



Magnitud imaginaria

Stanisław Lem , *Jadwiga Maurizio* (Translator) , *Roberto Valencia* (Contributor)

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«Lem es un experto en mundos distintos e inquietantes.»

Rosa Montero, *Babelia*

Con *Magnitud imaginaria* , Impedimenta recupera un nuevo título de la «Biblioteca del Siglo XXI», que abrió con *Vacío perfecto* y que se completará próximamente con *Golem XIV*.

Magnitud imaginaria , piedra de toque de la famosa «Biblioteca del Siglo XXI» y heredera de la aclamada *Vacío perfecto*, es otro ejemplo delirante del genio de Stanisław Lem. Artistas que realizan pornografía mediante el uso de rayos X, científicos que cultivan bacterias que se comunican en código Morse y son capaces de predecir el futuro, vendedores de enciclopedias «de cuarenta y cuatro magnetomos» en las cuales está escrita la historia que aún no ha acontecido, inteligencias artificiales que crean obras de autores tan intocables como Dostoievski y que ni ellos mismos se habrían atrevido a concebir. Deliciosas sátiras en las que, una vez más, Lem pone en tela de juicio las respuestas a las grandes preguntas de la Humanidad.

LA PRENSA HA DICHO:

«La habilidad de Lem por crear historias inventadas y presentadas como prólogos (y no solamente como meras reseñas de obras inexistentes) resulta brillante y estimulante.»

El Confidencial

Magnitud imaginaria Details

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From Reader Review *Magnitud imaginaria* for online ebook

Carlos says

Lo mejor de Borges con lo mejor de Lem.

Anacardoman says

Me flipa la idea de hacer un libro de prólogos de libros inventados (con prólogo del autor y prólogo de otro autor). Me ha encantado especialmente el prólogo/resumen de un libro en el que un pavo relata múltiples experimentos a través de los cuales enseña a las bacterias (más bien a su código genético) a mandar mensajes en inglés (que no a hablar). Muy delirante.

Olethros says

-Un trabajo correcto, poco común y realizado por un gigante.-

Género. Ensayo (pero no del tipo habitual, queridos lectores, avisados quedan).

Lo que nos cuenta. También conocida como “*Magnitud imaginaria*” en otras ediciones, recopilación de supuestos prólogos a varias obras igualmente supuestas que tratan temas tan interesantes como la pornografía a través de los rayos-x, la comunicación con bacterias gracias a su disposición en las placas Petri, la literatura de diferentes géneros pero escrita por ordenadores, una enciclopedia que para evitar la obsolescencia se dedica a explicar lo que va a suceder y lo que no, además del relato de la transformación de una computadora para la gestión bélica y económica de un país en un referente del pensamiento y la filosofía que trasciende la capacidad humana.

¿Quiere saber más de este libro, sin spoilers? Visite:

<http://librosdeolethros.blogspot.com/...>

Aaron Arnold says

This was Stanislaw Lem's first collection of reviews of non-existent books, also known as "pseudepigraphy" because every stylistic tic clearly deserves its own distinct Greco-Latin title. As with most disciples of Borges this student doesn't trump the master, but this was flawed even compared to *A Perfect Vacuum*, which I highly enjoyed.

The main problem was that though these pieces are "funny", in that they are usually written to parody various styles of writing, they're not typically actually that amusing. The opening "Introduction" might be the best piece in the whole lot in a way, its supercharged bombast namedropping Linnaeus, John the Baptist,

Bach, Heidegger, and the Book of Genesis in an entertaining way while also highlighting the uselessness of most real introductions. However, the humor quickly vanishes. "Necrobes" is about an artist who makes X-ray artwork out of porn, and is essentially humor-free. Same with "Eruntics", which covers the Lysenko-ish efforts of a scientist to teach bacteria to read, "A History of Bitic Literature", which reviews various styles of computer-generated literature, and "Vestrand's Extelopedia in 44 Magnetomes", a futuristic encyclopedia. These are mildly interesting, but might have worked better in actual sci-fi form instead of this pseudepigraphical sketches. The goal of the Borges style is to save a lazy author from having to concoct an entire story when all he really wants to do is write about an idea for a story, but even Lem's formidable literary pyrotechnics can't make these outlines interesting.

The last story "Golem XIV", the longest section in the book, is the perfect example of that. It's purportedly the transcript of a lecture to humanity delivered by a hyperintelligent computer, framed by some commentary and background on the political situation at the time. Pages and pages of quite sophisticated verbiage about mankind, computers, evolution, intelligence, and reality rain over the reader, but even though Lem is deliberately making this as pretentious as possible for effect, the computer's dense theorizing doesn't have much of an impact, and it simply isn't as enjoyable as the more light-hearted literary parodies in *A Perfect Vacuum*. Lem should have made these ideas into full-fledged stories, his forte, because they simply didn't work too well in this format.

James F says

This is an English translation of two Polish books; the first is a collection of prefaces and introductions to imaginary books, supposedly written in the future, and the second, *Golem IV* was a kind of sequel which actually wrote parts of one of the books. The idea of writing prefaces, introductions and reviews of imaginary books of course was not original to Lem, and he was probably influenced by some short stories of Jorge Luis Borges, whom he sometimes resembles, but I think Lem is the first to use the idea in science fiction; this was not the first book he wrote in this fashion, although it is the first I have read (I'm not sure if the earlier ones are even translated.)

Golem IV (with the original prefaces and introduction to it from the first book) makes up the largest part of the book, and the most interesting -- essentially, it is a treatise on the philosophy of evolution from the viewpoint of an intelligent computer, which shows how relative philosophy is to our human frame and experience. Although I would have preferred that he consider other issues than he did, it was very thought provoking, which is the mark of a good book.

Brent Stansfield says

The first half is stunningly funny but the second is a sober, academic lecture. In the first half, wordplay and ideaplay abound and the form of the book (a collection of introductions from books to be written in the future) is followed strictly. In the second half, he immediately abandons all of this. I'm happy to hear Lem describe how he thinks a different intelligence might relate to us since both *Solaris* and *His Master's Voice* end with that disappointingly unanswered question. But in the second half of this book, the description is so dry that it's almost unreadable.

Matthewaqq says

PROGNOLINGUISTICS, a discipline dealing with the prognostic construction of languages of the future. Future languages may be constructed on the basis of the in-fosemic gradients revealed in them, and also thanks to the generative grammars and word makers of the Zwiebulin-Tschossnietz school (v. GENAGRAMMAR and WORD-MAKERS). Humans are incapable of predicting languages of the future independently; this is undertaken within the framework of the PROLINGEV (prognostication of linguistic evolution) project by TERATERS (q.v.) and PANTERS (q.v.), which are HYPERTERI-ERS (q.v.), or computers of the eighty-second generation connected to a GLOBOTER (q.v.), or a terrestrial exformatic network together with its INTERPLANS (from Interfaciesplanetaris, q.v.) as bridgeheads on inner planets and as satellite memory (q.v.). Thus neither the theory of prognolinguistics nor its fruits, the METALANGS (q.v.), are intelligible to humans. All the same, the results of the PROLINGEV project permit the generation of any statements of one's choice in languages of a future no matter how distant; with the help of RETROLINTERS, a part of them can be translated into languages intelligible to us and practical use made of the contents thus obtained. According to the Zwiebulin-Tschossnietz school (returning to the course marked out by N. Chomsky in the twentieth century), a fundamental law of linguo-evolution is the Amblyon effect — the shrinking of whole articulatory sentences into newly emerging concepts and their names. Hence, in the development of the language, the following definition, for example—"A commercial, service, or administrative institution or establishment into which one can drive a car or any other conveyance and use its services without leaving the vehicle"—shrinks down to the name "drive- in.** The same mechanism of contamination also operates when the statement "Relativistic effects thwarting the ascertainment of that which is occurring now on planet X, n light-years distant from the Earth, compel the Ministry of Extraterrestrial Affairs to base its cosmic policy not on real events on other planets, for they are fundamentally inaccessible, but on the simulated history of these planets, this simulation being the business of investigative systems directed at the extraterrestrial state of things and known as MINISTRANTORS (q.v.)** is replaced by the single phrase "to wonderstand.* This word (and offshoots such as wonderful, wondrous, wonderland, wonderhanded, wondercover, won-derline, wondress, etc.—there are 519 derivatives) is the result of a shrinking of a certain conceptual network into an agglomeration. Both "drive-in** and "wonderstand** are words belonging to a language in use at the present moment and which is called ZERO-LANG in the prognolinguistic hierarchy. Above zerolang lie the next levels of higher languages, such as METALANG 1, METALANG 2, etc. No one knows whether there is a limit to this series or whether it is infinite. In METALANG 2 the entire text of the present EXTELOPEDIA entry for "PROGNOLINGUISTICS** would read as follows: "The best in n-dighunk begins to creep into n- t-synclusdoche.** Thus in principle every sentence of any metalang has its equivalent in our zerolang. (In other words, there are in principle no interlinguistically impassable hiatuses.) But while a zerolang utterance has its always more concise equivalent in a metalang, the reverse in practice no longer occurs. And so a sentence in METALANG 3, the language chiefly used by Golem—"The out-indriven chokematic phyts faststica" thren-sic in cosmairy"—cannot be translated into an ethnic language of human beings (zerolang), since the time it takes to say the zerolang equivalent would be greater than a human life. (According to Zwie-bulin's estimates, this utterance would take 135 ± 4 years in our language.) Although we are not dealing with a fundamental untrans-latability, but only with a practical one caused by the time consumed by procedures, we know no way of shortening them and so can obtain results from metalang operations only indirectly, thanks to computers of at least the eightieth generation. The existence of thresholds between individual metalangs is interpreted by T. Vroedel as the phenomenon of the vicious circle: to reduce the long definition of a certain state of things to a concise form, one must first understand that very state of things, but when it can be understood only thanks to a definition that is so long that a lifetime is insufficient to assimilate it, the operation of reduction becomes impracticable. According to Vroedel, prognolinguistics practiced in machine intermediation has already gone beyond its initial objective, since it does not in fact

predict the languages which humans are ever going to use, unless they radically transform their brains through autoevolution. What, then, are metalangs? There is no single answer. While carrying out his so-called "soundings upward"—i.e., along the gradient of linguoevolution—Golem discovered eighteen higher metalang levels within its reach, and also calculated circuitously the existence of a further five which it is unable to penetrate even by way of a model, since its informational capacity has proved inadequate for this. There may exist metalangs of such high levels that all the matter in the Cosmos would be insufficient to build a system to make use of those metalangs. So in what sense can these higher metalangs be said to exist? This is one of the dilemmas arising in the course of prog-nolinguistic work. In any case, the discovery of metalangs negatively prejudices the age-old controversy over the supremacy of the human intellect: it is not supreme, and we know that for certain now; the very constructibility of metalangs makes it likely that creatures (or systems) exist which are more intelligent than *Homo sapiens*. (See also PSY-CHOSYNTICS; METALANG GRADIENT; LANGUAGE CEILINGS; THEORY OF LINGUISTIC RELATIVITY; T. VROEDELS CREDO; CONCEPTUAL NETWORKS.) See also Table LXXIX.

Alex Feldman says

i would die for stanislaw

Debjyoti Paul says

Well actually I would give it 4.5!

It took me 3 months or more to reach cover to cover. This books has numerous of those "aha!" moments and numerous places which will allow you to ponder a lot. Turn of events right when they are expected, a bit predictable, which will make your eyes widen a bit and you smile and ponder again.

David says

This book of introductions, forewards, and excerpts from 21st Century books reveals the eclectic nature of Lem's genius. He begins with the introduction (to be written by Stanislaw Ertel) to **Necrobes** by Cezary Strzybisz. This isn't so much an introduction as a critique of the 139 reproductions of X-ray photographs of living human beings, their soft parts hovering around the skeletal structure like a ghostly presence. He can't help associating these images to the work of artists such as Holbein, who often included *memento mori* in his work. (Note by reviewer: as an example, Hans Holbein's "The Ambassadors" is a classic example of the introduction of a skull which can only be properly seen by the observer when seen at an angle to the painting surface. This painting resides in the National Gallery, London)

The majority of the book examines various publications with a common thread of knowledge/thought, including Verstrand's Extelopedia in 44 Magnetomes, the ultimate reference collection.

The majority of the collection examines three works which examine Lem's take on the question, "What is intelligence?" One book is entitled **Eruntics**, a study of literature produced by microbial life forms which have been taught English. Another is the study of Bitistics, or literature produced by intelligent machines and the debates surrounding it. The lengthiest portion is devoted to Golem XIV, the last iteration of machines created at the behest of the Pentagon to assist the military in its mission. Golem XIV, like all of its

predecessors is a failure, but not for a lack of intelligence. In addition to the foreward and introduction to this volume, several lectures given by Golem are included. The first examines the role of intelligence in evolution, or more precisely the failure of intelligence to serve the purposes of the genetic code in any great way. I was stopped in my tracks when Golem noted that there were no seminars during the Eolithic age concerning advancement to the Paleolithic.

If you want to explore reality, thought, what constitutes intelligence and whether or not Einstein was correct, this book will give you plenty of opportunity to stop and realize just how alien we are to ourselves.

Shane says

So I thought this was going to be a bunch of reviews/introductions to books that didn't exist. It sounded like a really cool idea and a good way for an author to use ideas that weren't really big enough to write a novel or even a short story about.

So that's how it started off and it was fun for the first 96 pages. Then the next 152 pages were about humans building a computer AI that was smarter than any human. I read the first 40 or so pages of the AI story but then gave up and skipped to the 22 page afterword, which was the afterword about the AI story, not about the book "Imaginary Magnitude".

So while the AI story was interesting up to a point, it really did seem to ramble on and most of all it destroyed the concept of the book. It was very jarring and I kept waiting for it to get back on course but it felt like Mr. Lem got distracted and then never came back to what he meant to write about.

Víctor Sampayo says

De entrada, Stanisław Lem muestra el hilo que guiará al lector a través de su extrañísimo libro *Magnitud imaginaria* (*Wielkość urojona*, 1973): hace un prólogo que habla del arte de hacer prólogos... ver reseña completa

Beatriz Chavarri says

Interesante, pero imposible de leer, de allí el abandono. Entiendo el recurso de la literatura ficticia, pero simplemente no funciona en el caso de este libro de prólogos, que a mi juicio se queda en el virtuosismo técnico pero no emociona ni entretiene. Una pena.

Daniel says

Lem himself wasn't keen on being grouped with most other Sci-fi writers and -as in one of the stories here collected- showed contempt towards the genre. I however find it difficult not to think of him and his works as science Fiction, and some of the very best.

He shows us here, in a condensed and abstract way, one of the things science fiction should definitely be: a window to mankind and how it relates to itself. In this book, while being playful, dramatic, darkly humorous (and dense), he brings about reflection and thought on the very nature of intelligence, art, science, western culture and post-modernism.

While it is true that Lem does not surpass Borges he at least would make him very proud, for his fake prefaces are very well written and feel plausible, which adds to the sense of wonder they produce as one reads, for example, of what could very well be a real art book and its reasonable critique.

Montse Gallardo says

Presentar los prólogos sin el libro al que preceden podría ser una antología curiosa; sin embargo, estos ni siquiera necesitan acompañar a un libro; tienen entidad en sí mismos. ¿No es una idea genial?

Ya el primer prólogo, el del liberador de prólogos, nos sitúa en esa faceta del absurdo de *Lem* que tanto me gusta. Llevar a lo más literal una idea que no tiene ningún sentido (pues ¿qué es un prólogo, sino aquello que abre el libro y que puedes saltarte sin alterar en absoluto la historia? ¿qué sentido tiene el prólogo sin la obra a la que prologa? Son tan inútiles como las cortezas del pan de molde.

Me lo he pasado pipa leyendo esta sarta de absurdos que encierran críticas a la cultura (el primer prólogo), el método científico (2º) o la semiótica (3º), y a nuestra forma de comportarnos, de crear, de relacionarnos con el conocimiento (y de valorarlo).

Me encantaría saber qué pensaría *Lem* sobre la wikipedia, y sus actualizaciones constantes, sin necesidad de ocupar espacio en el hogar :D O de Gunther von Hagens (el "artista" que plastifica cadáveres). No sé si lo consideraría un paso más allá de las Necrobias o un atraso, por estar tan apegado (Hagens) a la corporalidad

Soy incapaz de leer este libro sin pensar en cómo realmente nos describe -con 40 años de anticipación- nuestra cotidianeidad (vale, lo de las bacterias no, pero las referencias a la cultura no son tan descabelladas)

Y un comentario inevitable a la gran labor de traducción de *Jadwiga Maurizio*. Yo no tengo ni idea de polaco, pero imagino -viendo cómo se retuerce el español en esta obra, los neologismos, las reinterpretaciones de palabras ya existentes- lo difícil que habrá sido poder trasladar toda esa locura al español... y lo divertido, seguramente.

"Partitura", tortura del parto; "sarcófago", carnívoro; "placentero", relativo a la placenta; "microbio", oprobio sin importancia; "peristilo", estilo reinante en una región Me facina especialmente la definición de microbio

Como todo libro de *Lem* no es de fácil lectura; desde luego -si no se ha leído nada de él- no es el mejor para empezar; pero es un escritor original, divertido, absurdo, que desde la ciencia ficción más estrambótica siempre está hablando de la condición humana, de cómo somos. Si no este libro, sí se debería leer algo de este gran autor de la CiFi

