

Hallo and welcome to Episode 8 of the SF in Translation podcast. I'm your not-yet-ready-for-the-school-year-to-start host, Rachel Cordasco. This episode will include news and updates from August 1 through August 31.

So the school year is starting once again and my youngest is no longer napping, so I'm saying "bye bye" to that magical hour that I used to have to read the SF in translation while she slept and we waited to pick up her brothers from school. Guess I'll have to give up sleep! After all, there is so much SFT to be read, as you well know. Or one of you super-smart people out there can figure out a way to give me an extra day of the week. Thanks.

Enough of my whining. To the books! August has been one of the most exciting months for SFT in 2018 because it gave us more Strugatsky, Liu Cixin, Francesco Verso, Solarpunk, and Galactic Heroes. The new translation of the Strugatsky brothers' *Snail on the Slope* comes from Olena Bormashenko, out from Chicago Review Press, and I have to say, I'm especially looking forward to reading this version and comparing it to the one from Gollancz from 1980. In the review I wrote on the SFT site last October, I called it "*Radiant Terminus* meets *Annihilation* meets *The Slynx*." If you've read those three, you get bonus points. Basically, it's two separate stories joined together in a dizzying whirl of fantastical surrealism.

On August 7 we got *Solarpunk: Ecological and Fantastical Stories in a Sustainable World*, edited by Gerson Lodi-Ribeiro and excellently translated from the Portuguese by Fabio Fernandes. This collection of stories from Portugal and Brazil is wonderful in its diversity of styles and themes, especially because many of the pieces are actually pretty dark, despite the optimistic title. Many, indeed, draw on our anxieties about the future and what new technologies and approaches to sustainability could ultimately do to change what it means to be a human living on Earth. Will some of us evolve into plant people? Will mega-corporations gain even more of a choke-hold on local communities? Lots of interesting questions raised, and I appreciated these different approaches.

You may have seen me all over the social medias freaking out about the publication of *Nexhuman* by Francesco Verso, translated from the Italian by Sally McCorry, and out from Apex Publications. If you haven't purchased this book about a boy who falls in love with an artificial woman, you need to change that right now. This is the story of someone so consumed by love for an artificial body with the uploaded consciousness of a human woman that he will stop at nothing to piece her back together after she is torn apart by a ruthless gang. Questions of identity, love, human evolution, the nature of consciousness, environmental degradation, and reality itself merge in this book to create a terrifying yet plausible portrait of what our world might yet become. Verso advances our understanding of transhumanism and is part of the new wave of Italian science fiction that is making its mark around the world.

Next up is *Ball Lightning* by Liu Cixin, translated by Joel Martinsen and out from Tor Books. Of course, this is the same author who brought us the brilliant hard-sf *Three-Body* trilogy, and the translator of *Ball Lightning* translated *The Dark Forest*. I just started this one, since I only recently got a copy, but reviews so far have been good. Not jumping-up-and-down awesome, but still very good.

And it's always a good day when I get my next installment of the *Legend of the Galactic Heroes* series. This time it's Volume 7: *Tempest* (translated by Daniel Huddleston), in which Yoshiki Tanaka continues the story of Yang Wen-li and (now emperor) Reinhardt as they play chess with the galaxy.

Finally, I just received in today's mail a copy of the next unsurprisingly-gorgeous book in the Zoran

Zivkovic series released by Cadmus Press. This one is actually called *The Book* and is translated from the Serbian by Tamar Yellin. In classic Zivkovic style, *The Book* is a meta meditation on texts and meaning, narrated by...that's right...a book.

Onward to the short fiction. How pleased was I to see more Hao Jingfang, out this time in *Clarkesworld*. I loved *Folding Beijing* (and apparently so did a lot of other people, since it won the "Best Novelette" Hugo in 2016). And I also loved "Invisible Planets." This newest story, entitled "The Loneliest Ward," translated by Ken Liu, is a haunting yet spare piece about atrophying social interactions, anxiety, social media, and validation. It's relatively short, and stays in the mind of a young nurse who helps care for patients in seeming comas, who are no longer able to function because they've been rejected in various ways. They listen to looped recordings that validate their feelings and praise them, for their beauty or acting talent or skills. Meanwhile, the main character obsessively checks her status updates hoping that her boyfriend will interact with her after a recent argument, and when he doesn't, her sense of loneliness and rejection becomes almost too much to bear.

From the latest *Trafika Europe* comes a special issue on Italian literature, including an excerpt from Piero Schiavo Campo's novel *The Man at One Kelvin Degrees*, translated by Sarah Jane Webb. The story takes place in late-21st-century Milan and involves quantum teleportation, mob bosses, and smuggled scientific information. *The Man at One Kelvin Degrees* won the Italian Urania Award in 2012.

We got some SFT from Algeria as well this month, with "The Mauve Planet" by Safia Ketou, translated from the French by Nadia Ghanem, and featured on Arablit.org. This story comes from a collection of pieces written between 1962 and 1978, and thanks to Ghanem, us Anglophone readers can check out this simultaneously humorous and horrifying tale of two astronauts and the culture shock they receive after crashing onto an alien planet. Be sure to check out this story.

You'll also want to check out an excerpt from *CoDex 1962*, the latest novel from Icelandic author Sjon, and translated by Victoria Cribb, out from FSG. The synopsis describes *CoDex* as "encompassing genre fiction, theology, expressionist film, comic strips, fortean studies, genetics, and, of course, the rich tradition of Icelandic storytelling." I'm sold.

If you're looking for reviews, I've got you covered. Andrea Johnson, aka the Little Red Reviewer, praises *Nexhuman* on her site, and it's well-deserved. Sara Martin, the translator from the Catalan of *Typescript of the Second Origin*, reviews *The Vestigial Heart*, also from the Catalan, in the *SFRA Review*. Erik Henriksen reviews *Ball Lightning* on Tor.com, and Graham Oliver reviews Andrzej Sapkowski's *Season of Storms* for the SFT site.

And, of course, don't miss Daniel Hauesser's reviews of short SFT each month on the SFT site.

Looking ahead, September is the month for fantastic SFT anthologies, namely: *The Apex Book of World SF5*, edited by Spanish author and editor Cristina Jurado; *The Reincarnated Giant: Twenty-First Century Chinese Science Fiction*, edited by Mingwei Song and Theodore Hutters; and *Zion's Fiction: A Treasury of Israeli Speculative Literature*, edited by Sheldon Teitelbaum and Emanuel Lottem. So far, I've had the pleasure of reading *Zion's Fiction*, and with stories by Lavie Tidhar, Keren Landsman, Shimon Adaf, Nir Yaniv, Nava Semel, and others, you're guaranteed to love it. The introduction is itself engaging and enlightening, contextualizing speculative fiction in the larger subject of Israeli history. Check out my review of the anthology in *World Literature Today*, and Gary Wolfe's review in *Locus*.

As you may have seen on twitter and facebook, I've started dedicating each month to a specific language of SFT. August was devoted to Spanish-language authors, editors, translators, and texts, and September (by popular demand) is devoted to Japanese SFT. So tweet or message me your favorite Japanese SF and let me know if you'd like to write a review or essay for the site. If you're interested in learning more about Japanese SFT, go to the "Japanese SFT index" tab on the site.

Ok, and now it's time for Rachel's corner, where I tell you all about what I've been reading and translating. I recently read *Vita Nostra* by Marina and Sergei Dyachenko, translated beautifully from the Russian by Julia Meitov Hersey, and was blown away. This book rearranged my brain- you probably saw me shouting about it in all caps on twitter when I finished it. It's dark psychological fantasy that you don't often read, carefully plotted and stylistically manipulative in a deliciously creepy way. I wrote my review of it but I don't know if I made much sense. The review will be out soon in *Foundation*. Then I turned to *The Invention of Morel* by Adolfo Bioy Casares, translated from the Spanish by Ruth L. C. Simms. Again- mind blown. I should have been prepared, though, since Argentine author Rodrigo Fresan himself insisted that I read *Morel*, and Bioy Casares was close friends with Borges. If you haven't read *Morel* yet, take a few hours and read it- it's only a hundred pages. You'll certainly want to read it a few more times after that, too.

A couple of days ago, I read the novella *Two of Six: A Captain's Dilemma* by Tomohito Moriyama, translated from the Japanese by J. D. Wisgo. It's a brief, intense snapshot of a spaceship that has mysteriously malfunctioned, and it's up to the captain to decide which two civilian passengers should use the escape pod. His anguished conversations with a highly-advanced android are compelling, though I wish the story had been longer. Look for my review on the SFT site soon.

I just started *Ball Lightning* by Liu Cixin, translated by Joel Martinsen, and am enjoying it so far. After that I'll jump into *Alphaland* and *Apex World SF5*.

In terms of translation, I'm working on the first of several short stories by Italian sf author Clelia Farris, whom you know I adore. You can read my translation of her story, "A Day to Remember" in the December 2017 issue of *Samovar Magazine*.

And for any translators out there, do think about submitting any speculative stories you've translated to places like *Clarkesworld*, *Apex*, *Lightspeed*, *F&SF*, and other magazines that publish sci-fi, fantasy, magical realism, Weird, horror, and other subgenres. The editors welcome translations and are always looking for great stories. Some places pay up to 10 cents per word. And if you do place a piece of translated sf, definitely let me know about it so I can promote it all over the place! And I'm always happy to beta read these texts, as well.

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