

## **"THE FANTASTIC: NORTH AND SOUTH"**

### **Abstract**

In the twentieth century, the long-standing connection between Latin American literature can be appreciated in the work of writers such as Jorge Luis Borges, Gabriel García Márquez, Julio Cortázar, Laura Esquivel and many others. Also, the tradition of research on the fantastic is strong within the Spanish-speaking academic world. But even if Latin American fantastic literature is strong and healthy, it is certainly not autonomous. There are important links to other literatures, and especially, due to geopolitical and historical reasons, to European literatures. In order to highlight the fact that these links are by no means unidirectional, we present this anthology, in which different perspectives meet.

Following the editors' introduction, we have the honour of presenting a lecture that was given by Jorge Luis Borges in the year 1964, on the occasion of his visit to Gothenburg and the Iberoamerican Institute, then directed by Nils Hedberg. The lecture, which has been unpublished up to this moment, was transcribed by Anna Svensson, who also contextualizes it in the article following it. The lecture is published with the kind permission of the Jorge Luis Borges International Foundation, and its President, María Kodama.

The articles that follow have been selected from a large number of articles presented at the Sixth International Conference on Fantastic Literature that took place in Gothenburg, in June 2007. A first set of articles approach the literatures from the North. We start off with Leffler's fascinating outlook on the Gothic tradition in nineteenth-century Scandinavia, which shows the particular paths the fantastic has taken in this northern part of

the world. Hernández presents a fresh reading of Le Fanu's *Carmilla* as a story about lesbian love. Wijkmark studies gothic conventions in the short story "Spökhanden" ("The Ghost Hand") by one of the most famous Swedish writers, Selma Lagerlöf.

Linking North and South, Castro's article approaches different versions that have resulted of the translation of Poe's "The Oval Portrait" into Latin-American Spanish. The focus is on how the fantastic is treated in translations into Spanish.

Rodríguez presents an unknown utopian short story, "Cuento" ("Short story"), from early nineteenth-century Mexico, a story that confronts the prevailing neoclassical tradition of its time.

Gasparini writes about the precursor of science fiction in Latin America, the Argentinian E. L. Holmberg. By comparing two contemporary novels by this author, Gasparini brings forward some of the interlocutors whom the texts engage in dialogue: Darwin, Verne, Flammarion, but also the intellectual and political elite of the rising nation.

Phillipps-López approaches the work of an overlooked writer, Hernández Catá, and explains the fact that Hernández Catá has not been dealt with in literary histories due to his double identity: Latinamerican (Cuban) and European (Spanish). We are very proud to include some of Soutos Feijoo's illustrations from the first edition of the short story collection *Manicomio* (1931, "Madhouse") and wish to thank Arturo Souto Alabarce, Matilde Souto Mantecón and Uva de Aragón for their kind permission to publish these.

Ruiz Serrano examines the connections between South and North in her study about the different expressions that magical realism has assumed in Latin America and in Russia, mainly during the second half of the twentieth century.

Bergero approaches the work of del Casal, a Cuban *poète maudit*. By establishing a number of relations to the *fin-de-siècle* milieu in which del Casal lived, Bergero studies how the work of the poet reproduces a misogynous image of women. With its feminist perspective, this article opens the way for the three articles that follow: three studies of Latinamerican writers from the twentieth century who understand the fantastic as a political arena where the construction of the female subject within a dominating patriarchal structure is discussed and condemned. Del Gesso reads Elena Garro's *Testimonios sobre Mariana* (1981) as a discussion about the construction of the female subject. Thörnryd studies four fantastic short stories by the Paraguayan writer Yula Riquelme. Rodero brings up the female body as a 'surface' on which transgressions against patriarchal order may take place in the work of Chilean Myriam Bustos and Costarican Carmen Naranjo.

Closing the anthology, Vásquez Rodríguez comes to grips with Uruguayan Marosa Di Giorgio's surrealist and absurdist work, a work in which north and south, female and male, dream and reality lose consistency, and hierarchies are dismantled.

From Scandinavia in the North to the Southern Cone in South America, from the beginning of the nineteenth century to our time, this anthology draws a map of roads and bridges along which the fantastic has travelled in different and various shapes. The publication is made possible thanks to the Swedish Research Council (Vetenskapsrådet).