



Global SF and the *SETI* Project (*The Search for Extraterritorial Imagination*)

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English: it.stlawu.edu/~koon/cuba/ETEA_2010A.pdf
Español: it.stlawu.edu/%7Ekoon/cuba/ETE%20A_2010.pdf

Acknowledgements

- Bruno Henríquez
 - for introducing me to Cuban SF (2003).
- Gerardo Chávez Spínola & Carlos Duarte Cano
 - for the site *Guaicán literario* and thus introducing me to even **more** Cuban SF.
- The Spanish speaking writers
 - for their stories, for their inspiration, and for their friendship
- St. Lawrence University
 - for paying the bills. :-)

The Drake Equation

$$N = R^* \times f_p \times n_e \times f_\ell \times f_i \times f_c \times L$$

- where:
- N = the number of [civilizations](#) in our galaxy with which communication might be possible; and
- R^* = the average rate of [star](#) formation per year in [our galaxy](#)
- f_p = the fraction of those stars that have [planets](#)
- n_e = the average number of planets that can potentially support [life](#) per star that has planets
- f_ℓ = the fraction of the above that actually go on to develop life at some point
- f_i = the fraction of the above that actually go on to develop [intelligent](#) life
- f_c = the fraction of civilizations that develop a technology that releases detectable signs of their existence into space
- L = the length of time such civilizations release detectable signals into space.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Drake_equation

The Fermi Paradox

"If they existed, they would be here."

quoted in "The Anthropic Cosmological Principle"

--John D. Barrow & Frank J. Tipler -

**I WANT TO
BELIEVE**

The Search for *Global* Science Fiction

- “There is no question but that the story-telling capacity is distributed among all the peoples of the world; and even more so the story-loving capacity.”
- “The imagination is not tied to national boundaries and not even science fiction is owned by any one people. In fact, *especially* science fiction, in these terrifying closing decades of the twentieth century, is the property of all the world.”

“Science fiction for all the world”, Isaac Asimov in “New Worlds from the Lowlands: Fantasy and Science Fiction of Dutch and Flemish Writers” (Cross-Cultural Communications: Merrick, NY. 1982).

Outline of this talk

- History of *the production* of global SF
 - Common history
 - The Gernsback Era
 - Subsequent history in different countries
- History of *the translation* of global SF
 - The Golden Age
 - Are we in a second Golden Age?
 - The present and future -- signs of life

Precursors to *SF*

- Sumer
 - pre-2000 BCE. *Gilgamesh* (apocalyptic themes)
- India
 - 750-500 BCE. *The Ramayana* (flying machines, space travel)
 - 400BCE-400AD. *Mahabharata* (time travel)
- Japan
 - pre-720AD. *Urashima Taro* (time travel)
 - 10th Century - *Tale of the Bamboo Cutter* (UFOs, ETs)
- Arabia
 - *1001 Nights* (space travel, etc.)
 - c. 1270AD. Ibn al-Nafis *Theologus Autodidactus*

The Enlightenment & Modern SF

- 1516 More, *Utopia*
- 1634 Kepler, *Somnium (The Dream)*
- 1657 Cyrano de Bergerac,
...States and Empires of the Moon
- 1686 Bernard le Bovier de Fontenelle,
Conversations ...the plurality of worlds.
- 1741-3 Schnabel, *Felsenburg*
- 1752 Voltaire, *Micromégas*
- 1818 Shelley, *Frankenstein,*
or the Modern Prometheus

The *Pulp* Era and *Scientific romances*

- 19th Century

Penny dreadfuls (UK),
Dime store novels (US)
Hefte (Germany)

- 1828-05 Verne 54 novels (1864-1905)
- 1866-46 Wells
- 1875-50 Burroughs

The Role of Hugo Gernsback

“Before Hugo Gernsback, there were science fiction stories. After Gernsback, there was a science fiction genre.” [Gunn, 126]

Hugo Gernsback’s place in the history of science fiction literature is crucial “because he not only found, but fully developed the idea of science fiction and nurtured a widespread awareness of the genre’s existence and importance.”

[Westfahl, 25]

SF in France

- Proud tradition of SF through the early 20th Century.
- Lost “space race” to US between the World Wars.
- SF revived after WWII, but based on predominantly *Anglo* models 2^a.

Apt metaphor?

The Great French Wine Blight (1850s-1870s)

- 40% of wine harvest destroyed.
- Solution: graft French vines onto American rootstocks.

[Great French Wine Blight]

Gráfico: <http://www.imperialcollegeunion.org/data/images/width433/wine-and-cheese-2802.jpg>

SF around the world: Germany

- 1682 “Relationes Curiosae” 1st SF magazine?
[Engholm]
- 1897 Kurd Laßwitz, “Two planets”.
- Successful publishing and films industries until the Nazi era.
- After WWII: Rebirth. The most successful SF series of all time, *Perry Rhodan* (over 2500 episodes).

[Rottensteiner]

<http://www.xp-germany.com/Binaries/970502233598.jpg>

<http://www.xp-germany.com/Binaries/970499200526.jpg>

SF around the world: Russia

- Rich tradition of *Fantasy* literature
- Konstantin Tsiolkovsky (1857-1935)
- Classics of the early Soviet era:
 - Zamyatin, *We* (1921)
 - Tolstoi, *Aelita* (1923)
- SF during the Stalin era, but....
- Golden Age after Khrushchev *thaw* in late 1950s.
 - Ivan Yefremov
 - Arkadii y Boris Strugatsky
 - *и так далее....*

Graphic: http://www.worldcitizens.net/gallery/folk_art_images/matryoshka_nest.jpg



SF in the Hispanic world (p.1)

- Precursor stories in fantasy literature, 18th Cent.
- 1832. Joaquín del Castillo y Mayone: *Viage somniaéreo a la Luna, o Zulema y Lambert* (Spain. Story).
- 1875. Holmberg: *El maravilloso viaje de Sr. Nic-Nac* (Argentina).
- 1875. Calcagno: *Historia de un muerto* (Cuba).
- 1875. Zaluar: *O Doutor Benignus* (Brasil).
- 1878. Miralles: *Desde Júpiter...* (Chile)

[Nil Santiáñez-Tió, Bell & Molina-Gavilán]

Graphic: <http://www.marxismo.org/files/Latinoamerica.jpg>

La CF en todo el mundo hispano (p.2)

- Individual distinguished writers, including, e.g. Borges & Bioy Casares.
- 1959. Correa *Los Altisimos* (Chile)

CUBA:

- 1875. Calcagno: *Historia de un muerto*
- 1964. Hurtado *La ciudad muerta de Korad*
- 1964. Arango *¿A dónde van los cefalomos?*
- 1964. Collección *Cuentos de Ciencia-ficción*

[Bell & Molina-Gavilán]

Graphic: <http://www.marxismo.org/files/Latinoamerica.jpg>

SF around the world: Costa Rica

- 1899. Maximo Soto Hall, *El problema*
- 1920. Caros Gagni, *La caída del águila*
(Both are novels with distinctly anti-Yankee-imperialist themes.)
- Siglo XXI: Beginnings of a sustained *SF* publishing history, handful of writers.
- 2009: Anthology, *Posibles futuros: cuentos de ciencia ficción*. (for more info, ask Juanka)
[Molina Jimenez]

Graphic: http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/c/cf/Flag-map_of_Costa_Rica.png

SF around the world: Croatia

1918. Marija Jurić-Zagorka, *The Red Ocean*

1924. Milan Šufflay, *In the Pacific in the year 2255.*

1950s. First sustained *SF* movement.

1976-89. Magazine dedicated to *SF*, “Sirius”, plays enormous role in developing *SF* market.

Fans also important to development of *SF*.

[Žiljak]

http://www.directferries.co.uk/image/flagmaps/croatia_map_flag.jpg

SF around the world: Bulgaria

1899 (published 1912). Ivan Vazov, *The last day of the 20th Century*

No sustained SF literature till the 1960s, '70s.
Influence of USSR, USA

[Ivanov]

http://travel.nationalgeographic.com/places/images/photos/photo_lg_bulgaria.jpg

SF around the world: Romania

1899. Victor Anestin, *In the year 4000, or a voyage to Venus*

1914. Henric Stahl, *A Romanian on the Moon*

1914. Victor Anestin, *A celestial tragedy*

1950s. Patronage of the government. Well organized groups of fans. *SF* considered either “harmless” or of pedagogical use.

SF fan organizers become legislators, diplomats, ministers following the fall of socialist regime.

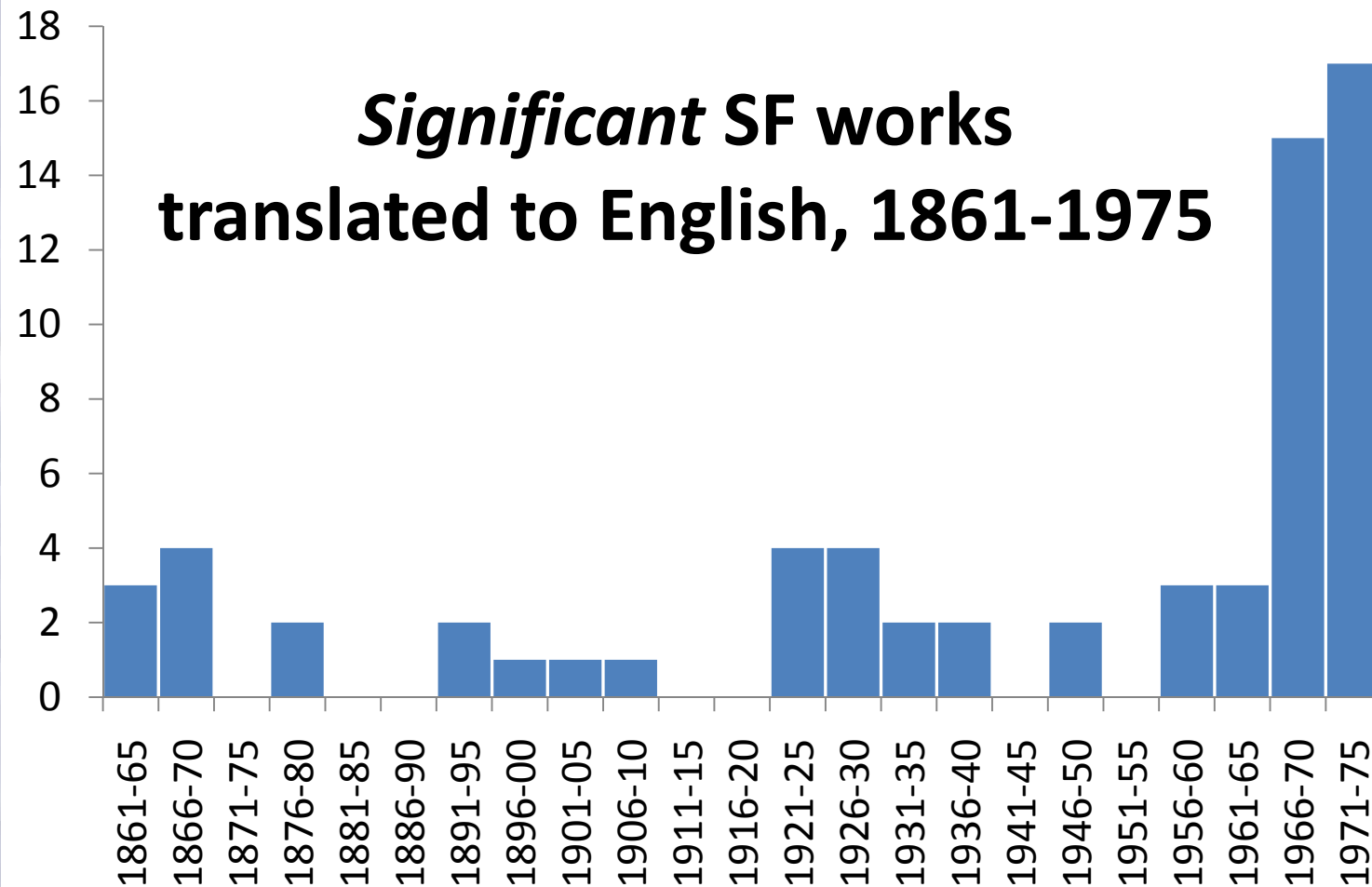
[Nistorescu]

SF around the world: CONCLUSIONS

- *SF* literatures develop in wide range of countries by the end of the 19th Century.
- Sustained publication of *SF* in only a few of these countries.
- Sustained publication in a wide range of countries following the Gernsback Era.
 - Easier: No need to re-invent the wheel, but a critical mass required.
 - Magazines, workshops, fans, government can play a critical role.

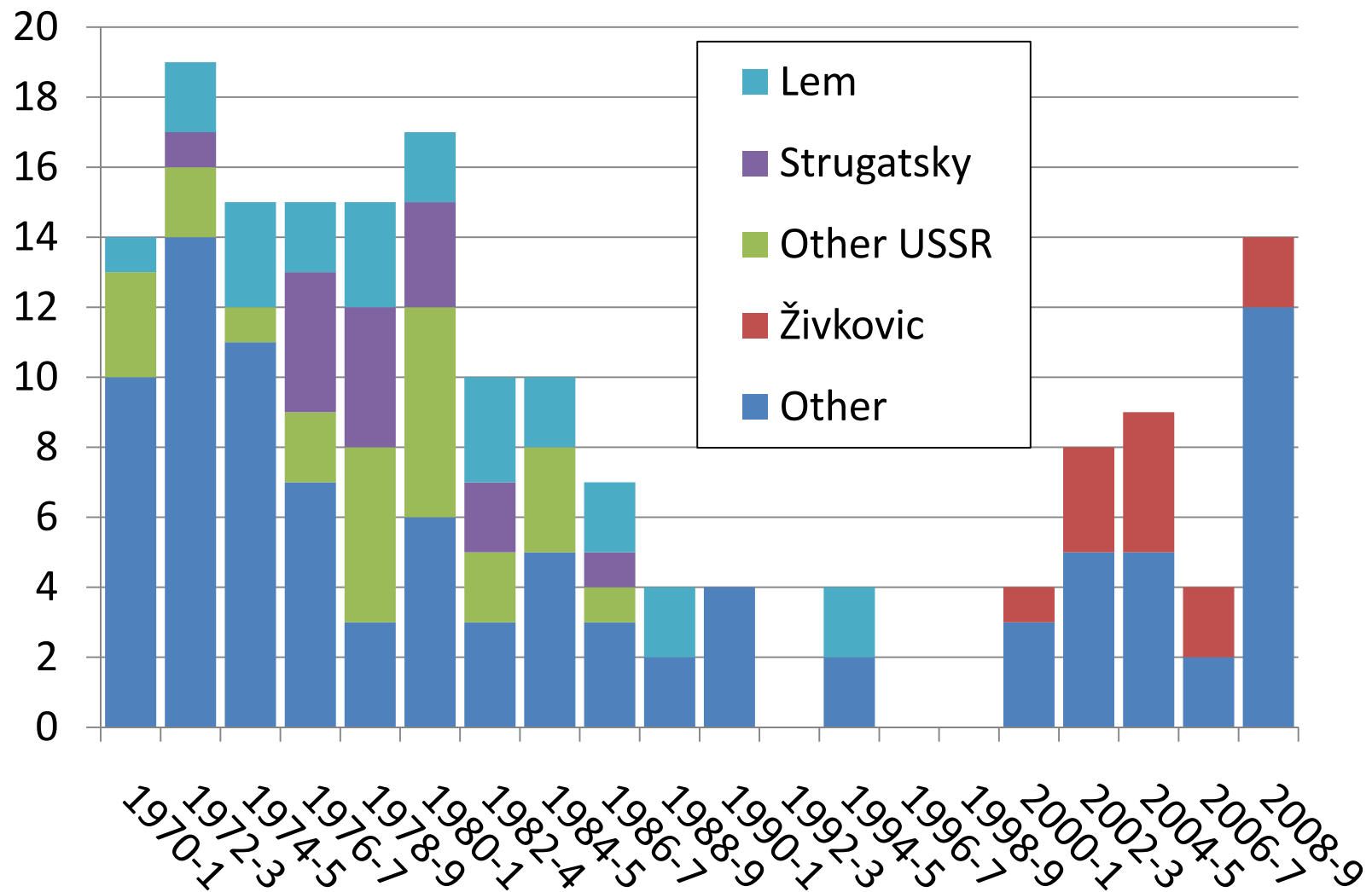
Global SF: Translation to English

(If a tree falls in the forest does it make a noise?)



[Data: Barron, "Anatomy of Wonder"]

Significant Global SF works translated to English, 1970-present



[Data: Zebrowski, Gombert, *this work*]

The present and future: signs of life

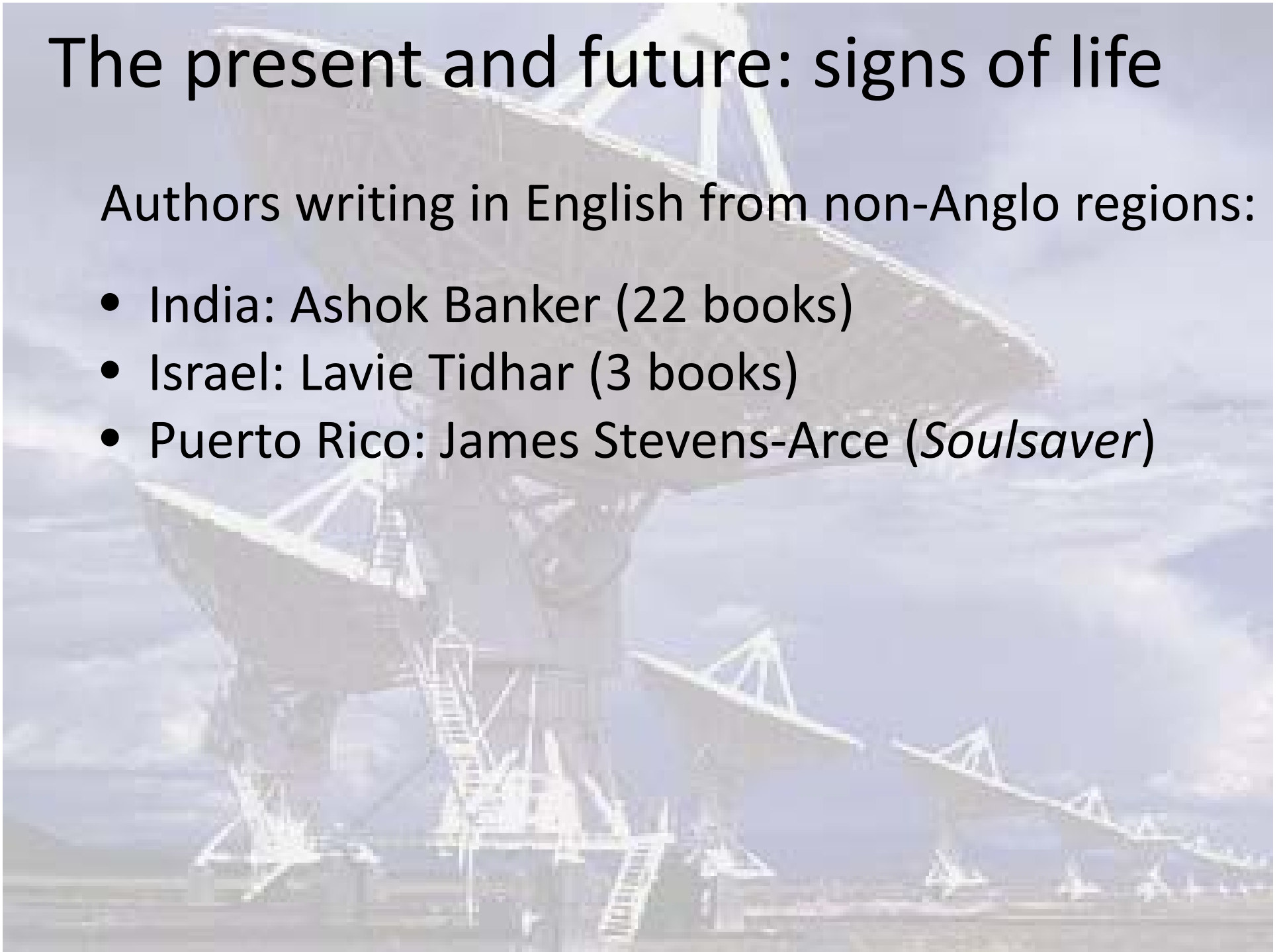
Writers with multiple works translated to English

- Serbia: Zoran Živković (13+ books)
- Québec: Élisabeth Vonarburg (7+)
- Russia: Sergei Lukyanenko (4 books, 2 films, computer game)
- Poland: Andrzej Sapkowski (2 books + game)
- France: Jean-Claude Dunyach (2 books, many stories)

The present and future: signs of life

Authors writing in English from non-Anglo regions:

- India: Ashok Banker (22 books)
- Israel: Lavie Tidhar (3 books)
- Puerto Rico: James Stevens-Arce (*Soulsaver*)



The present and future: signs of life

Anthologies in English:

- The Best **Japanese** Science Fiction Stories (1997)
- The Best **Austrian** Science Fiction (2001)
- Cosmos **Latinos** (2003)
- The SFWA **European** Hall of Fame (2007)
- The Black Mirror... (**German** & Austrian) (2008)
- **Tamil** Pulp Fiction (2008) – a mix of *marginalized* genres: detective, SF, etc.
- The Apex Book of **World** SF (2009) – *speculative* fiction

The present and future: signs of life

A rising tide of critical books on regional *SFs*:

- *French Science Fiction, Fantasy, Horror and Pulp Fiction* (2000)
- *Anime: From Akira to...* (2001, 2nd Edition 2005)
- *Brazilian Science Fiction...* (2004)
- *Robot Ghosts and Wired Dreams* (Japan) (2007)

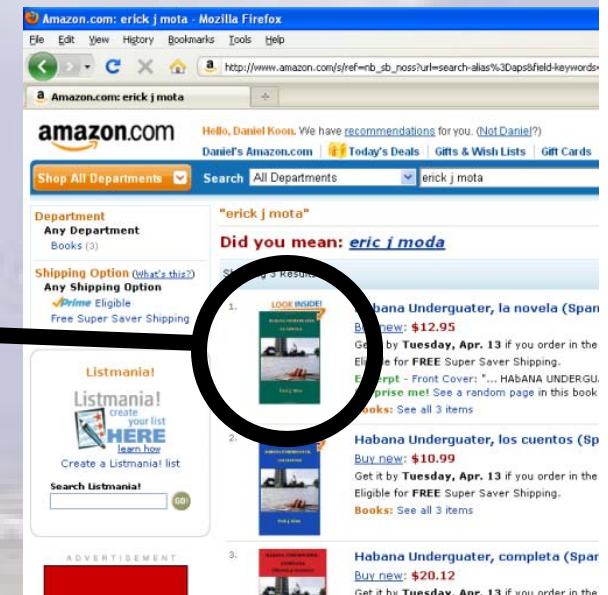
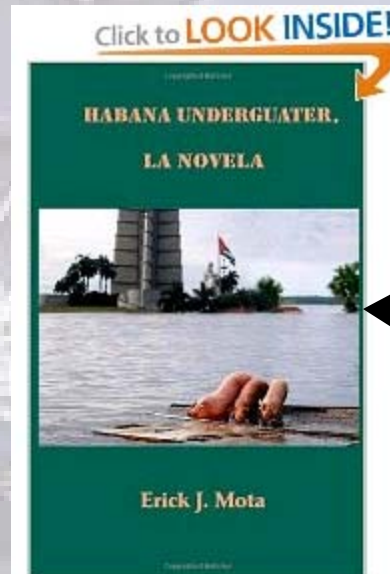
The present and future: signs of life

Online Communities :

- Ezines: Axxón, Alfa Eridiani,
- Blogs: “[World SF News Blog](#)” from Lavie Tidhar

Unprecedented opportunities:

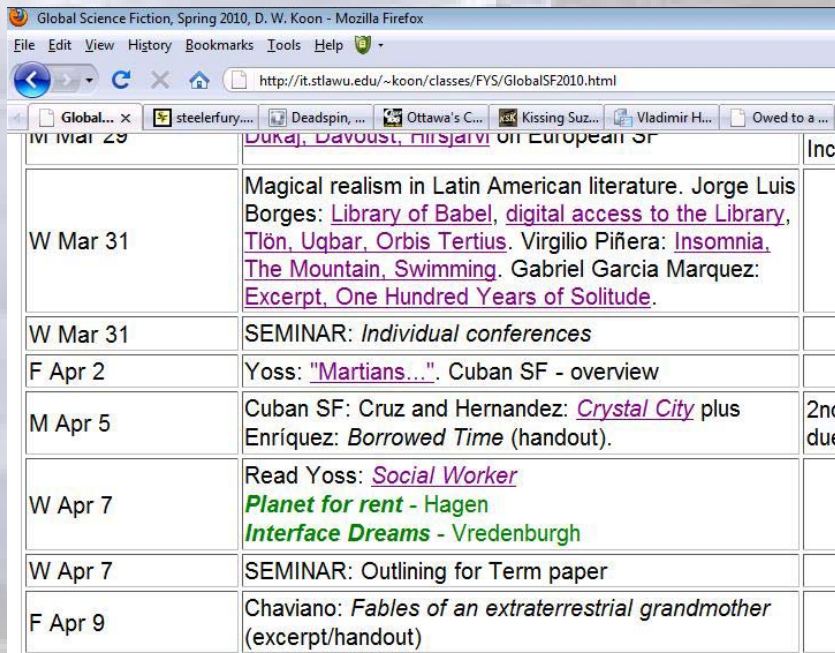
- “Albedo One” (Ireland) offers to translate, publish winners of national competitions.
- Atom Press:
(print on demand)



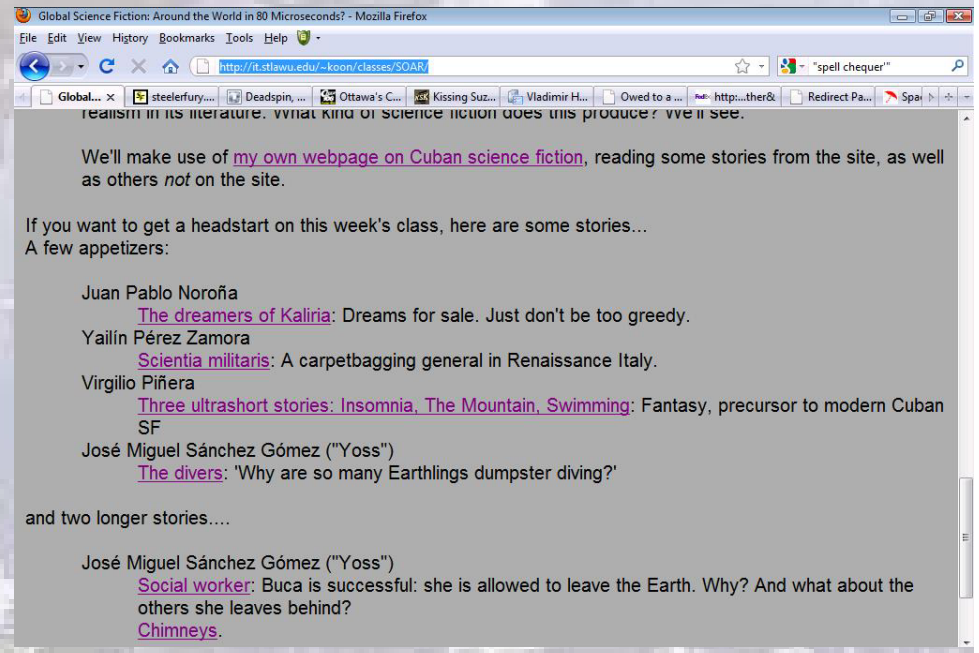
The present and future: signs of life

Lewis and Clark College: *No lejos de la Tierra: Ciencia-ficción en español* (SPAN 450)

SLU first year (university) students, adult education (*translated* fiction)



W Mar 31	Magical realism in Latin American literature. Jorge Luis Borges: Library of Babel , digital access to the Library , Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius . Virgilio Piñera: Insomnia , The Mountain , Swimming . Gabriel Garcia Marquez: Excerpt , One Hundred Years of Solitude .	Incl
W Mar 31	SEMINAR: <i>Individual conferences</i>	
F Apr 2	Yoss: " Martians... ". Cuban SF - overview	
M Apr 5	Cuban SF: Cruz and Hernandez: Crystal City plus Enríquez: <i>Borrowed Time</i> (handout).	2nd due
W Apr 7	Read Yoss: Social Worker Planet for rent - Hagen Interface Dreams - Vredenburgh	
W Apr 7	SEMINAR: Outlining for Term paper	
F Apr 9	Chaviano: <i>Fables of an extraterrestrial grandmother</i> (excerpt/handout)	



Global Science Fiction: Around the World in 80 Microseconds? - Mozilla Firefox

realism in its literature. what kind of science fiction does this produce? we'll see.

We'll make use of [my own webpage on Cuban science fiction](#), reading some stories from the site, as well as others *not* on the site.

If you want to get a headstart on this week's class, here are some stories...
A few appetizers:

- Juan Pablo Noroña
[The dreamers of Kaliría](#): Dreams for sale. Just don't be too greedy.
- Yailín Pérez Zamora
[Scientia militaris](#): A carpetbagging general in Renaissance Italy.
- Virgilio Piñera
[Three ultrashort stories](#): [Insomnia](#), [The Mountain](#), [Swimming](#): Fantasy, precursor to modern Cuban SF
- José Miguel Sánchez Gómez ("Yoss")
[The divers](#): 'Why are so many Earthlings dumpster diving?'

and two longer stories....

- José Miguel Sánchez Gómez ("Yoss")
[Social worker](#): Buca is successful: she is allowed to leave the Earth. Why? And what about the others she leaves behind?
- [Chimneys](#).

Conclusions

- We (the *Anglos*) have found the aliens.
- Contact has been established.
- The second invasion has commenced.
- Let us hope for success.



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Additional Resources

- Mind Meld: Guide to International SF/F. Parts I-IV (<http://www.sfsignal.com/archives/2009/06/mind-meld-guide-to-international-sff-part-i/>)
 - Interviews with writers, editors, critics, translators, etc. about the International SF/F scene in general, and for specific countries/regions.
- Lavie Tidhar, “The World SF News Blog” (<http://worldsf.wordpress.com/>)
 - News items from around the world on the International Speculative Fiction scene. Recent Cuban topics: Preface of “Deuda temporal”, Scott Edelman’s pictures, Daina Chaviano’s homepage, translation of Guaican Literario’s author page.
- PlanetaSF. <http://ar.groups.yahoo.com/group/planetasf/>
- *Science Fiction Studies*: <http://www.depauw.edu/sfs/>



*Pictured: SLU First Year Seminar
“Global Science Fiction” students,
January, 2010.*

