

SFT podcast
Episode 5
6/1/18

Shalom and welcome to Episode 5 of the SF in Translation podcast! I'm your host, Rachel Cordasco. This episode will include news and updates from May 1 through May 31.

It's been *quite* the interesting month in SFT world. For one thing, I was able to go to Wiscon for my fourth year in a row, and had a great time seeing friends and meeting new people and yakking on some wonderful panels. On this year's SFT panel, we talked about a wide variety of issues in the field, including the need for more translator-mentors, the importance of beta readers, the difficulty of making a living as a translator, and much more. We had a good turn-out, and the M&Ms, SFT catalogs, free books, and special booklet of Italian SFT went over quite well. I was also on a panel about podcasting, in which we discussed how much bigger the field of speculative fiction podcasting has become just over the last few years, as well as ways to encourage more of a diversity of voices.

I'm also very excited to attend my first Readercon next month! We don't have any SFT panels or anything this year, but Francesco Verso and I plan to talk about it to anyone who will listen.

And if you haven't heard yet, we now have *another* magazine dedicated to international sf: it's called "Future Science Fiction Digest," edited by Alex Shvartsman and part of the Future Affairs Administration sf publication in China. Its Issue 0 has some great reprints to check out, and which I'll discuss in a bit.

I also had the chance to interview (via email) the prolific and fascinating Brian Stableford, translator of an astonishing number of works of French proto-sf, mainly for Black Coat Press. He's cranking out the books at an astonishing rate, allowing Anglophone readers to experience the weird, otherworldly, sometimes hallucinatory texts that came out of the 19th century's fascination with science and its applications to all aspects of life. You can read my interview on the SFT site.

So, book-length SFT in May. Happily, there's much to talk about. *Future Fiction: New Dimensions in International Science Fiction* came out, and it's one amazing collection. While most of the pieces were originally written in English, every story comes from a different country, and the translated pieces

(from the Greek, Italian, Chinese, and Spanish) are fantastic. I reviewed this collection for *Strange Horizons*, and can't say enough about the important knowledge and expertise in the field that editors Francesco Verso and Bill Campbell brought to it. And since it's a new month, we of course have another group of translations from the French by Brian Stableford, namely *Jonathan the Visionary* by X. B. Saintine (1823, a collection of fantasy tales told by a mysterious immortal called Jonathan, which range from prehistorical fantasy to post-apocalypse), *The Second Life*, also by Saintine (1864, a collection of fictitious dreams, hallucinations and metaphysical fantasies that examine the nature of dreaming from a viewpoint infused by contemporary psychological science), and *The Mysterious Hermit of the Tomb* by Etienne-Leon de Lamothe-Langon (1816, a blend of Gothic horror fiction and chivalric romance).

Also out this month is a German SFT reprint called *The Abolition of Species* by Dietmar Dath, translated by Samuel P. Willcox, from DoppelHouse Press, in which, following mankind's near extermination, a kingdom of technologically-advanced animals wage a multi-planetary war against a new kind of AI. (You can read an excerpt of this novel in *The Nomadic Journal*). From Argentine author Rodrigo Fresan, we got *The Bottom of the Sky* (translated by Will Vanderhyden, from Open Letter), a brilliant and strange story about early sf fandom, extraterrestrial obsession with Earth, and a love so strong that it can jump dimensions. Oh, and it won the 2018 Best Translated Book Award! So well-deserved.

Last but not least, we got another Witcher novel from Andrzej Sapkowski, called *Season of Storms*, translated from the Polish by David A. French and out from Orbit Books.

On to short fiction! *Clarkesworld* brought us "Farewell, Doraemon" by A Que, translated from the Chinese by Emily Jin and Ken Liu- a story about nostalgia for childhood and a destiny-defining mystery. *Lightspeed* reprinted Xia Jia's surreal and beautiful "Night Journey of the Dragon Horse," translated by Ken Liu, about a giant horse-dragon robotic chimera that befriends a bat, and the two go on a journey for a place to call home. And if you've been wanting to read more speculative fiction from Latin America, look no further this month than *Latin American Literature Today*, which published several excellent pieces from Bolivia, Mexico, and Argentina.

If you've been wanting to read Yoko Tawada's *The Emissary*, translated from the Japanese by Margaret Mitsutani (and out this past April from New Directions), you can read an excerpt in *Granta* magazine

(though most of it is behind a paywall). And that new SF magazine I mentioned earlier? Their first issue included Tatiana Ivanova's "Impress Me, Then We'll Talk About the Money," translated from the Russian by Alex Shvartsman, and "Universal Cigarettes" by Teng Ye, translated from the Chinese by Yuzhi Yang. And finally, we were treated to another piece by Rodrigo Fresan called "Snatching Bodies," translated by Will Vanderhyden, a kind of bonus track to *The Bottom of the Sky*.

And don't forget to check out Daniel's reviews of short SFT each month on the SFT site.

We had some great reviews this month of *The Emissary* on the Brazos Books site, *The Abolition of Species* in *World Literature Today*, and *The Thousand Year Beach* on James Nicoll's site. Also be sure to read Regina Kanyu Wang's article in *Clarkesworld* entitled "Another Word: Chinese Science Fiction Going Abroad--A Brief History of Translation."

And now, if you please, we'll step into Rachel's corner. Let's start with what I'm reading. It's a novel by Laurence Suhner called *Vestiges* (the first book in the *Quantica* trilogy) and it's breathtaking. It's been published in Switzerland (the author's home) and France, but not anywhere else yet, unfortunately. I'm reading the English translation that was kindly sent to me by the author. It's a space opera that begins 300 years in the future on an icy extra-solar planet, which harbors mysterious artifacts that could change how humanity views its place in the universe. I'm only about a third of the way through, but I LOVE LOVE LOVE it and want it published in the US yesterday! You can read an excerpt from *Vestiges* on the *Strange Horizons* website (posted in 2015).

In terms of translating, I'm still working my way through that Italian surrealist noir. More about that next time.

Ok that's all for this month. Remember to send me any and all SFT-related news and links via fb, twitter, or email, which is rachel@sfintranslation.com. Happy reading!