any imaginable motive. No, the creatures representing themselves with such an understanding, beauty and sensibility could only feel love for life and for themselves; they could only want happiness and peace, not death and destruction. This is why, from the most extreme corners of the Galaxy, in all the inhabited planets, their memory will be honoured and their premature and unfortunate destruction lamented.

We are impatiently waiting for new discoveries, although what was found in the cylinder is already of incalculable worth; engraved on it are the following and undecypherable signs:

MUSEE DU LOUVRE - 1984

Till we meet again soon, Shanty dear,

Ten-Si-Gukkar

Barcelona (Sanctuary) 1-1-1970

.....

Flagrant anachronism!

The author's information is erroneous.

In 1968 there existed several sub-atlantic satellites, one of them being the ATS III, which on that year permitted the diffusion in Europe of the reports from the Pope's journey to Bogotá and the Mexican Olympic Games.

It is not my job to judge the man in question: human justice has already condemned him. Auguste Lérat is at present serving his sentence at Maracaibo's central Prison.

I shall only tell you how I happened to know him ten years after the catastrophe, and he was the man who had destroyed the Early Bird.

It was in Mexico, during the hot summer of 1978. It is easy to remember the date because it had been a long time since we had endured such a torrid July month.

Shall I mention to you what on earth I was doing at such a time of year in those latitudes? One must do one's job, mustn't one? As a journalist I have my difficulties at the end of each month, for which reason, regardless of the hell that was in store for me, I accepted an interesting mission. On the other hand, every job can have a good side: mine has allowed me to visit a magnificent country, superb in its modernity, and marked by that proud civilization several centuries old of the Aztec people.

Auguste Lérat loved Mexico too! There were sparks in his eyes when he talked to me about the Indian city of Uxmal and the Cuicuilco pyramid... Together we were drinking iced mint in the shade of a station café.

It was precisely between those clay walls, in that miserly atmosphere where I met him first. I used to take refuge there during the hours of vertical sun, for the feverishly tepid air of the bar didn't fail to refresh me momentarily.

I wrote my articles at the end of a table and considered myself quite lucky if, after giving the waiter some coins, I succeeded in having the whole table for myself during an hour.

This was the case that day. I had spread my disorderly notes before me and was trying to put some coherence into the whole thing. I had not noticed his approach, and he addressed me rather unexpectedly: "Are you a journalist?"

I looked up at him. The man was not a Mexican. An old unshapely hat covered his head. The abundant beard added to the strangeness of my questioner's sanguine face. I replied in an evasive tone. He sat down before me without deigning to ask whether the chair was free, and asked the waiter for a tequila. In astonishment I watched him emptying his glass, seasoned with salt and lemon.

- Yankee? - he asked me.

- No, French.

- What're you doing here?

The brusqueness of the question made me forget the indiscretion it implied.

- Want some front-page news? - he suddenly broke out.

I am quite used by now to his abrupt questions. He spat them out quite effecti-

vely, getting on the nerves of an unguarded listener. Those who in due course have followed his trial must surely have noticed his dexterousness in muddling conversation themes.

My surprise was considerable when he said with his habitual suddenness:

- It was me who sabotaged the Early Bird!"

Please imagine the situation. In 1968, barely a month before the beginning of the Mexican Olympic Games, the satellite Early Bird burst against a mysterious spatial body. The event paralysed the world press. Radio and television connections between America and Europe were interrupted. It was necessary to use all possible means in order to provide the security methods that had already been used during the Tokyo Olympic Games in 1964: to have a commercial airline transport to Europe all the films shot in Mexico.

And ten years later a man approaches you in a smoke-filled café and declares: "I am responsible for the catastrophe!"

Would you have believed him, had you been in my place? No, of course not.

Emphatically not if the man started laughing malignantly, with fire in his eyes: "This is my birthday cake..."

You'd have taken him for a lunatic, a narcotic addict or a drunkard. I paid him another glass of tequila. He seemed to sober up a little after we had drunk together.

The incident was closed. From that day we met at the same café at noon, me with the morning's notes, him with his florid language, his country witticisms, his memories of folkloric curiosities. He never mentioned the satellite again.

I began feeling a kind of friendship for him. His sketches of Mexican life were so picturesque that I used them in my reports.

An only shadow: his sadness.

He talked so vehemently and swiftly that I hardly had a chance to open my mouth. I let him prattle away, content with watching the sparks in his eyes.

I soon realised that his volubility, his liveliness concealed an anguish which threatened to end in a state of paralysing melancholy.

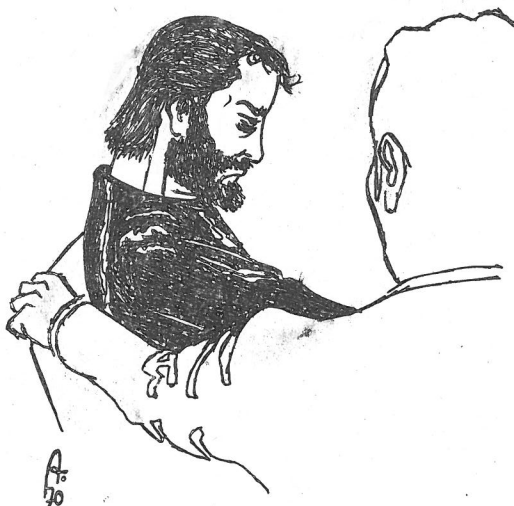
It was thus, in inarticulate fragments, that I learnt about the labyrinth of his past. He had been married. In 1968 he offered his wife Pamela the trip to Mexico: it had been like an enchantment.

Two years later, Pamela died from some unknown fever. The man lost his mind, collapsing into a moral chaos. His only obsession was going back to Mexico...to meet his wife there...

This conversation put him in a state of total abjection. I dared not prolong it, for he was invariably drunken and exhausted.

One day Auguste Lérat vanished from my life. I have not seen him again. Later on, all the newspapers wrote about him. The trial went on for several months.

Why did Auguste Lérat destroy the Lady Bird? You are surely wondering. But this is really a side issue. What bewilders me in the man is the reason prompting him to denounce himself to the press ten years after his feat.



Antar Pil had been a man of immense wealth, but his luck changed and soon he lost all his riches.

In his ruin, there remained to him only two things: the first was seven fierce bulldogs that had always been his faithful guardians during the prosperous half of his life; their ferocious aspect had prevented anyone from wanting to acquire them. The second was a manor in the Alps, attached to which was an old, dirty chambermaid whose name and age were unknown even to herself.

Nobody ever knew by what arts and means Pil succeeded in saving this place from his creditors' lust. The question is that he retired to it, accompanied by his faithful dogs and woman servant.

He lived in a big, damp house, lost in the thickness of the woods, a dark place where he shut himself with his memories of the past and his plans for the future. The memories, immaterial felonies of his defeat, subsisted, but the plans faded away with time, and a dreadful melancholy began taking hold of his mind. At first he tried to keep this melancholy at bay, sustaining endless monologues with the servant (and I say monologues because the latter was exasperatingly reticent). He talked about a thousand things, all the absurd things filling his narrow-minded brain. The old woman listened to him with a respectful attention, picking her nose and fascinated by her master's flow of stupid words.

But a distorted imagination always ends by engendering a last distortion, and abruptly one day Antar ceased speaking, adding his silence to that of the old servant.

Darker thoughts than his memories came to invade his brain. He was perpetually somber and short-tempered. He turned into himself, refused all contact with the external world and a muffled sound, as from vengeful sirens, permeated everything, from the whispering of the wind to the dull murmurs of the woods.

Thus, sunk in bitterness and melancholy, Antar Pil collapsed into a slow decay.

Looking at the trees towering all around him, he thought:

"Do not deceive yourself, Antar: your tomb is here. Grass and leaves will be your funereal stone and the wind will write your epitaph. Some hungry wolf, in his search of dead meat, will come to unearth your bones. Only wolves will know that you are here."

Then he called his seven bulldogs, embraced them and said, as if they could really understand him:

- You will watch over my tomb, won't you? You won't let them devour me. You will protect my body, you will die defending it, won't you, my faithful friends?

One day, when he was muttering these very words, his servant interrupted him and handed him a letter that had just been sent from the village.

He opened it out of curiosity, vaguely hoping for some possibility of relieving his economic problems. Like a greedy child, he read:



"Dear Sir: I'm looking for a lonely spot, far from all human curiosity, in which to put an end to my studies and experiments. I know your property is just what I need. Your house, surrounded by impenetrable woods, and your hostile attitude towards neighbours would guarantee the seclusion I require. Do not try to guess how I came to know about this. You would never understand it. Grant me the favour I am asking and although I have no money to offer you, I can assure you that your name would remain linked to mine for ever, as a reward for your gracious hospitality. Your servant in God, Sudhir Bhattacharya".

This letter, at first, left him confused and bewildered. Soon a kind of silent fury invaded him. He did not know how to smile, but his lips were arched in a strange grimace. For some minutes he stood tensely still, like someone waiting for the release of his emotions. The dogs moved uneasily about.

- Go away, go away!

One of the dogs started to run from him, with a mournful wail, hurt by Pil's boot; his master was screaming like a madman, tearing the letter into very small pieces with all the hatred he was capable of.

The event, however, changed nothing in Antar's daily routine, and before long he had forgotten all about it.

A cold autumn morning, three months later, he was pacing up and down his porch sunk in his gloomy thoughts when he saw a man walking through the clearing in the forest; his aspect was grotesque, short, with a big white turban around his head and he was laboriously carrying two big suitcases. When he reached the sunny side of the clearing, it became apparent that he was a Hindu.

He was sweating and out of breath when he walked up to Antar; dropping his suitcases, and bending deep in salutation, he said:

- Your servant in God, Sudhir Bhattacharya.

Antar was beyond speech. Blood rushed to his face, he was on the point of breaking into one of his violent fits, but the Hindu's glance stopped and frightened him. It was a hard glance, firm and sharp like a blade. Unconsciously, he looked at his dogs, waiting for their help, but his seven beasts were lying at some distance, like so many timid sheep, afraid to approach them.

His visitor had not moved. He observed everything with a polite smile, waiting for permission to enter the house. The old servant opened one of the ground storey windows and looked out. She showed no surprise on seeing the visitor, and then she came out to welcome him.

The Hindu, respectfully bowing his head, pointed to his suitcases:

- Madam...

The old woman looked up at her master, waiting for his orders. Antar lowered his head in mournful acceptance and walked away dragging his feet. Sudhir bowed his head once more and followed the servant upstairs, taking his suitcases along like a prisoner pulling his chains.

He came down at dinnertime. Antar had not waited for him. Grave, solemn, and visibly upset by the new turn of events, he was eating and did not look up. Sudhir tried to start a conversation, but Pil remained silent. He threw some rapid glances at his guest's turban, a garb making him especially nervous. He longed to make a scene, but dared not. The power emanated by the man's deep glance annulled his will.

When the sweets were served, the Hindu spoke again.

- I waited a long time for your reply, Mr. Pil. I'm sorry if I was mistaken, but I interpreted your silence as a reply in the affirmative. Tell me if it is not so and I shall go home after tonight's rest.

Antar Pil felt his hopes rise at this.

- Is that true?

- God is my witness, Mr. Pil.

Antar's eyes sparkled. He began thinking that his fears had been unfounded. Sudhir did not look so powerful any more. Antar thought that the Hindu's eyes did not seem so terrible now. Maybe the moment had come to destroy him...

Yes, destroy him! The word was like a balm to Antar's heart.

- God? What God?

- What God can it be, Mr. Pil? Yours, mine, everyone's, the only God.

- I'm afraid, - Antar murmured, - that your God is a different one, and that He does not favour you in any special way.

Sudhir smiled uncannily.

- Human stupidity, - he said, - is responsible for seeing God differently. I said human stupidity, Mr. Pil. But God cannot be contained in a name, in a shape. God cannot conform to a series of attributes calling him just, omniscient and powerful. Shape, name and attributes have been given Him by us, in order to try understanding him with our incipient intelligence. God is beyond all adornments. God is in you, in me, in life, in death, in what moves and in what lies, in the past and in the future. God has no shape, no name, no attributes. God is the indefinable.

After a short silence he added:

- Thus I see God when I transcend the material nebulae wrapping my brain and I penetrate the world of limpid knowledge.

Antar was fixing his companion, a dumb question in his eyes.

- This world, - Sudhir went on, - is here, inside our brain. Reaching it is difficult, but once we are there, the largest imaginable field opens before our intelligence. All our actions are born in the brain, and there all our desires can be fulfilled as if by magic. Did you ever hear about premonitions? I do not deny or defend them, but I can impart to you a theory that many consider mad and foolish and that I am on the point of demonstrating: most premonitions are, on their fulfilment, but facts originated and brought about by desire. What is a suggestion? An imperfect fulfilment of desires due to the partial activity of intelligence. Use the whole power of your brain and you will see suggestion is but a pitiful toy as helpless as a snowman under the sunrays.

Antar could grasp nothing at all, but he knew Sudhir was saying important things.

- This is the subject of your studies?

The Hindu nodded.

Pil was satisfied with the present course of events. His guest was talking, and talking in full confidence. This was just what he wanted, let him trust him! When that man suspected nothing he could kill him. It would be a partial vengeance on humanity, but it would be the beginning. Nobody would ever look for the intruder. The woods, his ferocious dogs...No trace would remain of that disgusting creature.

- You know what you want and how to get it, don't you, Mr. Bhattacharya?

Sudhir smiled uncannily again. He felt the temptation of saying to his host that it was silly of him to think him unguarded, but thought better of it and only said:

- Oh, no, Mr. Pil, don't judge me so superior. I do know what I want, but not how to get it. If I knew that years of work could have been saved. Only God, Mr. Pil, knows how to get things; we can only try, try unceasingly, and sometimes succeed.

The conversation closed here. After that night, Sudhir never came down to the dining-room again. He confined himself in his room, and the servant brought his meals up to him.

Antar, his plans disturbed by this incommunication, went to the old woman in search of information, questioning her for hours on end. But all she could say was that there were many books scattered about in the room, that the Hindu seemed to be reading them without interruption, and that she did not know what books they were.

Antar decided to find out by himself and began watching Sudhir's room as if he were a shadow.

He listened for the smallest noise. He looked under the door to have a glimpse of any moving shadow, and kept watch under the Hindu's window. Even the keyhole did not escape his attention. He did all this with the utmost precaution, moving about in total darkness, barefoot, avoiding the spots on the floor where the wood was liable to creak and turning the doorknobs with a handkerchief to make the least possible noise. His conduct would have provoked laughter in even the gravest of men.

By these procedures he believed the Hindu would never become aware of the vigilance to which he was submitted. But he was mistaken.

One day, after dinner, Sudhir came down to the dining-room. He looked young and satisfied.

- I have good news for you, Mr. Pil. Tonight I shall finish my experiment. I shall soon take leave of you, and then each of us will go his way and you will attain immortality as I promised you in my letter.

- Then you have succeeded in your quest? - Antar asked him.

- I have. And I have deemed it my duty to tell you, so that my joy can also be yours.

And, bowing his head and not waiting for a reply, he turned to go. Already on the threshold he stopped and said:

- "Curiosity shortens life". It is a Hindu proverb. Remember it, Mr. Pil.

And he left.

Silence reigned once more. Night deepened slowly. A clock struck three. The moon was moving towards the west, looking at the earth. From the forest came the occasional cry of a nocturnal bird. And suddenly, in the deep silence, a blood-curdling mew was heard.

Antar jumped out of his bed in his pajamas. Another mew sounded, stronger than the first, lacerating his ears. For a moment he was afraid of going mad. He rushed out of his room and ran downstairs. In the last landing he found the servant, also in her night attire, breathing deeply and uttering small cries.

Outside the dogs were barking furiously and biting at the chains fettering them. Antar walked towards them to set them free, and then the old woman grasped his arm and pointed at a window in the upper storey. It was the Hindu's window. Behind the curtains they could see the shadow of an enormous cat, mewing pitifully this time.

Antar released the dogs with trembling hands. The seven beasts stormed into the house, running upstairs and against the door to the Hindu's room.

Antar and the old woman followed them.

The dogs' powerful paws were beginning to splinter the wooden door, which was already bending. The mewing had stopped and Antar tried to calm them down.

- Stop! Go away! Radón, Trefén, here!

But it was not necessary. The door opened slowly and the dogs retreated, their furious barking reduced to submissive wails. Sudhir Bhattacharya appeared on the threshold, saying in a subdued voice:

- Your animals are very noisy, Mr. Pil.

- Excuse me. They were upset by the mewing of a cat. Haven't you heard it?

- Mewing? I only heard your dogs barking.

- However, we have heard...

The old woman was hiding behind Pil's bulk, refusing to be known as a witness.

- Barking it was, Mr. Pil, just barking.

And he closed the door with a smile.

From that night on Antar kept the dogs in his room. Their nearness comforted him, helping him to sleep.

Sudhir did not leave as he had announced and remained shut in his room, busy with his mysterious studies.

But the mewling was not repeated. The old woman, however, having inexplicably regained her usual calm, pretended that every night an enormous cat walked about in the Hindu's room, and went as far as to say that she had heard him mew again, only in much lower tones. Antar, meanwhile, said nothing and searched in his mind for a way out of that nightmare.

One day, at night, he thought the occasion had come. He was getting ready for sleep when he heard some footsteps in the corridor. He listened and recognised them as Sudhir's footsteps. He lost no time. He ordered the dogs to be quiet and ran to the Hindu's room, feeling suicidally brave. He pushed the door open, all was silent. The room was empty and he could see nothing out of the ordinary. It was full of books, MSS some of them, and all were worn out and old. They were written in strange characters that he could not understand. He looked for a clue browsing through the titles, but it was no use. Suddenly, a noise outside startled him. He looked at the clock and saw that only two minutes had elapsed. This reassured him, but he decided to leave the room. The corridor was empty and quiet. He sighed and walked out, noiselessly.

And then, from the shadows, he heard Sudhir's voice saying menacingly:

- "Curiosity shortens life". Do you remember, Mr. Pil?

Antar turned round. The Hindu's small eyes shone sinisterly in the darkness. It was no longer a dominating glance, it was a malignant one he had not seen before. Fear overwhelmed him and he ran madly along the corridor, stumbling before his room's door against an old armoury which fell with a rattling noise. He opened his bedroom's door and threw himself on his bed.

The dogs were there, staring at him. Seven pairs of eyes were fixing him with the same malignant expression he had just noticed in Sudhir's eyes. Provoked by sheer terror, a wave of unquenchable power surged in his heart, similar to the fury of the storm breaking against the embankment of the wharf.

He stood up and tried to be calm before the animals: they were his last hope. But his legs gave way under him. An irresistible force made him lie on the floor. Before him, wild, ready to jump, were the seven bulldogs. He looked at them and uttered a horrible and blood-curdling mew.

... ..

The following morning Sudhir went down to the dining-room for breakfast. Hunched in a corner, her eyes wide-open, was the old servant. Around her slept the seven bulldogs.

- The master...the master... - she whispered.

Sudhir looked at her tenderly and bent down to caress the dogs.

A strange effluvium, all calm and serenity, inundated the room with its warm presence.

A long time passed. At last the Hindu straightened himself up and took the woman's hands.

- May you be blessed, - he said, helping her to get up, - because you come now to be the servant of this servant of God.

Then he sat down at the table and asked her to serve him and the dogs.

And the old servant entered the service of the Hindu Sudhir Bhattacharya.

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LETTER FROM ENGLAND

by ROGER WADDINGTON

At this time of year, the thoughts of fans all over Britain are turning towards their annual holiday when, whatever they may do the rest of the year, they can meet all the friends that they've been writing to, their favourite writers (who, close up, are quite ordinary); and in short, enjoy themselves at the annual SF Convention. I see Spain has had her first glimpse of the delights such a gathering can provide; and I'll be doing the same when I go this year; for this will be my first time as well. Our convention, organised by the BSFA, is held at different places throughout the country; in other years it's been at Birmingham and Oxford, and other places noted for a strong local concentration of fans (which is not such a chance thing as it sounds, because bids are made by each group of fans to hold the Convention where they live...); and this year it will be in London. As of yet, the programme 's a secret; but it's rumoured that the Pink Floyd will be on hand to provide music, an exhibition of SF art will be held at the same time, and among the speakers will be Harvey Matusow, a gentleman connected with the Society for the Abolition of the Computer...Though now these marvellous machines are so firmly established in our society, it's difficult to see how this could be done! Still, I suppose if it really happened, we could go back to candlelight and horse-drawn carriages in the streets...

One person that I'd like to see at the Convention would be Brian Aldiss, since I've lately been wondering whether he has been moving away from the SF field altogether. As a writer, he was closely associated with New Worlds under the editorship of John Carnell and he provided some of the best features when it became known as the chief voice of the new, speculative fiction. You could be unkind and say that in changing with the times, he's tried to keep his market; but I believe that not only changing with the times, he's actually been changing them. And perhaps is one of the prime movers behind the change in rejection of SF as juvenile dreams to the present acceptance as the literature of tomorrow...All of which is leading up to the fact that his latest book, *THE HAND-REARED BOY*, has no spaceships or speculative images to placate his fans; instead, it's the story of the sexual awakening of a teenage boy. The first part of a trilogy that takes his hero from childhood into the Army and beyond, it may well mark the emergence of Brian Aldiss as one of the major authors in our literature. A point maybe added to by a book of his coming out this spring, called *THE SHAPE OF FURTHER THINGS*, a volume of autobiography. And the period covered is just one month, spent at his home; but filled with the talk of friends, his meditations on present living; and wise and good things that lead you to read the book over and over again, it being such good company.

Star Trek has left our TV screens, the first series having ended. (Though there is some doubt whether this series was the same as the American first series, the BBC seeming to have mixed them in a barrel and drawn out the first one that came to hand each week...) Now we SF enthusiasts are only left with the juvenile antics of Dr. Who. Being a white-haired old gentleman who with his time machine set forth on adventures through Time and Space; but his new series, since the "Time Lords" banished him to Earth, has him strictly in adventures in this present century. He's just saved the world from being taken over by human replicas from Outer Space; and as I write, reptile men have just woken up from a million-year sleep and have found the Earth they once owned taken over by the race of little humans...But have no fear: with the help of the good doctor, humanity will win through! I only hope that

the second series of Star Trek the BBC promised us will come as soon as possible...

How do you see your childhood? It may be as the unhappiest time of your life, or as a picture of sweetness and light; but whatever it was, it's almost certain that you had all those things that made your life that little bit happier, all those toys, and sweets and comics...And maybe rationed out by loving parents to help in your growth...But in America, manufacturers have given up selling their products to the parents and are going all out to sell them to the children themselves. A lot of people have expressed disquiet at this exploitation; and now an SF writer has made an investigation into the whole business and has come up with a book that makes very shocking reading. Called THE ASSAULT ON CHILDHOOD, it was first published in America, but now has a Gollancz edition with a special foreword in which it's related to affairs in Britain. We may not have gone so far yet; but I'd say it was required reading for every parent.

And going off the subject a bit, I was reading through the latest Faber book catalogue and saw in the children's books section a title by Harrison (Harry), called SPACESHIP MEDIC. It's quite an exciting story, and would make a nice gift for any space-minded child; but that's not the point. Which is that this same story was featured in a recent issue of an outwardly adult magazine, Venture SF; and which would seem to say that we're not as grown up and SF is not as advanced as we thought it was. And thank goodness for New Worlds, the only magazine that treats us like adults!

BOOK MARKET

Faithful to our policy of continually trying to improve, we are starting this new section in AD INFINITUM. Here you may advertise for sale the discarded copies of your books, or ask for any book you wish to obtain in exchange. The usefulness of this section is obvious: a greater contact among fans and members, an increased possibility of unearthing rare volumes...We are sure we shall see many surprising titles on this page. Dr. Rafael Llopis, well known for his magnificent anthologies, sends us the first list of books available for exchange as well as another of the books he wishes to acquire. We shall be waiting for your lists.

AVAILABLE BOOKS

| | | | | |
|-----------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------|----|-------|
| J.B.CABELL: | <u>JURGEN</u> | (Penguin Books, 1946)..... | 25 | ptas. |
| A. MERRITT: | <u>THE MOON POOL</u> | (Collier Books, 1961)..... | 50 | " |
| HARLAN ELLISON: | <u>EARTHMAN, GO HOME!</u> | (Paperback Library, 1964)..... | 50 | " |
| K. ROBESON: | <u>LA TIERRA DEL TERROR</u> | (Doc Savage nº 2; Molino 1936)..... | 15 | " |
| " | <u>ASESINOS EN ACCION</u> | (" " nº 3; " ")..... | 15 | " |
| " | <u>EL TESORO DEL POLO</u> | (" " nº 4; " ")..... | 15 | " |
| " | <u>LOS PIRATAS DEL PACIFICO</u> | " nº 5; " ")..... | 15 | " |
| " | <u>LA COMARCA DEL DIABLO</u> | " " n" 361; " 1952)..... | 15 | " |

BOOKS WANTED: BRAM STOKER: THE MYSTERY OF THE SEA; AUGUST DERLETH: SOMEONE IN THE DARK; CLARK ASHTON SMITH: LOST WORLDS; CLARK ASHTON SMITH: OUT OF SPACE AND TIME; FRANK BELKNAP LONG: HOUNDS OF TINDALOS; AUGUST DERLETH (editor): STRANGE PORTS OF CALL; ABRAHAM MERRITT: CREEP, SHADOW, CREEP; AUGUST DERLETH (editor): MR.GEORGE AND OTHER ODD PERSONS; LEO MARGULIES (editor): WEIRD TALES (Pyramid B.)

BOOK REVIEWS

"CAHIERS DE L'HERNE"

by Rafael Llopis

In November 1969 a special issue of the magazine CAHIERS DE L'HERNE has been published in Paris, under the direction of François Truchaud, wholly dedicated to H.P.Lovecraft.

In the index appear, together with some translations from the English (Derleth, R.E.Howard, Kuttner, J.Vernon Shea, R.Bloch and J.Ramsey Campbell among others) and several French works (P.Versine, G.Klein, Th. Owen, Jacques Van Herp, F.Kienzle, etc.), as well as an ample graphic section, several as yet unpublished letters, essays, stories and poems by Lovecraft in French and also in Spanish. As an interesting novelty we must mention a version of Lovecraft's "The nameless city" in comic form, due to Philippe Druillet's pen, to whom we also owe the Lovecraft-like illustration on the cover of the 183 issue (March 1969) of the magazine FICTION.

The contents of this issue of CAHIERS DE L'HERNE are, then, very extensive, though of varying quality; but it is nonetheless quite interesting for Lovecraft fans. An important drawback: the price, 54 francs (some 675 ptas.)

In case some readers want to acquire it directly from the editors, this is their address: EDITIONS DE L'HERNE - Diffusion Minard - 73, rue du Cardinal Le moine - Paris 5e. It will always be cheaper than through a bookshop.

"THE THIRD OPPORTUNITY"

R.A.Lafferty - Rumeu Editor

by Angel Rodríguez Metón

The choice of Thomas Moro (the creator of the Utopia) by the governors of Astrobe as the unstable and discordant element in the ancient terrestrial colony which has surpassed the mother planet in importance, is humanity's last attempt to escape the phantom threatening to destroy her: boredom. THE THIRD OPPORTUNITY is a strange interesting book, containing some notable introductions...and also some excessively frequent errors in the story's development. The end is just right and moving. It is, in short, one of those books deserving a commentary, either to praise or to point out its faults, but whatever the case, it will not disappoint the reader. Then you range it on any bookshelf, vaguely determined to read it again sometime.

RECORDS IN-A-GADDA-DA-VIDA - Iron Butterfly - Atlantic Hat (421-35)

A new dimension in sound has been created by the American musical group IRON BUTTERFLY. In this long-play record they play a mixture of soul, Oriental and religious music, with passages of the purest African floklöre melodies.

This is probably what music will mostly be in the near future: a fusion of the ancestral with the classical; its success in world hit-parades has been considerable.

COMICS

BY PEDRO TABERNEIRO

Shortly after the appearance of "The paper heroes", another book by Luis Gasca has been published: COMICS IN SPAIN, this time edited by Lumen, and following, like Táber, the standard set by J.J.Pauvert: big size, plentiful illustrations and exorbitant price: 1000 ptas. This is the outcome of the March Literature Fund conceded to the author in 1966. We must confess that, unlike "The paper heroes", with which we felt disappointed (and, therefore, robbed) this last book by Gasca confirms us again in our opinion that he is becoming our official theoretician of the comic, and not in a pejorative sense.

Because this is an important as well as an irreplaceable book in the library of any professional or fan. The history, "more anecdotal than exhaustive" in the author's own words, of the Spanish comic, from the "proto-fumetti" - the idealist bourgeois comic as defined by Moix - to the autochthon attempts of today, from the Xaudaró of GENTE MENUUDA to the Sió of LINUS. It covers the relation of the Spanish comics to their artists and plot writers, their editors, the influences from the foreign comic, - mostly North-American, of course - and much else. Gasca's fundamental documents will save us many exertions from now on. It is not, however, an exhaustive work, leaving some blank spaces which shall have to be filled. For instance, Gasca has chosen to ignore the republican comic almost wholly; he mentions and reproduces as an anecdote a cover of "El Pionero" and that other one from "L'Esquetlla de la Torratxa" with Hitler and Musolini "a les banyes de la Lluna" ("on the Moon's horns"), and nothing else, apart from the news of production collectivism in Catalonia and the editorial repression in the post-war years; the chapter devoted to the children's press during the Movement lacks that of the Second Republic. ¿What happened to the "El Mono Azul", "La Ametralladora", etc.?

The illustrations are, in my opinion, generally good. Perhaps some important items have been overlooked whose place was in this book: the most representative drawings to each character should have been chosen - and have been, in fact, in most cases - and the evolution of the different artists should have been emphasized reproducing vignettes from different years. This point is particularly patent in the case of the artist Gago: he may or may not be a good artist, it depends on the aesthetic preferences of the reader, but there is no doubt that he occupies a prominent place in the history of the Spanish comic; evidently Gasca thinks otherwise, since he ignores him almost completely, mentioning only "El guerrero del antifaz" ("The masked warrior") with an only vignette and reproducing one cover from "El Capitán España" (Captain Spain). To my mind, the best Gago's drawings are in the first issues of "El guerrero" and in the "La Batalla de las Termópilas", published in "Flechas y Pelayos" in 1944; Gasca forgets both, his drawings and his appearance in the phalangist publication.

But...Luis Gasca has written an arid book, as is natural in a historic survey. He lacks the sociological view, the element humanizing his subject. The only sociological points of view are taken from Moix, referring to the II Bruguera epoch. Gasca generalizes too much: in all his publications about comics - with the exception of "Cuto" - he systematically evades a profound analysis of the social implications, doing it superficially, perfunctorily. For this reason I said at the beginning that Gasca is the official theoretician, the erudite, the searcher, and it is useless to rely on his critical point of view, for either he has none, or he refuses to use it.

Do not be put off by an atrocious cover on show in the bookshop windows, an offending cover bearing the title: COMICS IN SPAIN. The important thing is hidden inside, even though, once more, there is no "warmth" about it.

With this book, with the foregoing ones by Gasca, with the "Apuntes para una historia de los tebeos" (Notes for a history of the comic) by A. Martín, with the brochure from Lara and "The Comics" by Moix we have a considerable basis of generalizations. We invite from these pages all Spanish comic experts to work from now on with a certain depth, so that comics can reach the category, given to them by Luis Gasca, of the "ninth art".

José Ignacio Fontes

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THE MOLINS DE REY CHRONICLE

by

Jaime Palaña

For a long time we had been asking ourselves the following question: ¿do SF fans really exist in Molins de Rey and the Llobregat area?

Now we know the answer, which is, to our dismay, negative. We are afraid they do not exist, and if they do, they must be "lonely wolves", hidden away in their dens, making the task of tracing them very difficult.

Shall we conclude, then, that the situation is hopeless? We think not, since this absence of SF fans is simply due to the fact that SF is practically unknown in our area, at least in its positive form.

We have actually met, the fact procuring us a pleasant surprise, several young men genuinely interested in SF, desirous of acquiring more knowledge about it; from their questions we could guess that the general idea about SF here confines itself to a parade of Martian and other intergalactic creatures, all coming in their glossy UFO's to start a planetary war against the earth.

They need, then, somebody who explains things to them, who points out their errors and helps them find the right approach. This is exactly what we set out to do, using our fanzine HOMO SAPIENS as a means to do it.

HOMO SAPIENS will be the launching platform from where they will start their long and pleasurable voyage into higher SF spheres.

We have, therefore, decided that HOMO SAPIENS must contain some short stories of a "classical" cut, not too difficult, so that they can become interested, together with other "new-wave" stories which will acquaint them with the new tendencies in the field.

We sincerely hope that in a relatively short time Molins de Rey and the Llobregat area will count with many new SF fans.

JAIME PALAÑA is, as you all know, our Coordinator in Molins de Rey. Together with some no less enthusiastical friends of his, he edits a fanzine HOMO SAPIENS, which will be distributed free among our members at the same time as AD INFINITUM next week. Jaime is doing a good job, and we hope his example will be imitated by fans in all our other cities, so that the CIA can be spread all over our geography.

correspondence



BY

PILAR GIRALT

As you see, this time we really mean making up for lost time, and giving you practically no leisure in which to read AD INFINITUM 12, here is AI 13, which this year, even for superstitious CLA friends, is beginning under a lucky omen! I hope you will agree that we should start with our members' letters, and I can assure you I have been at a loss as to which I should select, since they have come in heaps and they were all interesting. Don't expect of me, then, any kind of order, and let variety take the upper hand.

FERNANDO DIEZ PALACIOS, from Zaragoza, sends his first contribution to our fanzine, in the shape of several ministories "black-humoured to paroxysm"! in the author's own words. Fernando is a cartoonist and is currently working at a comic series satirizing the Marvel Comics Group. It sounds very interesting.

JOSE IGNACIO FONTES has sent five comic pages. The first two will appear in this issue if no last-hour changes occur, an unlikely thing, but one must always have an alibi, if one doesn't want to be eventually labelled as inexact! They are about a new hero's adventures, his name is FANTASY, and he has a striking personality. I am positive you will enjoy them all.

PERE SOLER, a Barcelona friend, writes: "Once this CLA venture is launched, nobody with a real SF urge can possibly stay outside!" Well said, and he has sent a good story to prove they are no idle words.

DOMINGO TORRAS is another Barcelona member who is now living in Paris for a while. From the French capital he has sent us an interesting issue of HORIZONS DU FANTASTIQUE, together with other magazines. He promises to visit us when he comes back.

SILVESTRE TORRECILLAS, from Cartagena, has read about us in the magazine ALGO, and writes to ask for further information about the CLA.

EDUARDO MILLER, from Jerez de la Frontera, whose short stories you have read in our last issues, sends us another one and promises to keep on writing in spite of being chronically short of time. We have not yet succeeded in drinking up all the wine he sent us for the HispaCon '69, but we never fail to drink to his health whenever we get together!

GREGORIO MARTINEZ, from Burgos, writes the following: "I like having difficult aims, and fighting for them...When our Circle gets over all the difficulties, I will of course stand by it as faithfully as I do now, but it will have lost an incentive to me, the urge to fight for it. I'm pretty certain, though, that such a day will never come, because there will always be some goal to be attained, some things to be improved on, some obstacle to be saved." Shake hands, Gregorio!

JUAN JOSE CAGIGAL, from Reus, a new member, sends a story: "THE DELUGE", which is already being read by our selection committee. Good luck!

RAMON BERNABEU is another member whose membership card is brand-new. Either I am a bad judge, or we can expect great things from him...time will tell us, but in the meantime we warmly welcome Ramón into this den of non-repentant dreamers. I can't transcribe his letter for you because he has written in a Venusian language, and they tell me at E.D.H.A.S.A. (Nacha) no such a dictionary has been published as yet. A pity!

FRANZ ROTTENSTEINER writes to thank me for the article about Spanish fandom which I recently sent to him and which he'll shortly publish in his fanzine QUARBER MERKUR 21; he adds that it will probably also appear in an Australian fanzine, edited by a friend of his in that far-off island. He writes also that there is an article in Q.M. 20 on the well-known Polish SF writer, Stanislaw Lem, who is as yet practically unknown in Spain, so he asks me to translate this article into Spanish and English for AD INFINITUM, so that we may all get to know him. Franz is Lem's agent, and would like to contact Spanish editorial firms for an eventual publication of his works.

NED BROOKS, our American friend, writes: "It doesn't seem fair to be getting all those beautiful issues of your fanzine in exchange for my sporadic COLLECTOR'S BULLETIN...Can I become a CLA member?" I don't have to tell you what my answer has been...He also writes: "The level of your fiction is really remarkable. Your EXPERIMENT is good, as well as Steinseifer's RENUNCIATION. And I hope you sent a copy of issue n° 9 to Mark Owings, who is making a catalogue of everything written on the Necronomicon and will probably be interested in reading Sánchez's THE WALL."

HORST CHRISTIANI, editor of the justly praised Berlin ANABIS: "Excuse me for not remembering Hemingway's "For whom the bell tolls" from which I should have known that Pilar is a woman's name." I hope everybody knows it by now...He regrets that he could not come to the HispaCon '69, and hopes to meet us all in Heidelberg. He sends his best wishes to all Spanish fans.

JOHN-HENRI HOLMBERG, one of the three editors of the Swedish fanzine FORUM INTERNATIONAL, sends us a copy and a volume of SF poetry by Kjell Borgström, one of my correspondents. The poems are written in Swedish, they are very good, and I'm translating some of them for AD INFINITUM. You will soon read them and agree with me that they lend a very lyrical taste to some of the best SF themes.

JEAN-CLAUDE DE REPPER, an excellent French author, thanks us for the issues of AI, praises our efforts and promises to speak about us during the next SF convention to be held shortly at Rouen. With real French courtesy he sends four stories of his for AI, two of them as yet unpublished. We want to publicly thank him for them.

I'm afraid this month I'll be the target of my redaction friends' most justified attacks for taking up more space than I was entitled to, but...who is going to prevent me from publishing the list of new members?...No one, of course. Here it is:

LUIS ALFONSO NOGUERA -- ALEJANDRO NOGUERA -- FRANÇOISE NAHON -- DANIEL RIERA-MARSA
RICARDO SANS -- JOSE VICTOR SANCHEZ -- RICARDO SALA -- RICARDO JAUME SACHSEL --
RAMON OLIVERES PAL -- EDUARDO VINAMATA CAMP -- CARLOS BARÓ. All from Barcelona.

CONCEPCION SALES DE LA MAZA -- LUIS GONZALEZ LAZARO -- DANIEL J. YBORRA QUESADA --
LUIS SICRE CANUT -- FERNANDO GUTIERREZ DE VERA -- MARISA VILLANUEVA DE GUTIERREZ --
CRISTOBAL MATEOS IGUACEL. All from Madrid.

CARMELO HERNANDEZ -- MANUEL MONEDERO GOMEZ -- JUAN ANTONIO RUIZ GARCIA. From Sevilla.

JOSE ANTONIO SANTOS GARCIA, from Pontevedra.

MARIA DOLORES DE LA PUENTE CAMPANO, from Santander.

JUAN MUÑOZ MUÑOZ, from Cabra (Córdoba).

ELSIE AUDREY WALTON, from Coventry, Warks. England.

MANUEL LOPEZ TOBAJAS, from Zaragoza. MAXIMO SIERRA MORENO, from La Coruña.

FRANCISCO GARCIA HERNANDEZ, from Lérida. MIGUEL ANGEL FERNANDEZ URARTE, from Bilbao.

PEDRO RODRIGUEZ LAPUERTA, from Oviedo. RONALD HAHN, from Porz-Wahn, Germany.

RAMON BERNABEU PINA, from Orihuela (Alicante).

INTERNATIONAL FANDOM

BY

PILAR GIRALT

I got a letter from WALDEMAR KUMMING, the editor of MRU, which besides being very amusing contains some very important information which I feel I must pass on to you. So this month we are going to be really frivolous and dedicate this column to the history of a wine, a history that cannot fail to interest even the most abstemious of AD INFINITUM readers, since it is to a 250% anSF wine. You'll remember that in AI 10 I named several of the surprises awaiting us in Heidelberg next August, one of them being the sale at a boutique of the VURGUZZ wine. Well, now you are going to learn the meaning of this funny name. But let us our friend Waldemar have the floor:

"In page 37 of AI 10 the wine VURGUZZ is mentioned. I am in a position to give you the most accurate information as to its origins.

The name VURGUZZ was invented by me in one of the first issues of MRU in 1959. What I really wanted was to tell some SF jokes (which I had translated from GALAXY). To add a little more salt I explained in a marginal note that they had been told in the BAR OF THE TWO AND A HALF PLANETS. Logically enough, people had to be drinking strange and exotic things, and this is why I invented the VURGUZZ. Both the bar and the VURGUZZ pleased other fans who write stories for MRU, and they mentioned them in many of the stories. Thus, in time, a whole mythology was created around the VURGUZZ.

A passionate MRU reader was Franz Ettl, from Unterwössen, a small community by the München-Salzburg highway, but well-known in the history of German fandom for in it, and in the neighbouring Marquartstein, Ettl had organised a series of successful SF conventions. He is a dentist by profession, a fact qualifying him to belong to one of the most exclusive clubs in the world: the VuZ (Verband ungeheuerlicher Zahnärzte = Association of Monster Dentists) which has only three members (all of them dentists, of course): himself, Thea Auler (member of the Heicon Committee) and a Japanese whose name I ignore. In short, Franz Ettl was so entranced with the VURGUZZ (perhaps owing to its likeness to VuZ) that he knew no repose until he succeeded in blending a similar mixture. From 1961 his mixture is being elaborated and sold by a distillery in the neighbourhood of Unterwössen. I can vouch for its strength and its rapid effects.

And now about the mythology. Written on the labels of the VURGUZZ bottles (I'm sorry I have no empty one around here to send to you) is: 250%. It refers to the alcoholic contents of the genuine VURGUZZ; only a succedaneous can be sold on the Earth, since the authentic VURGUZZ would instantly destroy the weak terrestrial throats. This high alcoholic percentage is only possible in outer space, where it can be found in great quantities. The VURGUZZ is elaborated in the planet MONSTROS (capital HORROPOLIS). This is why the bottles sold to the Earth contain the quantity of a monstrosian GLURK (about 0,7 litres). By its nature, the VURGUZZ is also indicated as rocket fuel. Many a spaceship crew has been doomed to stay at some inhospitable planet owing to their having consumed too much of the fuel, leaving practically nothing for the take-off. Transporting great quantities of VURGUZZ is only possible in the so-called "Scheer cask" which, instead of possessing just one bottom like the normal ones, possesses three bottoms. The additional two are a must if you want to avoid leaking in outer space. The name "Scheer" goes up to an homonymous German SF writer, but also to a word in the Bavarian dialect meaning the na-

tural wit of an ignorant peasant to deceive his fellows.

The VURGUZZ is the only drink in the world after which all creatures endowed with just a pair of eyes can see double and even triple, even though this seems physically impossible. In all likelihood this effect is produced by the alcohol from the outer space.

In the authentic VURGUZZ a small KRAAHK is included, for only thus can the real taste be achieved. A KRAAHK is a monster invented by the SF author Jesco von Puttkamer, in one of his novels (meanwhile he has emigrated to America, where he works in the NASA).

The VURGUZZ is, as far as I know, the only SF drink being currently elaborated. The mysterious water from the San Fantony well, which in the admission ceremony into that Order is given to all candidates to drink, has really been VURGUZZ in many an occasion - an understandable enough fact if you bear in mind that Franz Ettl and myself are Knights of San Fantony.

The exact composition of the VURGUZZ is a secret. But because in the bottle labels the name is written thus:

250%
VURGUZZ

it is often affirmed that it is extracted from the root of the VURGUZZ plant, although this theory has never been proved."

.....

JOHN-HENRI HOLMBERG sends SCIENCE FICTION FORUM, the official organ of the Scandinavian SF Association. It is written in Swedish, has an excellent literary quality (if I can be a judge after two years of intensively studying this language) and offers us an interesting perspective of the Swedish fandom today. The three editors of the fanzine are: John-Henri Holmberg, Mats Linder and Bertil Mårtensson. By the way, our friend Kjell Borgström, secretary of the Association, has asked me in the name of the Board if I want to be their agent in Spain, my task mainly consisting in the sending of an article on Spanish fandom now and then.

Now I have to ask all of you to help me; I happen to have but two tentacles, and one of them is embarrassingly clumsy! Send me for our friends abroad your opinion on our fandom, and as many interesting news as you can get, so that we can help them to know us and become our friends. You'll remember, won't you? Here I am waiting for your articles, while I exercise the muscles of my tentacles in other no less important jobs. Thank you!

AD INFINITUM has its own agent in Germany! He is a member of the C.L.A. and his name is RONALD HAHN. He will sell our fanzine at DM 1,50 per copy, and whoever pays for a year's subscription will automatically become a C.L.A. member. Ronald has written 80 SF stories and a novel, and collaborates in almost every German fanzine. Welcome, Ronald, into the C.L.A. and AD INFINITUM!

Incidentally, Ronald is 21, married and with a little daughter. You will know soon what he looks like, for I intend to publish shortly a page with the photographs of all my foreign correspondents. I'm curious to know how much of a mutant they all are.

.....

THE TRAILTOR GAZETTE

You will observe that Ramón Cerdón's name is no longer heading this column. For professional reasons he is now living in Madrid. You all know how we feel about him, so we shall only say that we are going to miss him a lot, after all the good times we had together. We wish him and M^a Angeles plenty of happiness in their new home, and hope he will not forget his Barcelona friends, collaborating with us in his Gazette. Because, to us, it will always be Ramón's Gazette.

.. ..

NUEVA DIMENSION 12 is already out. Is it not superfluous to add more praise to this magnificent magazine? It is one of the best in the SF field, and its interest never wavers.

.. ..

You surely remember that Baudilio Salat and Alberto Español are taking care of our budget, and that we asked you to collaborate with them in their task of making our ends meet... You have received a letter from them with the list of CLA activities in the new year and hinting at the convenience of paying your CLA membership dues punctually. We need your collaboration to keep things going.

.. ..

OCTAVA FUNDACION, a special issue, is out. It is really special in its collaborations and its drawings. Go ahead, Jaime. Don't let your enthusiasm and sense of humour flicker out. And thanks for supporting SF with such gallantry. Eight issues in one year is not bad, in Spain at least, where only AD INFINITUM has kept ahead of you, with twelve issues, one for each month.

.. ..

We are furnishing our new club local at Valencia street. We shall shortly give you the date of what will undoubtedly be an unforgettable housewarming!

.. ..

Editors! We are ready for your SF books now, the CLA bookshelves are waiting for them. We shall pay you a personal visit one of these days.

.. ..

The rumour is out, and it will soon be a reality, that the CLA is editing a newszine in Madrid. Its name? LASER.

.. ..

It seems BANG! is already on its way. Let us hope that Antonio Martín's good Star (Estrella is his wife's name) helps him achieve all his ambitious plans.

.. ..

And now a notice to our artists. An old CLA's project is on the point of being put into practice. We speak about the first National Exhibition of SF drawings. We shall meet and talk about it, but we want to announce it now so that you can begin thinking about a subject and preparing all your "magic tools", for it will be a unique occasion for Spanish artists to demonstrate the perfection of their art.

.. ..

Foreign artists will soon be asked to enter a friendly competition which the CLA is also organising. We have a prize ready for the winner of the CLA award to the best cover. All entries will be exhibited at our club's premises and published in AD INFINITUM. So all our members and friends will be able to submit their vote. You can begin sending your drawings now!

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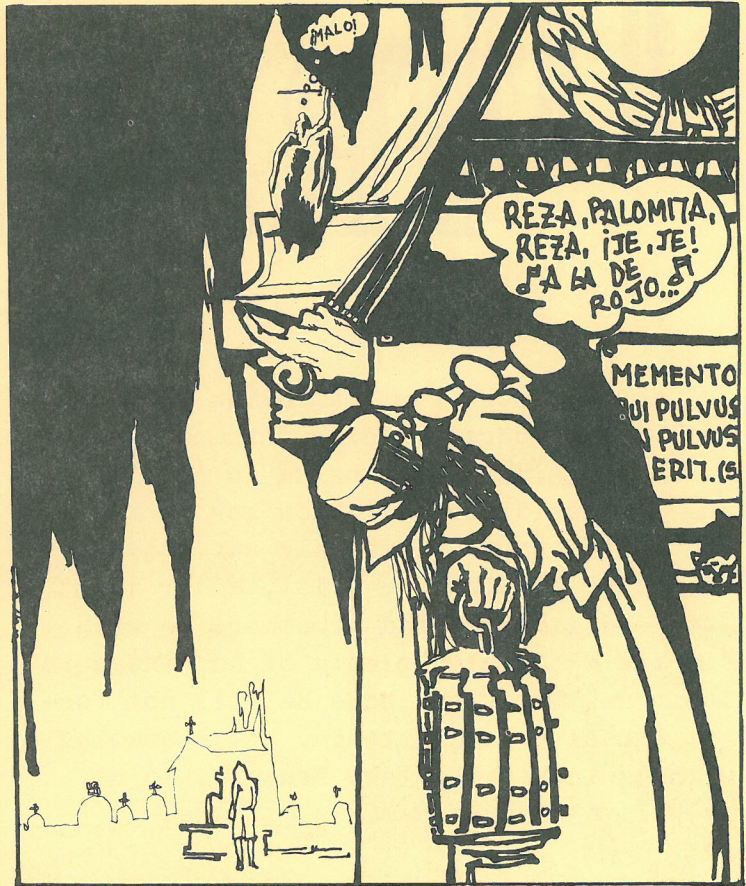
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Fantasy

era una noche oscura...



...y tempestuosos...



¡MALO!

REZA, PALOMITA,
REZA, ¡JE, JE!
¡LA LA DE
ROJO...

MEMENTO
QUI PULVUS
IN PULVUS
ERIT. (S)



¡ESTA ES LA
MÍA!

NI TOPOLINO ME
LA ESTROPEA.

CLAP-TOCOTOC-CLAP-CLAP

J. J. Torres
69



¡AY!

¡CRAC!

¡JE,
JE!

EN LA CASA DE LOS SEPULTUREROS...



PAPI, HE OÍDO UN RUIDO
AHÍ FUERA.

QUE SÍ,
PAPI.

NO, HIJO. LOS MUERTOS HACEN
COMPAÑÍA, PERO NO HABLAN.

ES LO MA-
LO.

¡ABUELI!



MIRE A VER QUÉ PASA
FUERA.

CLA
MIRIN
Kafka



EL QUE TENGA UN AMOR...



¿se saldrá de ~malvado~ con la SUYA?



¿QUÉN ANDA ANÍ?

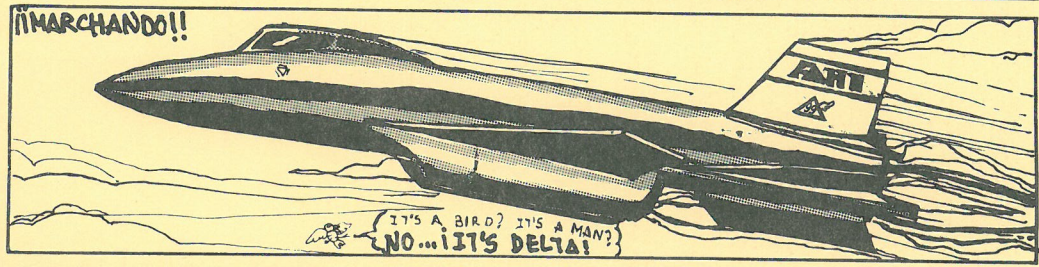
¡RÁPIDO! ¡LA SEÑAL!



EN EL A.H.I. [Asociación Héroes Internacionales]...

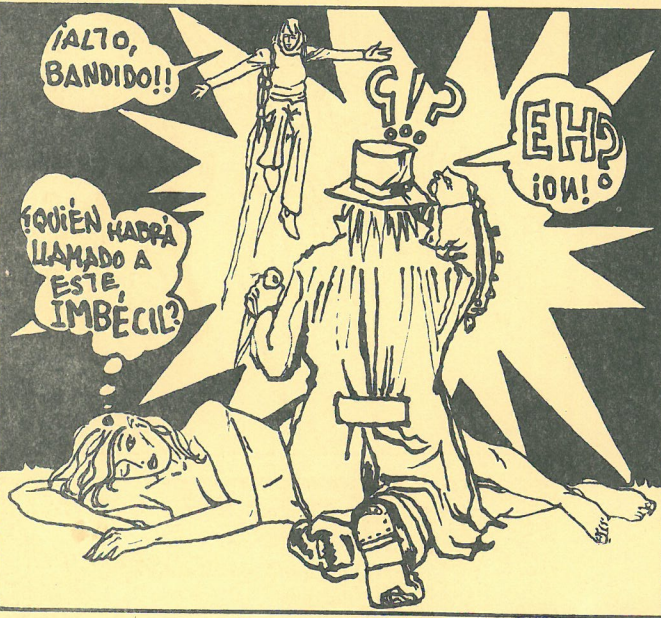
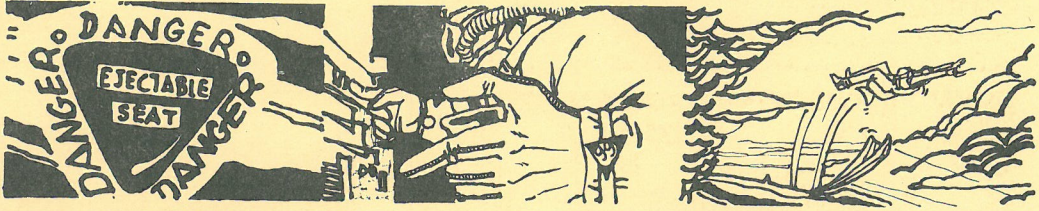
S.O.S.

¡DELTA!



¡MARCHANDO!!

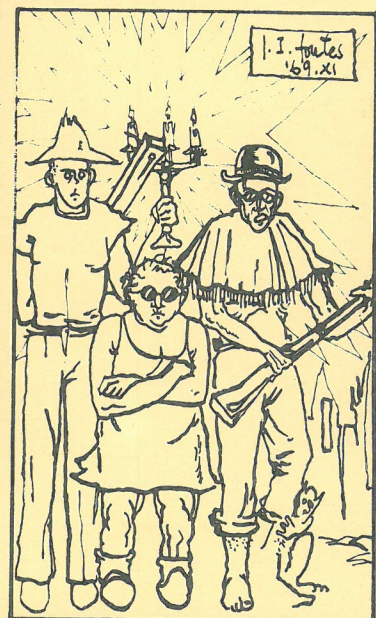
IT'S A BIRD? IT'S A MAN? NO... IT'S DELTA!



¡ALTO, BANDIDO!!

¿QUIÉN HABRÁ LLAMADO A ESTE, IMBÉCIL?

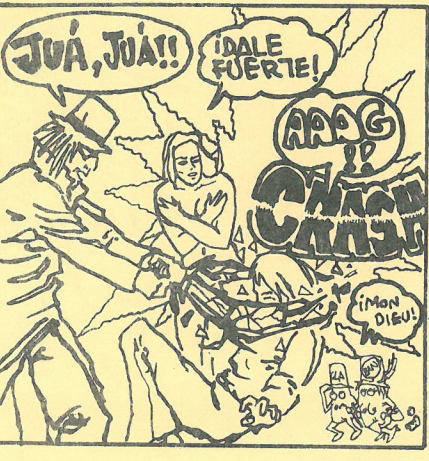
EH? ¡OW!



I. I. Torres '69.XI



WHEHW! ¡¡MI TOBILLO!!

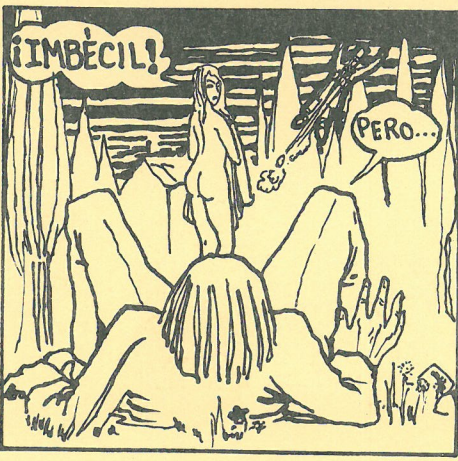


JUÁ, JUÁ!!

¡DALE FUERTE!

¡AAAG!

¡MAN DIEU!



¡IMBÉCIL!

PERO...



¡BUAKA!! ¡NO ANCIANO, YA NO MÁS! ¡BUA'KA!

¿QUÉ BOCHORNO...

FREE DOM.

FIN... pero... CONTINUA

