

SMALL PLANET

Issue #2
August 2026

The SF in Translation Magazine

**An Interview with Jihyun Park & Gord Sellar
Jonathan Strahan on a Translated Novel Category
Julia Meitov Hersey on Books We Want Translated
News, Reviews, Forthcoming Books... and more!**

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*Small Planet:
The Speculative Fiction in
Translation Magazine*

Issue #2: August 2026

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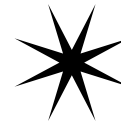
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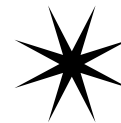
No AI/LLM was used in the creation
of this magazine

*Petit planeta:
la revista sobre
CF traduïda
(Catalan)*



A Note on Language

In an ideal world, this magazine would feature articles in a multitude of languages. For now, though, most pieces will be in English in order to further the mission of the magazine to encourage English-language readers to dive into speculative fiction from around the world. And yet, English itself is written differently, depending on if you live in the US, UK, or wherever a version of English is written and spoken. To recognize this diversity, some of the articles in this magazine will be written in US English, while others will be in UK English.



Editor's Note

Issue #2

This second issue of *Small Planet* might look a bit...heftier than the first issue. That's because there's *so much* to say about SFT! I know, I sound like a broken record, but it's true. Just look at that table of contents: we have recurring columns (interviews, Vintage SFT reviews, Forthcoming Books, Books We Want Translated) and essays about everything from Hungarian speculative fiction to Soviet SF films. I must also point out Clelia Farris's piece "Mescolanze/Mixtures," a fascinating look into the translation process—and it is my translation into English of Clelia's Italian piece about her Italian/Sardinian story that I translated into English! Love it!

In my haste and excitement to get the first issue out, I unfortunately forgot to include a contributor's page. To make amends, I have included a Contributors page in this issue to reflect the dedication and talent of everyone who wrote for the first *and* second issue. Every issue going forward will include a contributor's page.

Happy reading and remember: spread the word about SFT!

—Rachel



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The Blueprint for Activist Translation

Alex Shvartsman

There's amazing talent everywhere. People are writing brilliant fiction in Farsi, Ukrainian, Mandarin, Swahili, Vietnamese and all the other languages of the globe. In the age of the internet, the world is getting smaller, and with the renaissance of translated fiction in the past decade, we'd like to think we have access to the very best works these cultures have to offer.

We do not.

There are certainly astounding translations available to English speakers. Some have won awards. Some have topped bestseller lists. They deserve their accolades. But we're not anywhere near close to even scratching the surface.

Consider [Francois Carsac](#). I believe him to be the greatest French science fiction writer of the 20th century. He was well-known to his contemporaries in the field and highly respected. Yet the first time any of his novels was [published in English](#) was in 2020! Sadly, the book didn't make much of a splash. But then, if *Foundation* or *Ringworld* were to debut today as written decades ago, they'd show too many signs of aging, as well.

Even if you think Carsac is relatively niche, you might be surprised to learn that not all novels written by Alexandre Dumas have been published in English, either.

There are dozens of books in Russian I can point to that are as good as or better than an average genre novel published in English. They haven't been translated. And don't get me started on the short stories. I have to regularly pass on translating fabulous stories because I don't think I can place them (for reasons stated below).

Having edited a magazine that published translated works for over five years, I can confidently say that brilliant gems await

discovery and translation in virtually every language.

So, what's to be done about it? Although no perfect solution is forthcoming, we can make significant inroads by encouraging more activist translators.

What is an activist translator, you ask? It's someone who is willing to take on literary translation projects with no up-front pay and is willing to invest the time and effort into ushering the translated text toward publication.

This doesn't have to be a professional translator with lots of industry credits. It could be anyone who has excellent command of both English and the source language. Optimally, it should be someone who is already writing publishable prose in English, but some of the better translators I know are not, themselves, writers.

Suppose you are a multilingual individual and you're willing to put in the work. Where do you even begin? The steps are far easier than you might think.

My recommendation is that you always start with short fiction. First, it's a way to cut your teeth on literary translation with relatively low stakes and time investment. Second, and perhaps more importantly, the author is far more likely to retain foreign rights to their short story than a novel, and there would be no need to get agents or publishers involved.

Avoid the superstars who write in your source language. They probably already have translators they work with, and they're less likely to entrust their writing to a new translator who is trying to break in. I mean, if you love their work it can't hurt to ask, but don't be disappointed if they decline to grant you the rights.

Instead, seek out a short story you absolutely love; a story that you can't wait to talk about with your Anglophone friends; a story that will feel relevant and contemporary to Anglophone readers should they encounter it. Bonus points if the author is alive and still

writing; they need a leg up more than a dead giant of the field. Try to avoid authors who already have an established working relationship with another translator, as well.

If you are still not sure how to find works to read and consider for translation, then enlist help. Who are the critics that are covering SF/F/H in your language? What recent works do they love? Is there an award for the best SF/F story, and which stories have been nominated or won in recent years?

Of course, loving the story to death is not enough. You want a reasonable chance of it getting published in English. When authors ask me what kind of stories I'd like to see, I tell them that I prefer science fiction works that would come in at under 6,000 English words over fantasy and longer stories.

It's not that I enjoy science fiction so much more; it's that there's only a handful of major pro paying venues open to submissions in SF/F and many more of them prefer science fiction over fantasy (*Analog*, *Asimov's*, etc.) Very few venues are able to consider stories longer than 6,000 words for budget reasons. Another area that's seen significant growth lately is horror. The pay rates at horror venues are generally lower, but if you like that sub-genre, there are a number of outlets you can try. Still, the length requirement consideration remains.

So suppose you found the perfect story. The next step is to contact the author. Most authors have a website or some social media at this point. If not, the genre bloggers and con runners in your source language may be able to help put you in touch with them.

When I reach out, I explain that I would like to translate the story into English. The deal I offer every author is exactly the same: I will act as an agent, of sorts, for the specific story in the English language (and, of course, I own the copyright to the translation) and I will pass along 50% of any and all funds earned through the sales of this story. This includes getting paid by the anthology or magazine if

the story sells, any royalties, and any reprint fees. The author controls the media rights, so if Hollywood comes calling I am not in their way. If the story doesn't sell, I will have invested my time but the author and I do not owe each other any compensation.

Once they grant you the rights (and in an overwhelming majority of cases the author will gleefully do so; they want their work to appear in English!) you can perform the translation and, if the author's English is good enough, have them verify it. Otherwise they can usually find a native speaker who can double-check things as well to ensure they're satisfied and that you didn't commit any major bloopers.

Then the story is ready for submission! At this point you treat it just like your own work when submitting for publication. In your cover letter to the editor you mention that it's a translation and any accolades and credits the author has (if any) as well as your own credits as a translator (also if any). You do not need a formal contract with an author; an email chain confirming they granted you the rights is fine. In case your submission is successful, the publisher may ask to verify you have the rights, which you and the author should have no trouble confirming.

In most cases (*Clarkesworld* being the only notable exception) there is no separate pay allocated to the translator. You and the author will share whatever the magazine normally pays for short fiction. This is part of the reason translating short fiction is truly an activist endeavor. When I do freelance translation my rate is typically 15 to 20 cents per English word. When I sell a story to an average pro zine, I end up getting paid 4 or 5 cents.

It is, however, a great way to get your foot in the door. I started out in literary translation doing exactly this. After a couple of years of getting my Russian short story translations published, I began receiving unsolicited offers for paid translation work. Since then, I have translated novels, TV and movie scripts

and pitches, and video game content. My translations have been nominated for the BSFA Award three times, and, just recently, for the World Fantasy Award.

Even so, you should only undertake literary translation if you're truly passionate about it. Paid work comes and goes. The field is under the threat of so-called AI as much as the writing and illustration fields. Just like in those cases, "AI" is terrible at literary translation but this fact often doesn't overcome the allure of the resulting slop being free.

Good luck on your journey! If you have specific questions about this, please feel free to reach out to me at alexshvartsman.com.



Translating from Korean...with Jihyun Park and Gord Sellar

Cristina Jurado

If there is a powerhouse in the Korean-to-English science fiction translation landscape, it is the team formed by Jihyun Park and Gord Sellar. *Small Planet* is proud to present its first joint interview to unravel the secrets of a unique way of translating.

Cristina Jurado: You work together co-translating from Korean into English. To both, what made you become a translator? To Jihyun, why did you choose English? To Gord, what attracted you to Korean?

Jihyun: I lived in Singapore and Indonesia for some years during elementary school, which helped me learn English as a second language. I also speak and read Indonesian, but not as well as I know English. Taking advantage of my English skills, during my

university years I could pay for tuition with translation and interpretation side jobs. I got into science fiction late, around 2010, after Gord introduced me to it. After opening my eyes to the world of SF, I kept reading just SF books for a couple of years straight and discovered some really good Korean SF. At one point, when I was talking about how some of the Korean-style SF work I'd found was so good, Gord suggested we work together to translate one of Kim Bo-young's stories. Gord knew her personally, and she gave us permission to work on it, so we translated it and sent it to *Clarkesworld*. After that, we continued working as a team translating Korean SF.

Gord: I moved here in 2002 and as a foreigner living here, I was faced with a dilemma: I could do what a lot of expats in Korea do, namely live inside the "expat bubble" and isolate myself from Korean society, or I could find avenues by which I could connect with Koreans through common interests. Early on during my stay in Korea, SF was incredibly marginal here. I searched for Korean SF, but failed to turn up much of anything besides a couple of movies. I learned that there actually was a small but active, if somewhat underground, Korean SF scene. Once I knew Korean SF was out there, that people were doing interesting things with it, then I got more interested in translation, because I wanted to know *what* Koreans were doing with SF. Things have changed radically in the decade or so since then. Lots of Korean SF has been translated. Now I teach an SF class at the university where I work, and it fills up every semester. Korean SF shows are way more common, SF movies aren't so unusual here and I regularly meet people who are into SF, tabletop RPGs, and all kinds of stuff like that.

Jurado: Being professional translators working in tandem, how do you typically organize your translation workflow?

Jihyun: I do the rough translation from Korean to English with some notes when necessary, in order to highlight some subtle cultural context for Gord. After I pass him the rough translation, Gord goes through while restructuring and polishing the sentences, and then highlighting parts as he goes along using a color code we've found useful. The codes specifically ask for close checking and/or indicate passages we'll need to work over together. Once I get this draft polished, I check every sentence, comparing them against the original text and readjusting them to ensure faithfulness to the original text. Then, we have editing meetings online together and go through any problem passages that remain. Sometimes we end up passing the file back and forth a number of times more, while also asking a few clarification questions to the author. Finally, we send a mostly-final draft to the author to check over, and apply whatever edits they request in their response.

Gord: About those "editing meetings online": we usually meet using an online VOIP app like Discord. Even though we might just be one room apart, using a voice chat with screen sharing helps us to focus, and also makes it easier for both of us to look at the translation text onscreen while discussing it. We'll go through the text in blocks, until we've resolved everything that needs resolving. It's not unusual for us to do a couple of really intensive editing passes, back and forth, though we usually save the VOIP chat for when the text is ready for close, critical reading, toward the end of the process. That said, it varies from writer to writer: sometimes, we need to do more passes and deliberate more, sometimes things are more straightforward.

Jurado: Let's talk about the elephant in the room: AI. It's entering the industry, raising concerns about job security and the quality of translations. What is your opinion on it?

Gord: I think we're both really dubious about the projections being made regarding AI's usefulness for literary translation. Like, that's not going to stop some publishers from trying to use it, of course, but generative AI is a machine of probabilities and averages. Another way of saying "average" is "mediocre" and while mediocrity is probably fine in some contexts—say, in translating contracts or user manuals—when it comes to literary works, I don't think most people hunger for mediocrity.

Jihyun: Yes, I think AI will be more useful for video and non-fiction books but I don't see it happening for literature translations. However, there's another thing to consider besides AI taking over translations from humans. There is a translator, Hong Han-byeol, who translates from English to Korean. In her book about translation, *About the Whiteness of the White Whale (Huin Goraewi Huime Daehayeo, 2025)*, she mentions how people are getting used to reading AI texts instead of good translations by skilled human translators. Their taste is changing because of their exposure to AI translations.

But honestly, I think people reading less and just scrolling through short, pointless videos on their phones is a way bigger problem for translators than AI taking over the industry. Reading challenging books is becoming "niche," the way classical music is "niche."

Jurado: What changes would you like to see in the literary translation market to better reflect the diversity of creativity in today's world?

Jihyun: More translators. More heavy serious book maniacs. They are the fuel of possible future writers. There should be more spaces and events where heavy readers/fans come and recommend books, buy autographed books, special editions, and goods like badges.

Gord: I think there are more barriers to

getting the work done than there need to be. I also think sometimes there's a bit too much emphasis on prizes and awards—I mean, they're nice, but there shouldn't be so much fixation on them. I'm more interested in seeing dialog develop between Korean SF and the global SF scene.

Jurado: What advice would you give to any aspiring translator?

Jihyun: Don't worry about AI too much. Just keep doing it until you get to translate books you want to translate, if you are okay with having two jobs. Your life will be more exciting and fulfilling doing translation, so it will give you the strength to continue your day job to put food on the table.

Gord: My first advice would be for aspiring co-translators like me: you really need to immerse yourself in both cultures (and, as much as possible, both literatures) for the language pair you intend to work on. And find a good, sensitive, thoughtful co-translator. The other thing I'd say is that translators are *writers*. They simply need to have some skill in the craft of literary writing. For this reason, I think seriously studying creative writing is a useful thing—not necessarily formal studies, but some kind of sustained effort and study of creative writing, even in a crit group, can help a lot. Also: learn to read and understand a publishing contract. You can avoid a lot of problems if you understand what publishing contracts are supposed to look like, what terms are standard and what terms aren't, and so on.

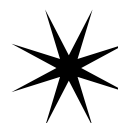
Jurado: And last but not least, which works from Korean authors would you like to see translated into English in the near future?

Gord: Chung Bora's got a (unpublished, I think) novel titled *Yeaenja* (*The Prophet*) that is incredibly timely. It's "the one that got away"—we were on the verge of signing a contract to translate it, when suddenly the

book was withdrawn. It's really a shame, because from the excerpts I saw, it was a compelling look at issues that are more and more pertinent in our daily lives right now.

I also have a special spot in my heart for the novella *Daerijeon* by Djuna. It was roughly translated on a science website called *Crossroads* years ago, but it's long gone now. It was the first Korean SF story I ever read, and despite the flaws in the original translation, it was like nothing else I'd ever seen. I personally think it's a really representative work of Korean SF that deserves a wider readership.

Jihyun: There are a few Korean authors who come to mind. Kim Heesun's short story collection *The Clock Shop of Light and Eternity* contains this one-time traveller story that was really good. Also, Lee Jongsan's book *Customer* is a YA SF novel related to people customising themselves via genetic engineering. It reminded me somewhat of the first season of *Wednesday*. It'd work well either as a literary translation or if it was adapted to a TV series.



The Locus Awards and the Translated Novel Category: An Interview with Jonathan Strahan

The Locus Awards is now the second major Anglophone speculative fiction award (besides the British Science Fiction Association Awards) that includes a category for translated work. I had the honor of talking to Jonathan Strahan, the *Locus* reviews editor and World Fantasy Award-winning editor, anthologist, and Hugo Award-winning podcaster, about this addition to the Locus Awards and what it means for recognizing SFT in the future.

Rachel Cordasco: Thank you so much for taking the time to talk to me about this new Translated Novel category that has been added to the Locus Awards. Could you sketch out for us what led up to this decision?

Jonathan Strahan: It's my pleasure. We have been compiling recommended reading lists at *Locus* since 1971, and those lists have ultimately formed the basis for the Locus Awards shortlists. I first became involved with compiling the recommended reading list in 1997. Even then you would see the occasional outstanding work of genre fiction make it into translation and get real recognition.

There had always been an honourable tradition of SF in translation — look at Zamyatin, Capek, Lem, the Strugatskys and others -- but it was occasional. During the 2000s that began to change. We saw more and more work being translated and getting recognition. For

me that started with Ursula Le Guin's translation of Angélica Gorodischer and probably culminated with Ken Liu's translation of Cixin Liu.

Over the past few years we'd seen more and more outstanding translations get attention, get discussed and make it onto our lists. Somewhere during that time we began to discuss possibly recognising translations in the awards, but it really was only when one of our reviewers, Niall Harrison, suggested it at the outset of compiling our 2026 Recommended Reading List. He highlighted that we really were reviewing more work in translation and that was outstanding and that we should recognise it.

I took that to our publisher, Liza Groen-Trombi, who embraced the idea. It probably took about two weeks to go from the suggestion to sketching out the award category to compiling a list, with the help of you and SF in Translation and others. The key to the category was that it had to be a permanent addition to the awards - not a one-shot. We felt that if it was to be worth doing, we wanted to be committed to doing it for the foreseeable future.

I was delighted with the process, the shortlist and the ballot, and am looking forward to getting to work on this coming year's list.

RC: When the issue of adding a “translation” category to an SF award has come up in the past (see the Hugo Award efforts), some have argued that highlighting translated work would “ghettoize” that work instead of encouraging readers to consider it on par with texts originally written in English. What would you say to them

about the value of having a translation category?

JS: It's a valid concern. Any science fiction novel, say like Jacek Dukaj's *Ice*, certainly is outstanding enough to succeed without a special translated work category. However, I think we're still at a point where the benefits of promoting translated work as a whole outweigh those concerns—especially promoting this work to the SF community, which *Locus* does. It often appears from smaller or independent publishers, or is not even published as genre fiction, so to highlight it, to help put it out in front of genre readers, seems really valuable.

RC: Do you believe that the Locus Awards including this category might prompt other major SF awards to do the same? Related, how would you suggest those involved in other awards, like the Hugos and Nebulas, might be persuaded to include translation categories?

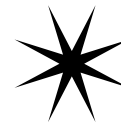
JS: I would certainly welcome it, but I think it's really difficult for some awards to change categories. The Hugos, for example, have rules you need to change and that takes some time. And awards administrators are understandably cautious about proliferating awards categories. So most likely not, but I'd welcome it, as I say.

RC: Might the "Translated Novel" category be the first step toward other Locus Awards translation categories (short story, collection, etc.)?

JS: We've not discussed it, but I'd not imagine us looking at that for some time. There's a significant amount of resources — especially judges' time - that goes into this, so we are limited in what we can do. For now, I think we'll be happy to focus on the Translated Novel category and making it as successful as we can.

RC: Thank you so much, Jonathan!

JS: My pleasure.



Mescolanze

Clelia Farris

Vivo in Sardegna, una delle isole più grandi del Mediterraneo. In Sardegna si parlano due lingue: l'italiano e il sardo. Il sardo è una lingua polimorfa, possiede molte parole derivate dal latino, qualcuna perfino dal fenicio, e ha molte varianti locali. È sufficiente spostarsi di pochi chilometri da un paese all'altro per trovare cambiamenti di lessico.

Spesso, nel parlato di tutti i giorni, i sardi utilizzano un italiano impuro, modificato dalla sintassi e dalle parole sarde, per cui a volte bisogna conoscere bene entrambe, per comprendere il senso di una frase.

In alcuni miei racconti ho cercato di riportare questo modo "ibrido" di parlare, dando filo da torcere al traduttore.

Per esempio: *lui si faceva abbagliare da un bel faccino e si prendeva la smurrata*.

Smurrata non è una parola italiana, è l'italianizzazione del sardo "smurrau". Nel contesto della frase significa che il personaggio si svegliava dall'incanto iniziale con una bella botta metaforica. Ma smurrato ha un

senso molto preciso, descrive una persona, distratta e sognante, che finisce con la faccia contro un muro, e allora la traduttrice decise di “usare il muro” trasformando la frase in: hit the hard wall of reality. In effetti il muro è già presente nella parola originaria mentre wall of reality è una bella trovata per riuscire a trasmettere il senso metaforico della parola e risparmiare la solita nota a fondo pagina.

Altra frase: *è illegale, murrungia l'altro*. Murrungiare è una parola ibrida, trasforma il sardo “murrungiai” in un verbo simile ai verbi italiani con desinenza finale in ‘are. Significa borbottare, criticare qualcosa parlottando fra sé. Di comune accordo con la traduttrice abbiamo deciso di renderne il senso con “mutters”, un equivalente inglese che anche qui evitava la nota esplicativa.

A un certo punto uno dei personaggi dice: *tu sei poco uscito*. Questa frase è la traduzione letterale in italiano del sardo “ses’ pagu bes-siu”, che significa: non esci di casa e quindi non conosci il mondo, sei un ingenuo. Anche se è detta in italiano, al di fuori della Sardegna non la capirebbe nessuno. In inglese era necessario che la traduzione si avvicinasse al concetto, più che all’immagine di qualcuno chiuso in casa, perciò la frase è diventata: *you’re behinde the times*.

I nomi propri di alcuni personaggi, poi, sono spesso soprannomi con un preciso significato in lingua sarda. Un personaggio femminile si chiama Marigosa, marigosu vuol dire amarognolo, piacevolmente amaro, come il suo carattere. Un altro si chiama Prangi, che in senso letterale vuol dire “piangi”, ma un prangi-prangi è una persona che si lamenta di tutto e piagnucola di continuo.

Sarebbe stato impossibile tradurli in inglese e riuscire a rendere anche la corrispondenza tra il senso del nome e il carattere del personaggio. Ovviamente, anche in italiano si perde questo legame, nessun lettore italiano è in grado di capire il segreto di questi nomi. Sono solo per sardofoni.

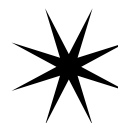
Invece il nome del protagonista del racconto omonimo, Gabola, è una parola italiana. La gabola, minuscolo, in italiano è un raggio, un imbroglio. Il mio protagonista è un imbrogliatore, perciò è diventato Gabola con la g maiuscola.

Tuttavia, nel racconto c’è una frase in cui viene usata la parola gabola.

Sì, è splendida, ma è una gabola. Qui un personaggio sta dicendo che la statuetta antica che gli vogliono vendere non solo è falsa, ma è stata fatta da Gabola in sostituzione di quella autentica.

La prima traduzione in inglese era questa: *Yes, it’s beautiful, but it’s fake*. Indubbiamente corretta, ma si perdeva l’aggancio col personaggio, che infatti compare subito dopo. La frase è quindi diventata: *Yes, it’s beautiful, but it’s gabola*. A questo punto una nota esplicativa era inevitabile e necessaria.

Come scrittrice, trovo molto stimolante partecipare attivamente alla ricerca della locuzione adatta, della parola che traduce al meglio le mie storie. È come raccontarle nuovamente, in un mondo parallelo nel quale i miei personaggi, pur così tipici del luogo, parlano inglese.



Mixtures

Clelia Farris

Translated from the Italian
by Rachel Cordasco

I live in Sardinia, one of the largest islands in the Mediterranean. Two languages are spoken here: Italian and Sardinian. The latter is a polymorphic language, possessing many words derived from Latin, and even Phoenician, and has many local variants. Travel just

a few kilometers, from one town to another, and you'll find differences in the vocabulary.

Often, in everyday speech, Sardinians will use an impure Italian, modified by Sardinian syntax and words, so sometimes one needs to know both well in order to understand the meaning of a sentence.

In some of my stories, I have tried to capture this "hybrid" way of speaking, giving the translator a hard time.

For example: "lui si faceva abbagliare da un bel faccino e si prendeva la smurrata."

"Smurrata" is not an Italian word; it's the Italianized version of the Sardinian word "smurrau." In the context of the sentence, it means that the character emerged from the initial spell with a rude, figurative awakening. But "smurrato" has a very precise meaning, since it describes a person who is distracted and dreamy, someone who ends up with their face against a wall. So the translator decided to "use the wall" by transforming the phrase into "hit the hard wall of reality." Indeed, the "wall" is already present in the original word, whereas "wall of reality" is a clever way to convey the word's metaphorical meaning while avoiding the use of a footnote.

Another sentence: "'è illegale,' murrungia l'altro" ["'It's illegal,' the other mutters"]. "Murrungiare" is a hybrid word, transforming the Sardinian word "murrungiai" into a verb resembling Italian verbs ending in "-are." It means "to mutter or criticize something while murmuring to oneself." Together, the translator and I decided to use "mutters," an English equivalent that here, too, avoided the use of an explanatory note.

At one point, one of the characters says, "tu sei poco uscito" ["you haven't gone out much"]. This phrase is the literal translation into Italian of the Sardinian "ses' pagu bes-siu," which means "you don't leave the house, so you don't know the world; you're naïve." Even though it's said in Italian, no one outside of Sardinia would understand it. In English, the translation needed to reflect

that concept, rather than the image of someone shut up at home; that is why the phrase became "you're behind the times."

Moreover, the proper names of some of the characters are often nicknames with a specific meaning in the Sardinian language. One female character is named "Marigosa" - "marigosu" means "slightly bitter," even "pleasantly bitter," much like her personality. Another one is called "Prangi," which literally means "cry," but a "prangi-prangi" is someone who complains about everything and whines constantly.

It would have been impossible to translate each of them into English and also convey the correspondence between the meaning of the name and the personality of the character. Obviously, even in Italian, this connection is lost; no Italian reader would understand the secret behind these names. They are only for Sardinian speakers.

"Gabola," the protagonist of the eponymous story, is, however, an Italian word. The word "gabola" refers to a ruse or a swindle. My protagonist is a con artist, so he became Gabola with a capital "G."

However, there is a sentence in the story where the word "gabola" is used: "Sì, è splendida, ma è una gabola." Here's a character saying that the ancient statuette they want to sell him is not only fake, but it was made by Gabola to replace the authentic one.

The initial English translation was this: "Yes, it's beautiful, but it's fake." Undoubtedly correct, but the connection with the character was lost; in fact, he appears immediately afterwards. The sentence therefore became: "Yes, it's beautiful, but it's gabola." At this point, an explanatory note was inevitable and necessary.

As a writer, I find it very stimulating to actively participate in the search for the right words and phrases that best convey my stories in English. It's like telling them again, in a parallel world where my characters, despite being so typical of their place, speak English.

Red Space: Six Soviet Sci-Fi Films Revisited

Jean-Paul L. Garnier

Through the Thorns to the Stars aka Per Aspera Ad Astra



A group of dead clones are discovered on an exploded spaceship. One is still alive. Is she human or alien? Her memory is gone but she comes to find she is a genetically engineered being created to survive in a world ruined by climate change.

Movie description:

Through the Thorns to the Stars aka *Per Aspera Ad Astra* is a Soviet science fiction film made in 1981. The story is by Kir Bulychov, directed by Richard Viktorov, and stars Yelena Metyolkina and Uldis Lieldiz.

Synopsis:

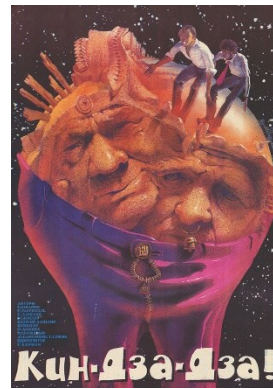
After a live clone is discovered on a destroyed spaceship, she is brought back to Earth and assimilated into the family of the man who found her. As she slowly recovers her memories, she finds that she was created by a scientist exiled from his home planet for protesting against corruption and catastrophic climate change.

Praise and critiques:

This two-part film with a highly original story revolves around a cloned woman found on a derelict spaceship. As with much Soviet cinema, the story is dialog driven and only features minimal special effects, often using lighting to create a sense of atmosphere. Much of the effects are simple, slowed down, sped up, and very practically the zero gravity scenes are filmed underwater. The woman found on the space craft conveys her alien-

ness through movement, causing me to suppose that she is a dancer when not acting, and it is an effective technique without having to resort to camera tricks. The interior design of the spaceships is worth it alone, and the exteriors are really cool models (the best way to make spaceships for film, in my opinion). It also features non-humanoid aliens and a few corny robots, which seem to have been included for comic relief. Over-all it is a wonderful film that is both visually pleasing and also goes into philosophical questions about being human.

Kin-Dza-Dza



Koo! Matches are the only currency that can buy your way back to Earth. Koo! Can you find your way across the wasteland and comprehend the culture well enough to bargain your way back home? Koo! This strange film will

have you wondering what they are smoking in Russia. Koo!

Movie description:

Kin-Dza-Dza is a Russian science fiction film made in 1986, directed by Georgiy Daneliya, starring Stanislav Lyubshin and Yevgeni Leonov.

Synopsis:

Two strangers are accidentally teleported to another planet. They believe they are still on Earth until they begin to meet other people, who only say the word "Koo." They proceed on a strange adventure looking for the machine that can send them back to Earth, while the locals covet the fact that they are in possession of matches.

Praise and critiques:

This film was not only an awesome watch but also highly original. The storyline is strange and surreal, creating a truly foreign dystopian environment, which struck me as an analogy for the self-serving nature of capitalism. Through this bizarre setting, the film explores issues of classism, hierarchy, subservience, sycophantism, and an obsession with being entertained. The film also deals with the issue of the reduction of language (one of the only words the locals use is “Koo”). Overall, the social commentary is abstract, in my opinion a highly effective way to go about it. As the two travelers explore the planet, they begin to fall prey to the commercial ideas of the locals, and in this way I felt that the film was trying to express the dangers of what capitalism does to the psyche.

A Dream Come True



After finding out that an alien ship is on its way to Earth, a distress call is received that the craft has crashed on Mars. A rescue mission is sent to find out what happened to the ship, but a debate rages about whether or not the aliens have friendly intentions.

Movie description:

A Dream Come True is a Russian sci-fi film from 1963 directed by M. Karzhukov and Otar Koberidze, starring Larisa Gordeichik and Boris Borisyonok.

Synopsis:

Book-ended with the cheesy “it was all a dream” scenario, the movie begins with an alien signal being detected. The council debates and is divided by the question of

whether or not the intentions of the aliens are friendly. A mission is sent to find out and to answer the alien’s distress call. The mission is compromised by a solar flare, and a secondary rescue mission sets off to help both the aliens and the first crew. Will the aliens prove benevolent or malevolent?

Praise and critiques:

The spaceship interiors, set design, lighting effects, and synth soundtrack were really cool but the story left something to be desired. The organization of this film was strange, moving from long winded voice-overs to documentary style to musical interlude montages, and lacking a cohesive plot. That being said, it was still an interesting watch. While the story line leaves much to be desired, as a visual piece it was quite good, and if you’re a fan of miniatures and model spaceships (like I am), you will probably enjoy this film for its look alone. The main message of the film is that if alien life exists, then it is most likely benevolent. While I would like to believe that is true, we don’t have any concrete evidence to support that claim and it makes me wonder what kinds of cultural fears this film was addressing for its time.

Loss of Sensation



Robots are here to steal our jobs! The capitalists think they can snuff out the working class and increase productivity at the same time. But when the robots come, the people will be ready!

Movie description:

Loss of Sensation is a Russian film from 1935, directed by Alexandr Andriyevsky and starring S.M. Vecheslov and V.P. Gardin. It is

based on the novel *Iron Riot* by Volodimir Vladko.

Synopsis:

An engineer invents a robot as cheap labor and believes he can take down the capitalists through the production of cheap goods. The working classes view him as a traitor for attempting to take their jobs. Eventually the workers rise up and take control of the robots.

Praise and critiques:

This film is essentially propaganda about the workers versus the capitalists. That being said, it is still a great movie and is worth watching for the robots alone. And the cinematography is excellent, especially for such an early film. Some of the scenes are strange and beautiful, as when the film ramps up the fight among the workers, the robots, and the capitalists. At first, the robots are controlled by a saxophone and there are some really great scenes with dancing robots. As the capitalists take over the robots, their creator and the people are attacked. *Loss of Sensation* is basically a science fiction analogy of the revolution, and for this reason the film is worth watching to get an idea of the hopes and fears of the time.

***The Big Space Travel aka
A Great Space Voyage***

The Soviets were the first to put a woman in space, but should we also be sending children? Three kids set off on a life-changing adventure to the stars and have to work together to make the mission a success. The adult captain of the ship falls sick and it's all up to the thirteen-year-old commander to make the right decisions.

Movie description:

The Big Space Travel aka *A Great Space Voyage* is a Russian science fiction film made in 1975, directed by Valentin Selivanov and

starring Ludmila Berlinskaya, Sergei Obrazov, and Igor Sakharov. It is based on the play *The First Three, or the Year of 2001...* by Sergey Mikhalkov.

Synopsis:

Three children are selected for the Soviet space program and are sent on a mission. When their captain comes down with an illness and is quarantined, one of the children is put in charge and it is up to them to complete the mission without adult supervision.

Praise and critiques:

This film is geared toward children and is generally a propaganda piece designed to get young people interested in the space program. Once you get to the end, it is almost a recruitment film. The set design and spaceships were great, but overall the story is pretty hokey. There are also several goofy dance scenes, and some of the story is told through musical montages with lyrics about the film. The children in charge of the mission overcome many adversities including meteor showers, distress calls, and EVAs. The scene when they are under stress have some attractive shots of space through the ship's windows. Spoiler: it was all a simulation.

Orion's Loop



A mysterious phenomenon is heading toward the Earth. Every ship that has gone to investigate it has been destroyed, their crews driven insane. Can the spaceship *Phaeton* figure out what's really going on? And what will happen when the phenomenon reaches our planet?

Movie description:

Orion's Loop is a Soviet film from 1980, directed by Vasily Levin and starring Leonid Bakshtayev and Gennady Shkurato.

Synopsis:

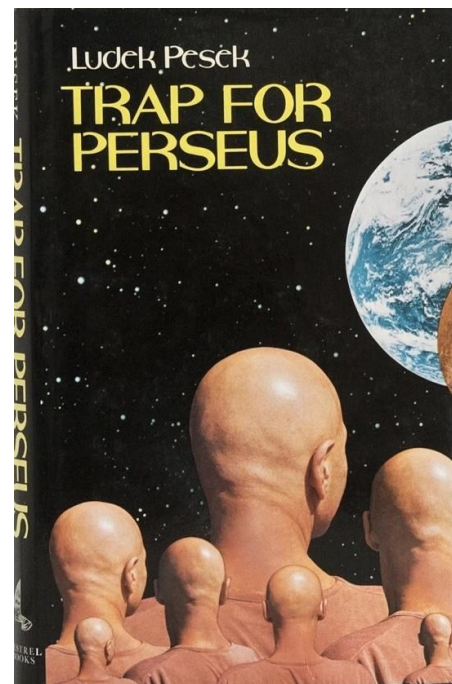
A phenomenon dubbed “Orion’s Loop” is heading towards Earth. The spaceship *Phaeton* is sent to investigate with a crew of humans and androids. Radiation from the Loop causes the crew to hallucinate and several of the androids to be lost. As the crew tries to make sense of the hallucinations, they find that they are actually aliens from the Loop trying to make contact. The crew cannot decide if they believe the aliens to be malevolent or peaceful and are not sure what to make of their claims that the Loop was sent to protect the Earth from an alien virus.

Praise and critiques:

This was an enjoyable dialog driven film that lacked the blatant propaganda of many Soviet sci-fi films. One of the things that came to mind while watching this film is how different thematically Soviet sci-fi is from its American counterpart. While American films tend to deal with xenophobic plots, Soviet films, including this one, tend to deal with issues of miscommunication between alien species. This difference tends to make for more interesting and psychological movies. With slow and deliberate pacing, the tensions created by the introduction of aliens, whose motives are difficult to understand, made this film an intriguing watch.

**Vintage SFT Review**

Joachim Boaz



***Trap for Perseus* by Luděk Pešek (1976), translated from the German translation by Anthea Bell (1980)**

Czech author Luděk Pešek (1919-1999), also a painter of space landscapes and photographer, emigrated to Switzerland with his wife in 1968. Due to his political beliefs and penchant to criticize the state in his early literary works, the Union of Czechoslovak Visual Artists expelled Pešek from its ranks. In Switzerland, he focused on painting space landscapes and providing illustrations for foreign publishing houses like Penguin Books and the National Geographic Society.¹ He also wrote three science fiction novels in Czech, his native language: *The Earth is Near* (1970, trans. Anthea Bell, 1973), *Flight into the World of Tomorrow* (1975), and *Trap for Perseus* (1976, trans. Anthea Bell, 1980). All three first appeared in print in German translations.² Anthea Bell translated two of the novels, *The Earth is Near* and *Trap for Perseus*, into English from German.³ I am

unsure if the Czech manuscripts still exist. In the safety of exile, Pešek's *Trap for Perseus* re-imagines the generation ship, so often a symbol of humanity's technological triumph, as an isolated microcosm of Stalinist extremes detached entirely from its original purpose to colonize the stars.

The Lay of the Halls and Plantations and Other More Conceptual Places

The deep space exploration vessel *Perseus III*, under the command of Commander Steven D. Clair, celebrates the third anniversary of its voyage to investigate Tartarus, the tenth planet of the solar system. The multi-ethnic crew of scientific experts spend their time debating the merits of contemporary scholarship and theory. The tentative filaments of the crisis first fray in a crew debate over *Collaborate or Perish*, a controversial work by Dr. Larry S. Hogan. Hogan claims that "man's efforts to adapt the environment to its own needs were mistaken" and went against "the biological laws of evolution" (3). Blair, laying the conceptual groundwork of all that comes to pass, suggests that Hogan's argument "concerned man as a whole" and "if man changes, what he calls laws must change too" (3). Linda Ramsay, the crew exobiologist and voice of reason, "protested that this would lead to moral apathy" and would infect men without any backbone, leading them "to a position of responsibility, given the right environment!" (3). While on the surface a scene of petty bickering, Pešek uses this off-handed discussion to introduce the conceptual crux of the novel: the dangers of moral relativism. If there is no prescriptive moral compass guiding our behavior towards others, the totalitarian state will forever exist and bend us to its will.

As they approach Tartarus, the crew picks up a strange radio signal, as if someone were monitoring the flight of *Perseus III*. The two previous *Perseus* deep space exploration vessels lost radio contact with Earth. Is the signal

coming from one of the lost ships? The *Perseus II* contained all the requirements for 30-40 years of survival (meaningful work growing food, vast collections of literature and music, drugs in the case of psychological emergency, etc.). Is the source of the signal extraterrestrial?

The crew discover the long lost *Argo*, a vast prototype interstellar spaceship built in the 2050s and 60s, more than 200 years in the past (21). Was it possible that the descendants of the original 120,000 pioneers were alive? What society exists within? The records indicate nebulous "differences of opinion among the commanding officers of the ship" before it cut off radio contact (23). As they approach the *Argo*, they notice the *Perseus II* docked with the larger vessel. Commander Blair decides to lead an away mission in order to discern the fate of its crew. Beyond all belief, the commander of the *Perseus II* sits in his chair waiting for their arrival. In the dead silence of space, he leads them through the hatch into the hallways of the vast *Argo*. Soon communication from the *Argo* to the remaining crew on the *Perseus III* dictates the draconian terms: "They will live with us. And so will you" (48).

The narrative radically shifts into far more disturbing waters. Separated from his crew, Blair awakes in a "globular room" with a man wearing a "blue equilateral triangle with a small black circle in the middle" (51). The man, the Tutor, intones: "Sit down, brother, and forget the past" (54). The leaders of the *Argo*, isolated from the rest of the universe, detach the vessel from its voyage and purpose. There is no destination. The hallways and plantations and technological splendor becomes a Stalinist dystopia. And as the Tutor guides Blair through endless dehumanizing rituals, psychological torture, drugged sleep, Kafkaesque tasks, he's sheared from all his moral anchors and ideals. And, as

Linda Ramsay foretold, Blair bends sinister into the arms of the state.

The Generation Ship as Arena of Authoritarian Speculation

Trap for Perseus joins a legion of stories in which a generation ship becomes an isolated laboratory to explore the impact and implementation of authoritarian schemata.⁴ Authors frequently imagine draconian rituals to control the restless generations trapped between departure and arrival. As a Machiavelian character spells out in Frank M. Robinson's ["The Oceans Are Wide"](#) (1954) to a youth destined to wear the mantle of dictator, the generation ship cannot be "a democracy under any conditions. Democracies are run by men who agree among themselves as to their course of collective action. The colonists weren't free agents" (170). Often authors, deliberately or accidentally, end up endorsing extreme totalitarianism in an effort to get the ship—by hook or by crook—to its planet of destination: E. C. Tubb's [The Space-Born](#) (1956), with its offhanded endorsement of Stalinist purges of non-conformists and the elderly as a necessary evil to achieve the goal, is a particularly egregious example.

However, in my quest to read all pre-1985 examples of generation ships in science fiction, most authors I've covered so far tend to couch the generation ship (and the society within) in a grand narrative of future conquest and colonization of alien worlds. Even if disaster besets the ship, for example in Fred Saberhagen's ["The Long Way Home"](#) (1961), the crew still inch towards the ultimate destination. Occasionally the architects of colonization create deliberate stasis—Poul Anderson's ["The Troublemakers"](#) (1952)—in order to maintain the stability necessary to achieve the grand objective. In instances where accidental decadence or institutional authoritarianism seize control, intrepid youth discover the true nature of things and force

the narrative forward. Chad Oliver's ["The Wind Blows Free"](#) (1957) and Robert Heinlein's influential ["Orphans of the Sky"](#) (1941) are exemplars of this narrative pattern. Pešek's formulation of the generation ship does not fit neatly with other exemplars of the subgenre. As the Tutor explains to Blair, "nothing outside our world is of any interest to us unless it is a threat" (59). The Tutor even implies that the *Argo* can no longer even move from its position. Blair cannot even keep record of time in his cell (77). The past and future collapse into each other. There is no beginning. There is no end. Stasis.

Pešek detaches the *Argo* entirely from its purpose to explore and colonize in order to serve as a condemnation (and analog) of the Soviet state: a state hurtling towards collapse; a state trapped in a self-justifying manifesto of transformative life yet diseased, corrupt, and immoral to the core. The Tutor proclaims "there are no lower or higher classes here. We are all brothers" (89). The state here is supported and encouraged by a legion of brainwashed supporters, willing to look the other way as their colleagues are sent to the gulags. While outnumbering the Black Shirt enforcers of the regime, the workers, brainwashed and traumatized, avoid even looking at the police for fear of punishment.

In the novel's most successful moments, Pešek conveys how the totalitarian state transforms the physical space of the generation ship and the psychological workings of the minds within. A "plantation room" with a "solitary, dark green banana tree" (67) becomes the site of psychological torment as Blair shifts soil from one side to the other until he truly believes "the basis of human happiness is work" (69). Blair, shifted from his cell to a larger dormitory of workers, watches how his companions, "whom he had taken for stupid near-morons with very few emotions," become swept up and moved by a whole series of seemingly nonsensical fairy tales

piped through the ship's speakers (97). In another instance, he realizes that the "way the workers were organized" and the machines they used were "deliberately primitive" in order to create the work needed to pacify the masses (97). And soon Blair, too, yearns for the "present, the timeless, unbounded present" (111). The fate of the world, the nature of the world, the connection formed by the past, the desire formed by the future, are unraveled and rewoven into the superstructure of the totalitarian present.

Recommended for fans of science fictional allegories of totalitarianism.

¹ For Luděk Pešek's influence as a space artist, see N. Cramer's "[Ludek Pesek's Role as Space Artist](#)" in *Organizations and Strategies in Astronomy* 5, ed. A. Heck (2004), 259-272.

² As Pešek was in exile, I assume they did not appear in Czech originally but rather it was the language he was most comfortable writing in.

³ Biographical info from the Czech entry on Wikipedia.

⁴ For a survey of the science fiction on generation ships, see Simone Caroti's *The Generation Starship in Science Fiction: A Critical History, 1934-2001* (2011). In my own explorations, I've added to Caroti's list on my site. Caroti does not include Pešek's novel.

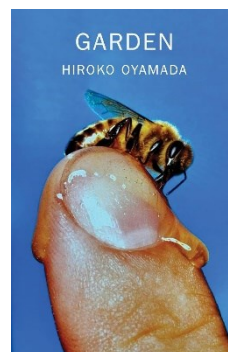


Forthcoming Books

Jessica Rose Sanford

Garden by Hiroko Oyamada

Translated from the Japanese by David Boyd, Lucy North, and Yuki Tejima · New Directions · Sept. 8, 2026



From the author of *The Hole* and *The Factory* comes a collection of fifteen stories where the natural world quietly upends everyday life. Crabs swarm a landfill, giant tadpoles churn in a pond, ants pour from faucets, and chance encounters

with animals or forgotten local rituals leave ordinary people subtly transformed.

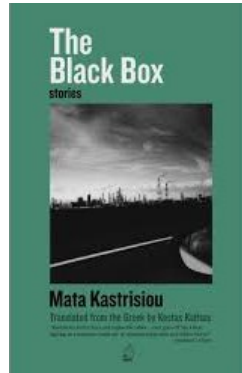
Oyamada's gift is making the familiar feel just a little off. Her stories unfold with dream-like logic, building unease through small shifts rather than big twists, while themes of family, memory, and humanity's uneasy relationship with nature run beneath the surface. If you're drawn to literary fiction that blurs realism and the surreal, this is a journey worth embarking on.

The Black Box: Stories by Mata Kastrisiou

Translated from the Greek by Kostas Kaltsas · Arb Editions · Sept. 1, 2026

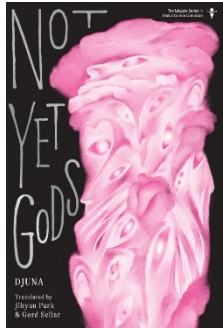
This first English-language collection introduces Greek writer Mata Kastrisiou through stories that slide effortlessly between realism and the fantastic. A homeless man shelters on New Year's Eve, schoolchildren compete for the chance to meet a beloved cartoon character, an elderly man confronts fading memories on an empty beach, and even a murder on a distant asteroid carries surprising emotional weight.

What ties these stories together is Kastrisiou's sharp eye for people living at the edges of ordinary life. The prose is economical, often darkly funny, and deeply compassionate, balancing surreal premises with genuine emotional insight. Readers who enjoy writers like Kate Folk or Ottessa Moshfegh, but are looking to discover a new international voice, should keep this one on their radar.



***Not Yet Gods* by Djuna**

Translated from the Korean by Gord Sellar and Jihyun Park · Kaya Press · Aug. 11, 2026



After a nuclear explosion in North Korea, a South Korean classroom becomes the site of an astonishing discovery: certain children can amplify the telepathic and telekinetic abilities of those around them. As governments and corporations race to exploit these human "batteries" for everything from energy production to space travel, the collection explores what happens when extraordinary power is concentrated in the lives of ordinary teenagers. Told through interconnected stories, the book moves between science fiction, horror, mystery, and political allegory.

Djuna is one of South Korea's most celebrated speculative fiction writers, and this long-awaited English translation showcases why. The ideas are bold, but they're grounded in questions about power, disability, exploitation, and resistance that feel remarkably timely. If you like ambitious science fiction that values both big concepts and memorable characters, you won't be disappointed here.

Books We Want Translated

Julia Meitov Hersey

***The Tunnel* by Yana Vagner**

I like sad books. I find them cathartic. And no, it's not because I grew up reading Russian literature--I also read plenty of comic novels and hilarious short stories, and loved them all. I'd like to think that complex, dark narratives balance out my (so far) happy life. I feel very fortunate, and these books remind me not to take my luck for granted.

The Tunnel by Yana Vagner is one of those books. You may know Vagner's name from the Netflix series *To the Lake* that came out in 2020 and was endorsed by Stephen King. *To the Lake*, based on Vagner's novel *Vongozero*, told the story of a young woman who's trying to flee Moscow during a pandemic. It was a (very timely) survival novel, written a few years before March of 2020. As you can imagine, it was bleak and bone-chilling and amazing, and of course I loved it, both in the original Russian and in the excellent English translation by Maria Wiltshire. I envy those who have yet to read *To the Lake*--I miss the intensity of Vagner's prose, her exquisite storytelling, and the poignancy of her writing. Luckily, I encountered all of this again in *The Tunnel*.

It's the end of a long summer weekend, and Muscovites are coming back to the city after a few days of family gatherings, gardening, squabbling, and whatever else Muscovites do on their *dachas*. There are a few pickup trucks, and even a smattering of mysterious official cars with tinted windows. The traffic is terrible. The vehicles enter a long tunnel underneath the river. Halfway through the tunnel, everything stops. It's very hot. Everyone just wants to get home.

I won't spoil anything if I tell you that the initial civility turns into something else entirely. And yet, in Vagner's novel, the hermetic thriller trope doesn't feel tired--perhaps, it's because she's just so good at

emotional manipulation--in the best possible way. Her characters are complex and unpredictable, making our sympathy shift every few pages. Points of view are swapped often enough to keep the action taut while giving us enough time to form unsteady alliances. These obstinate, contentious, fragile, frustrating people find themselves in an impossible situation--and who are we to judge them?

https://www.bgs-agency.com/files/ugd/28fbdd_219c973c862d4dfb8d0b3fdb43ff27f3.pdf

(Excerpt from the book posted on Vagner's literary agency's website--translated by me)

***Manunia* by Narine Abgaryan**

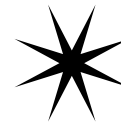
Allow me to pivot. The second book I'd love to see translated is completely different. I came across it during a very difficult time for my family, when my dad was diagnosed with terminal cancer. He read tons of books during his chemo and doctor's visits, and I was responsible for making sure his Kindle had plenty of options. He wanted something happy, something uplifting, but not "light." *Manunia* was the only book he reread that year--I believe he reread it at least four times. He laughed out loud at some of the passages and quoted them to me over and over again--and it was precious and magical to hear laughter fill the infusion room.

Manunia is an autobiographical children's book--sort of. Set in the eighties in a small Armenian town of Berd, *Manunia* tells the story of two little girls, Narine (the author) and Manunia, her best friend. The girls get into all sorts of hilarious situations, deal with their quirky family members, observe the colorful characters that live in the neighborhood, and just generally have a great summer. A perfect book to read with your children? Absolutely. Your children will love it. But even if you're older than ten, you will laugh out loud and will have your heart broken a little by the memories of a magnificent childhood, of the time you were loved unconditionally,

of the time when friendship was the most precious thing in your sparkling, brand-new life, and when every day presented myriads of miracles, one more extraordinary than the other. Abgaryan writes about her childhood, her family traditions, the multicultural experience of growing up among Armenians, Georgians, Azerbaijanis, Russians, Jews, and Romans, where every bite of food, every musical note, every sarcastic remark is a mix of cultures and philosophies; she writes about a place where the next war is forever just beyond the doorstep, and where people are united by their efforts to keep their children safe.

https://www.bgs-agency.com/files/ugd/28fbdd_58f3175c434046da9074ef2cf445dd36.pdf

(Excerpt from the book posted on Vagner's literary agency's website--translated by Siân Valvis)



Hungarian Speculative Fiction: The Three Pillars

Austin Wagner

When it comes to writing about Hungarian speculative fiction for an English-speaking audience, an enormous problem rears its ugly head before the first sentence can even be typed out -- namely that very little speculative fiction written in the last fifty years has been translated from Hungarian into English. You have some classics from the early and mid-20th century that have made it into translation, sure, but just as British fantasy, Polish science fiction, and American horror didn't start and end with Tolkien, Lem, and Lovecraft, neither did Hungarian speculative fiction die before the turn of the century. If you believe,

like I do, that one of the greatest strengths of SFF is to comment on, critique, and question the ills of society, to shine a light (however eldritch) on the plight of those suffering the most, shouldn't we be fighting tooth and nail to get more contemporary SFF into English? I certainly think so.

So, teeth filed and nails sharpened, I'd like to introduce three Hungarian authors today. Not only are they three of my personal favorites, they are also nigh inarguably three of the pillars holding up the world of contemporary Hungarian speculative fiction. And as fate would have it, they each occupy a different corner of the SFF tent: Botond Markovics with science fiction, Anita Moskát with fantasy, and Attila Veres with horror.

SCIENCE FICTION – BOTOND MARKOVICS

In the world of science fiction, [Botond Markovics](#) (who previously wrote under the pen-name Brandon Hackett) will be the first on nearly anyone's list, though here it's especially important to reiterate that we're looking at contemporary science fiction. Hungary has a strong science fiction tradition, but its icons – Péter Zsoldos, István Nemere, or the *Galaktika* magazine – were mostly in their heyday throughout the '60s, '70s, and '80s. When it comes to sci-fi that has appeared post-2000, multi-award winning Markovics is largely unrivaled in consistency and success.

Markovics's work is in many ways classical space opera. Far future, spacefaring adventure, star-hopping humans (or transhumans), black holes and wormholes, stellar technology, the works. But while the foundational elements of his books may be familiar to the avid sci-fi reader, the skill with which he seamlessly integrates the social concerns of the modern age into his page-turning narratives as they plow relentlessly forward is unparalleled.

This seamless integration is what strikes me most with Markovics's work. Issues of gender, economic inequality, xenophobia, and corporate or political greed feature frequently in his work, but never in a heavy-handed, overwrought, "look at me I'm talking about current events" way. Consider Markovics's 2020 novel, *Disposable Bodies*. In it, humans develop the technology to print new bodies for themselves as frequently as they wish, transferring their consciousness from body to body. So, naturally, it becomes the norm for people to experiment with different body types, genders, physiques, etc. Whether or not someone truly is male or female ceases to matter – characters who began the book locked into their original gender often spend more time in other bodies than their "own" body. Sexual intimacy becomes a marathon affair, with partners swapping out spent bodies for fresh ones, changing gender, build, race, you name it. Is Markovics hyperfixating on making some grand statement, pointing a flashing sign at his stance on transgender rights and warping his novel in detrimental ways to fit his views in? No. This is simply a logical, natural consequence of the world he has created.

In his 2017 novel *Xeno*, we encounter multiple alien races – one is completely genderless, another has a sexual classification system undiscernible to humanity, and the methods and duties associated with reproduction are unlike anything on Earth. Which makes sense! Why would alien species from across the galaxy fall into artificial, human-manufactured categorizations? And in his most recent book from just a few months ago, *Bionauts*, it is the greed and destructive nature of capitalism that sets the backdrop: humans have discovered a gargantuan, planet-sized living creature orbiting a nearby star, so what do we do? Harvest its flesh and sell it as a premium luxury product back on Earth, of course. The social critique here is strongly on the nose, but again, it is not forced, it doesn't

feel artificially inserted into a story where it doesn't fit. Rather, it's an all-too-believable setup for a novel that is, at its core, one of discovery, both external (we're flying spaceships through something's veins and getting attacked by school bus-sized white blood cells, after all) and internal, as the characters come to realize all too quickly. This fluidity in Markovics's thinking, writing, and integration of these ideas into his books in a natural, unobtrusive, but still crucial way, is what makes his work so compelling for me.

FANTASY – ANITA MOSKÁT

Not to be outdone in matters of social commentary, we turn to fantasy and [Anita Moskát](#). Where Markovics excels in robust, fast-paced storytelling, Moskát thrives on pure creativity and the originality of her ideas. It is no exaggeration to say she is one of, if not the, most original SFF writer in Hungary today. Nor does she stick exclusively to fantasy, as her most recent volume of short stories, *The Theses of Lies* (which includes her BSFA award-winning short story "[Liecrafft](#)," published in English by Apex Magazine), shows. Still, her standout novel is undoubtedly 2019's *Skin and Hide*, a piece of biological and political fantasy as unexpected and gut-wrenching as biology and politics can be in the real world. In it, animals suddenly and unexpectedly begin to cocoon up, only to emerge days later as part-human, part-animal (and derogatorily named) *breeds*. In some places throughout the world (Denmark, where one of the characters hails from), they are welcomed and integrated, while in others (Budapest, where the story takes place) they are ostracized, controlled, and herded into ghettos. You would be hard put to find a more pointed analogy to the "migration crisis" in Europe beginning in 2015 (which I'll touch on later), but you luckily *won't* be hard put to find English excerpts from the novel, available at both [Hungarian Literature Online](#) and [khōréō](#).

Another of Moskát's brilliantly socially-minded works is *Anchorpoint*, in which humans are tethered to the spot in which they were born, unable to travel more than a thousand or so paces in any direction. The only group that can travel freely, and who have therefore consolidated an extraordinary amount of power? Pregnant women. But what is it that gives pregnant women this power? What anchored humans to their birth spots in the first place? How do the earth eaters, humans with the power to consume earth and use its magic to help crops and gardens flourish, factor into this upside-down power dynamic?

Beyond her boundless creativity, what I love most about Moskát's work is its refusal to oversimplify, especially when it comes to her characters. In either of the aforementioned books, I honestly don't remember a single character who was unequivocally "good" or "bad," someone I was rooting for or against without any reservations. In *Skin and Hide*, the *breeds* could have easily been the perfect victims – wholly innocent, harmless, the very image of victimhood. But not with Moskát writing them. The *breeds* are just as complex, multifaceted, and often flawed as those wielding power over them. In the upside-down gender dynamic of *Anchorpoint*, she could have created two warring camps as clear-cut as Tolkien's orcs and elves: the violent, oppressive pregnant women; and the helpless, powerless, subjugated men. But she didn't. Every character, male, female, or otherwise, regardless of life station or circumstances, is motivated by a plethora of forces both internal and external. They are flawed, they err, try to rectify, try to grow, and often fail. Put simply, Moskát's characters are painfully real. She addresses complex societal issues in a complex manner, refusing to oversimplify these fraught topics with wooden characters or cookie-cutter platitudes, encouraging the reader to think beyond the lightning-fast soundbites we're accustomed

to nowadays. I have no doubt that her upcoming novel, set to release in just a couple of months, and one which she dictated aloud while fighting a debilitating bout of tendonitis that left her temporarily unable to type, will exceed the already-soaring expectations of her readers.

HORROR – ATTILA VERES

And finally we turn to Attila Veres, the representative of what happens to be my personal favorite in broad genre terms: horror. Of the three authors discussed here, Veres has so far found the most success in the English market: yes, Markovics has ambitions of breaking in, and Moskát won the BSFA Award for best translation this year, but Veres has a proper flesh-and-blood collection of short stories that was released in 2022, [*The Black Maybe: Liminal Tales*](#), translated by Luca Karafiáth and published by Valancourt Books, and which made it onto 2023's Bram Stoker Awards shortlist. This, to anyone who has picked up the collection, is no surprise. Veres is a master of the short story, and particularly the [*Hungarian short story*](#) (update: since the linked story was published, Veres released his second volume of short stories with Valancourt Books, [*This'll Make Things a Little Easier*](#), in his own translation. As such, this version available online is probably no longer the "certified" English version, but they haven't asked me to take it down yet, so until then, enjoy either or!) His work, perhaps in more ways than Markovics and Moskát, is truly and distinctly Hungarian, often centering the traditions of rural Hungary, from harvest season to thermal baths to the famous (or infamous) pig slaughter. As I wrote previously in my [review of the collection](#): "In Europe's Hungary, men rise at dawn, get well and drunk, slaughter a pig, and spend all day butchering, boiling, and otherwise making use of all the animal bits. In Veres' Hungary, however, the pig is replaced with things far more bizarre, whether it's recently deceased

villagers returning from the grave, or something far more ethereal, more essential, ripped from the interdimensional aether and mixed into the earth for a fruitful harvest."

Veres has also written a full-length novel, *Darker Outside*; while perhaps not as popular as his shorter works, it is nonetheless a wonderfully original tale. It takes place on a farm (of sorts), placing it well within Veres' wheelhouse, but is also deeply Lovecraftian – strange tentacled creatures have suddenly appeared in one of Hungary's forests, and cannot be relocated beyond the country's borders. But they have their uses, and are therefore protected (exploited?) by workers who extract their bodily byproducts. The main character develops a unique connection with the creatures before being sucked into a nightmarish series of events straight out of the mind of Lovecraft's and Veres' love child. Like any of his short stories, it is eldritch, bizarre, rural, surreal, and deeply, horrifyingly Hungarian, which is what keeps me coming back to his work time and again.

AFTERWORD: IMMIGRATION

I have not been entirely forthright with you. Yes, I chose perhaps my three favorite authors to talk about. Yes, they are indeed the undisputed leading figures of their respective genres. But another reason I wanted to write about these three was because of three of their specific works, which I have already alluded to: Botond Markovics's *Xeno*, Anita Moskát's *Skin and Hide*, and Attila Veres's *Darker Outside*. These three books, aside from being outstanding works in their own right, take on a whole new dimension when considered as a set. And that is because of both when and why they were published.

These three books, all published between 2017 and 2019, are a response to the so-called "2015 European migrant crisis," in which large numbers of migrants and refugees entered Europe – many through Hungary – fleeing war and devastation across Africa and the

Middle East. Hungary is sadly, and by now infamously, hostile toward migrants (whether or not Péter Magyar's extraordinary ouster of strongman Viktor Orbán in the last election will change this remains to be seen). As such, it is no accident that we now return to my earlier contention: "one of the greatest strengths of SFF is to comment on, critique, and question the ills of society, to shine a light on the plight of those suffering the most." Because these three novels are stories of immigration, of arrival, of otherness. In *Xeno*, Earth is colonized, along with two other planets inhabited by different species of aliens, by a technologically superior race, and citizens from the three worlds are forcibly migrated about the galaxy for reasons none of them can discern. In *Skin and Hide*, a new group of undesirable *breeds* appears, and we see how Hungarian society reacts to the newcomers. In *Darker Outside*, an alien species arrives – or perhaps was always there, unseen – and is at first hunted, later farmed and exploited, a weird and bizarro cattle.

These works all explore the topics of immigration, acceptance, exploitation, bigotry, and fear of the unknown, words we are all too familiar with in today's political and social discourse. But this is precisely why they are so important. They show the power of speculative fiction to react to social, cultural, and political upheaval, and these authors, these works, show that the Hungarian speculative fiction community, and the literary community at large, is pushing back against the rhetoric for which Hungary is becoming internationally known. If anyone ever asks me what makes Hungarian speculative fiction unique, what sets it apart from the wealth of genre books that are already out there, and why it should be translated as widely as possible, these are the books and the authors I'll point to.

A Translated Hugo Award: An Interview with Jake Casella Brookins

In 2019, Chris Barkley, Juli Marr, and Mark Richards submitted a motion at Worldcon to create a new Hugo Awards category for Best Translated Novel. It was listed on Dublin 2019's New Business Agenda. Having failed to pass, the idea was taken up six years later by Jake Casella Brookins, who is one of the founders of the Translated Hugo Initiative, a project that gathers together people and information in a bid to, once, again, have the Hugo Awards make a place for the recognition of non-Anglophone speculative fiction. The conversation that began in 2018 has raised many different issues about the viability and necessity for such an award, with some in the field claiming that a translation category would segregate SFT instead of allowing it to compete on its own terms with Anglophone works. As others have argued (myself included), the fact that Anglophone works win nearly every single category in every single year suggests that texts translated from other languages need their own category, which would increase visibility and bring Worldcon in line with its claim that "the Hugos are World Awards."

I've asked Jake Casella Brookins to discuss why this proposal has received so much pushback and what we can do to move the needle further toward a Translated Work category at Worldcon.

* * *

Rachel Cordasco: Thank you for joining me in this discussion about a Translated Work category for the Hugo Awards. What would you say now, six years after Chris's initial proposal, to those who think that a Translated Work award would

somehow minimize the importance of SF in translation in the Anglophone world?

Jake Casella Brookins: Sincerely, I really don't want to offend anyone who means well by saying this, but basically I think this is really wrong-footed. I don't think any of us here would have felt motivated to suggest the category if it *did* seem like the Hugos recognize the importance of translated SFF. The fact of the matter is, the awards have barely recognized translated work. Only three translated novels have been finalists in over 80 years, and in retrospect it's pretty easy to spot things that should have been on there—*Solaris* or *Roadside Picnic*, for example. The idea that adding a special category will minimize or disparage these works somehow—that people will shake their heads and say “it only won because it's translated” or something—is frankly really weird, given that in practice it's just continuing to exclude this work. Although I will add that how the hypothetical category is structured within the existing Hugo rules is really important—probably more to say on that later.

Also, just in the spirit of honesty: in reading over the notes on previous attempts and in comments in a few places as we've been discussing the Translated Hugo project, I have been struck by the level of hostility to the idea from some folks. Don't want to go long on that, but do want to acknowledge it.

RC: I agree, it really does seem like hostility, which I find very strange. Do people get so riled up about the Best Related Work category or Best Professional Artist category? What might it be, in your opinion, about bringing in translated work that gets people's hackles up? Might it have something to do with Anglophone authors and publishers not wanting to share attention and money with non-Anglophone authors and publishers? Or is it that people don't like change and new categories make them nervous?

JCB: I don't want to armchair-psychologize too much. And I think it's very important to underscore that Worldcon, the Hugos, and the infrastructure that keeps them both going are 100% volunteer; purely on that level I understand the resistance to adding new categories. It's a lot of work for a lot of people, in ways that aren't immediately obvious when you're just scrolling down the list of Hugo winners.

However, that opposition is there. Much of the US is, unfortunately, very mono-lingual; even if you're opposed in principle to Anglophone imperialism it can feel bad to have to confront that in your hobby. Furthermore, we're asking people to read more—another six works added to the shortlists—and honestly probably asking the Hugo crowd to read outside their existing comfort zone. Without wanting to cast aspersions too broadly, there's been a trend in Hugo lists towards a kind of inward-facing, self-referential, sanded-down vision of what speculative fiction can do, and the kind of work I at least get excited about in translated SF tends to contrast with that pretty sharply.

There's also—and sincerely I'm not throwing stones here, I just don't understand it—just some weird aggro vibes in the Worldcon Business Meetings sometimes; some of the opposition to the translated category that we pick up on might just come from that.

RC: In “So Glad You (Didn't) Ask: A Column of Unsolicited Opinions — #31” in *File 770* (2018), Chris said that “we, as a community, must show that the Worldcon isn't just a traveling genre party for English speakers, but the whole, wide world.” What would adding a translation category do to make this a reality? What are your thoughts on the *benefits* of adding a translation category—why would it positively impact the Hugos as a whole?

JCB: I actually have a more limited vision of Worldcon than Chris's, though I find his vision very laudable. The truth is it just is an English-language organization; I don't think we need to beat ourselves up about not finding a path to a truly global, poly-lingual award—there are no fan-run, democratically voted literary awards that cover lots of languages, because the logistic issues there are insurmountable. But adding a translated category as a nod towards the rest of the world feels like a very small but very necessary step we could make.

What I think the Worldcon community could do is a better job of looking outward to the kind of SF that's being produced in other languages, and a better job of inviting more of those reading and writing communities in. I don't want to make an overblown case for canon or anything, but I also think the value of the Hugos *as a record* is really immense: they trickle down to libraries and bookstores and reading lists decades after the hullabaloo of any given award ceremony has passed. And so from that perspective, doing a better job of getting more of the best SF *in the world* on those lists is worth a lot.

In terms of benefits to the Hugos and Worldcon, I think this is what excites me the most about the idea. "How to bring in new people and new energy" is always something to think about, and: there is so much excitement, so many different perspectives available if we start bringing in translated work. I think it would enlarge the conversation, it would pull along a lot of people (writers, readers, editors, reviewers) who are connected to the publishers who are putting out translated SF; and I think it would elevate the visibility of the Hugos within the larger literary world. Having a tradition of a solid translated category would also, I hope, lay some institutional groundwork for having more non-Anglophone fandom involved in Worldcon.

RC: On the [Translated Hugo Initiative Website](#), you argue that now is "a great time to propose this award due to the strength and variety of speculative fiction being translated today." Since you know about how the Worldcon business meetings work and what goes into getting a new category adopted, does 2026 seem like the right time, given the slow but steady increase in SFT over the past few years? After all, 2025 saw 90 long-form works of SFT published!

JCB: So there's two questions here. The first one I saw people asking in various discussions about the idea: is there *enough* translated speculative fiction being published to support the category? That was one of the first questions we set out to answer with the Translated Hugo group, and the answer is very clearly yes! Using resources from your website, Rachel, and digging through publisher catalogs and Edelweiss, we definitely think there's enough possible candidates.

The second question: is now, 2026, the right time to push for adding the category? And I'm of two minds about that. On the one hand, there seems to be increasing buzz about SFT in various ways, and a ton of wonderful, Hugo-worthy work; and, given the violent xenophobia and fascism in the US & elsewhere right now, it seems like a really good time for international SF fandom to welcome and incorporate a more global approach to the genre. But the other hand is: on a much narrower, smaller, more specific scale, I want to be sure we've laid the groundwork for the category addition. Millions of people may eventually see and read the Hugos, but only thousands attend Worldcon; a smaller number votes; a smaller number than that nominates; and a VERY small number of people are active in the business meetings where the rules are modified. And those are the people we need to convince.

Long answer I know, but basically as I've thought and learned more about how the process of adding a Hugo actually works, I've slowed my roll a little, and I want to be sure that we have the evidence, the support, enough of a group buy-in for it to work, specifically, for the Hugos. I am personally completely sure that the category is a good idea, but we can't expect everyone at the business meeting—who very likely do not read as much SFT and SFT coverage as we do—to automatically agree. I'd really like to see a Worldcon (looking at you, Montréal) do a Translated Hugo as a special award, as kind of a trial balloon, and schedule the proposal to line up with that. There might be other intermediate steps we could take, too—maybe see if we could put a nonbinding referendum on the idea to a general vote, and look for innovative ways to get more translated work visible to the Worldcon community.

Also, in the spirit of honesty: we need a core group of motivated folks to push for this, similar to how the Poetry category was added. A half-dozen or so folks joined me to get the Translated Hugo Initiative going (special shout-out to Eden Kupermintz for the website work), and we received a ton of signatories to our proposal, but I didn't quite get the momentum going to where things were happening if I wasn't pushing them along. And between my day-job, editing for the *Ancillary Review*, running *A Meal of Thorns*, doing my own reading and writing—I've been running low on time and spoons. I'm planning on attending business meetings this year, having conversations at Worldcon and elsewhere to rally some support, but I want to wait to really make a push for the amendment until we're sure it's the right structure and the right moment.

RC: Getting down to details, what shape would this new Hugo award take? Would it be just for translated novels, short fiction, etc?

JCB: This is the big question! Not quite coming to consensus around this was part of why I've been feeling like the THI wasn't quite ready for lift-off.

So: personally, I think it really needs to be for book-length works only. I don't think that putting single poems or short stories up against novels is good practice, for a whole bunch of reasons. That said, I wouldn't want to exclude short novels, maybe mosaic novels or collections—if we're only going to have one translated category, and let's be realistic, we're only going to have one at most—it would be good to have it as broad as will still work as a category, the better to capture the kind of excellent work going on around the world. So perhaps a definition that's something like: "A translated book-length work of science fiction or fantasy originally published in a language other than English, with a length of 17,500 words or more."

And to be clear, I'm focusing on book-length works not just for reasons of apples to apples in voting, but because of all of those add-on benefits. A book you can buy, that a library or bookstore can stock, is a way for the Hugos to have reach and influence and endurance in a way that shorter forms can't provide. And great book-length SFT is coming from a range of presses and publishers that would be good to get on Worldcon radars.

Here's the kicker, though: to answer those folks who say a translated category would "diminish" translated works, and to avoid some unlikely-but-possible scenarios I imagined when I first started proposing this: I think we *also* need to include an amendment that appearance on the Translated Hugo finalist list does not prohibit those works from appearing in other categories. The absolute worst-case scenario here, then, would be a *Parasite* situation: a book winning Best Novel and Best Translated. In my opinion that is not a bad thing at all, it's super

exciting; and at any rate it is *super* unlikely. (A reminder that the only translated novel to win a Hugo thus far only got on the shortlist after a retraction, was translated with the financial support of a superpower, and distributed by the single-biggest Anglophone SF publisher; a grand total of **three** translated novels have ever made the finalists in all the years of Worldcon.) I've come to think that's a necessary part of the proposal, but it would probably, understandably, make Worldcon constitution-knowers a little edgy.

RC: The Locus Awards and the British Science Fiction Association Awards have both adopted translation categories (the former for novels and the latter for short fiction). Do you see this as progress in the movement toward Anglophone recognition of SFT that might sway those reluctant to add a category, or do you think that much more needs to be done to convince those in the SFF community? I, for one, find these to be hopeful signs!

JCB: I think both! They're definitely very hopeful signs. Locus reviewers and associated folks have been doing a lot of great work to boost SFT for Anglophone readers; my impression of British SF literary fandom is that it's a bit more, well, literary, compared to the major US communities, so it's been really heartening to see translated work accepted and promoted by the BSFA.

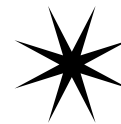
That said, I do think a lot more needs to be done, on "convince the kind of fans who participate in Worldcon" and "convince readers of the main genre imprints" levels. There's been a huge push towards getting translators' names on the covers, that helps; a lot of the work to be done, I think, is the slow distributed work of connecting readers of science fiction and fantasy to SFT that they would absolutely dig, that's maybe not winding up on the traditional SFF shelves and lists. That's work for indie bookstores, librarians, bookclubs, and various magazines and online

communities; it's a little chicken and egg, but that's a big part of why I want a Hugo for translated work.

RC: What have been some of your favorite works of SFT lately and what have you wished was on the ballot in recent years? Do you have any favorite authors or publishers of SFT?

JCB: Oh gosh, lots. *Sea Now* (Eva Meijer, tr. Anne Thompson Melo) and *Centroeuropa* (Vicente Luis Mora, tr. Rahul Bery) are pretty ambiguous generically but definitely in the SFF neighborhood, and weren't just my favorite translated speculative fiction but possibly favorite books *over all* in recent years. Michel Nieva's *Dengue Boy* (tr. Rahul Bery again!) is ludicrously fun, a gross-out comic cosmic horror sci-fi cli-fi novel. To name just three!

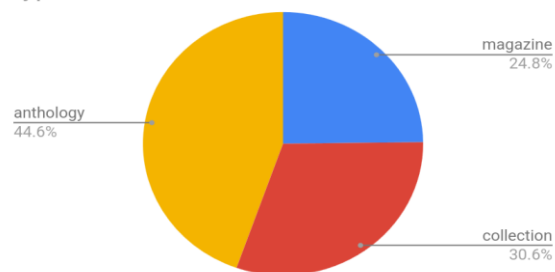
We're blessed with a lot of smaller presses doing fantastic work with SFT, though again I wish there was more intentional bridge-building going on with traditional genre reading communities. New Directions, Charco, Restless, University of Minnesota Press, Two Lines, and Coffee House are all presses I try to keep an eye on, they're publishing gorgeous stuff.



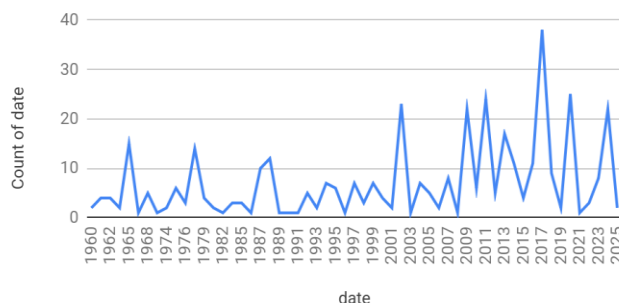
Source Language Spotlight: French

Short-form

type



date



Total # of short stories: 399

from magazines: 99 (24.8%)

collections: 122 (30.6%)

from anthologies: 178 (44.6%)

peak short French SFT: 2017 (38 stories)

mostly from Ghelderone & Willems colls

(both Belgian)

Top publishers (mags/anth):

Tesseract Q (anth): 22 (5.5%)

F&SF (mag): 15 (3.8%)

Traveling Towards Epsilon (anth): 14 (3.5%)

countries/provinces:

France: 63.9%

Quebec: 59%

Belgium: 11.5%

England: 4.8%

Algeria: 1.3%

Switzerland: 1%

Madagascar, Martinique: 0.8% each

Benin, Haiti, Ivory Coast: 0.3% each

Morocco, Senegal

164 unique authors

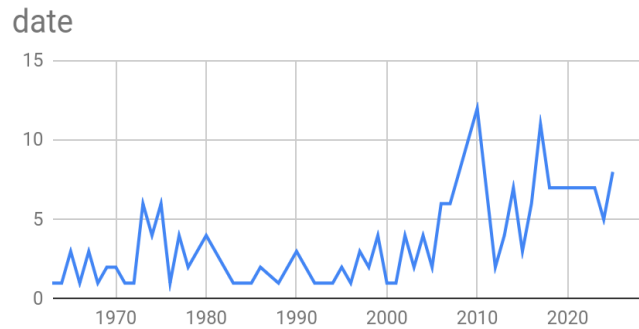
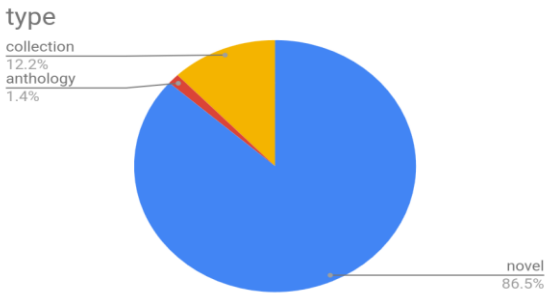
Top 3 authors:

Jean-Claude Dunyach: 38 stories

Élisabeth Vonarburg: 27 stories

Leonora Carrington: 19 stories

Long-form



Total # of long-form texts: 223

Novels: 192 (86.5%)

Collections: 27 (12.2%)

Anthologies: 3 (1.4%)

Top publishers:

Black Coat Press: 31

DAW: 13

Wakefield Press: 12

142 unique authors

Top three authors:

Pierre Boulle, Pierre Barbet: 7 novels each

Maurice Renard: 3 novels, 1 collection

peak long French SFT: 2010 (12 texts)

mostly from Black Coat Press

countries/provinces:

France: 71.3

Quebec: 13.9%

Belgium: 5.8%

Algeria: 1.8%

Congo: 1.3%

England, Haiti, Switzerland, Mauritania: 0.9%

Djibouti, Tunisia, Madagascar, 0.4%

Cote d'Ivoire

TAKEAWAYS:

- Most short Francophone SFT can be found in anthologies and overwhelmingly comes from France & Quebec.
- Short Francophone SFT has a lot of peaks from publications of anthologies & collections.
- Top 3 short-form authors are Dunyach, Vonarburg, Carrington- the first 2 are science fiction authors, the third is surrealist.
- Long-form texts are overwhelmingly novels from France.
- Black Coat Press has released more French SFT than any other publisher by far since the early 2000s- many of early French SFF.
- The top 2 French long-form SF authors in English are Boulle and Barbet (science fiction)- both were translated and published in the 1960s, 70s, and 80s.

NEWS

Award news:

Below are the novels that have won SFF awards around the world during the past few months (go [here](#) for a full list since 2025):

***Kesuura* by Marisha Rasi-Koskinen (S&S) - Tähtivaeltaja Award (Finland)**

***Aatea* by Anouck Faure (Argyll) - Grand Prix de l'Imaginaire (France)**

***Festin de larmes* by Morgane Causarieu & Vincent Tassy (ActuSF)- Prix Imaginales (France)**

***La fille qui sauva Hiroshima* by Stéphane Desienne (Gephyre) - Prix ActuSF de l'Uchronie (France)**

***Labeled Human* by Ningen Rokudo (Hayakawa) - Seiun Awards (Japan)**

***Mai verrà la notte* by Mariangela Cerrino (Ed. Tabula Fati) - Premio Vegetti (Italy)**

***Sintonia* by Audrey Pleynet (Le Béal' Éditions) - Prix Rosny Aîné (France)**

The Locus Awards now includes a “Translated Novel” category, and the inaugural winner is Solvej Balle with *On the Calculation of Volume III*, translated from the Danish by Sophia Hersi Smith & Jennifer Russell, out from New Directions and Faber & Faber.

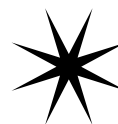
Check out the latest issue of *Revista Helice*, a Spanish magazine focusing on speculative fiction, which includes some English-

language content: <https://www.revista-helice.com/en/current-issue/>.

The European Science Fiction Society 2026 Achievements Awards have been announced: <https://www.esfs.info/next-current-esfs-awards/>

The “Donald A. Wollheim Collection of International Science Fiction” is being offered at auction by bookseller Mark Funke: [https://funke-books.com/lists/Funke Books International Science Fiction web.pdf](https://funke-books.com/lists/Funke_Books_International_Science_Fiction_web.pdf).

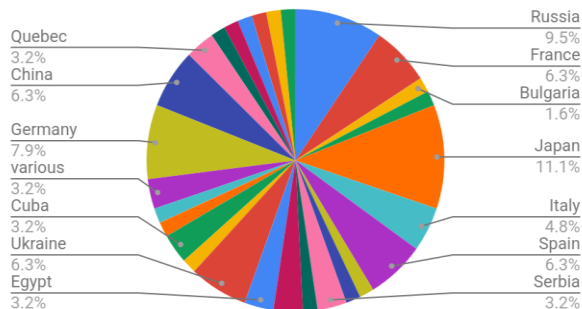
Rachel Cordasco's second book on SF in Translation, *Speculative Fiction in Translation from Around the World*, will be out later this year from the University of Wales Press.



FUN STAT

Long-form SFT
by country/province, 2016

Country



BLAST FROM THE PAST

From *Fancyclopedia* 3 https://fancyclopedia.org/wiki/Karel_Award

“The Karel Award was given by World SF: An Organization of SF Professionals from 1982 for excellence in translation. The *Science Fiction Encyclopedia* says it was instituted by Fred Pohl and the award was “named after Karel Čapek and is in the form of a robot standing on a globe of the world, reading an SF novel” (*Birmingham Science Fiction Group Newsletter* 135, November 1982). It’s unclear how long the award lasted but presumably it didn’t outlast its parent organisation whose activities declined in the 1990s and formally ceased in 2002. *World SF Newsletter* 2 (August 1988) provided a list of winners from 1982 to 1987 and further winners are provided in a later Newsletter confusingly also numbered 2 and dated 1989.”



Contributors

Joachim Boaz (issues 1 & 2) is a historian (PhD) and teacher under another name. He’s the creator of *Science Fiction and Other Suspect Ruminations*, a fanzine that explores science fiction produced before 1985. He’s particularly fascinated by the ways authors responded to the advent of nuclear weapons, the rise of 50s suburbia, commercialism, the Civil Rights movement, the Counterculture

and radical student politics, the Vietnam War, and the 1970s political backlash. He also writes a lot about Clifford D. Simak and all the fascinating ways science fiction engages with the history of leftist thought.

Sue Burke’s (issue 1) novel *Semiosis*, which imagined a planet with intelligent plants, was nominated for the Arthur C. Clarke Award, John W. Campbell Memorial Award, and the Locus Best First Novel Award. Its sequels are *Interference* and *Usurpation*, and her other novels are *Immunity Index* and *Dual Memory*. She has also written short stories, poetry, journalism, and essays, and she won the 2016 Alicia Gordon Award for Word Artistry in Translation from the American Translators Association. More information is at <https://sueburke.site/>.

Clelia Farris (issues 1 & 2) has won many science fiction awards in Italy. Her collection, *Chirurgia creativa*, was published in English translation as *Creative Surgery* by Rosarium Publishing. Her short story “A Day to Remember” was published in *Samovar Magazine*. *Future Science Fiction Magazine* published “The Substance of Ideas.” Her very short story “Holes” came out in *World Literature Today*. In 2024, her collection *La consistencia de les idees* was translated into Catalan and published by Sfabula Editorial. Farris’s latest novel, *Veghumans*, translated by Rachel Cordasco, was published in English in 2025 by Future Fiction.

Jean-Paul L. Garnier (issues 1 & 2) is the owner of Space Cowboy Books bookstore and publishing house, producer of Simultaneous Times Podcast (2023/25 Laureate Award Winner, 2024 BSFA, Ignyte, and British Fantasy Award Finalist), and was the editor of the

SFPA's *Star*Line* magazine from 2021-2025. He is also Editor-in-Chief of *Electronic Brain* magazine. In 2024 he won the Laureate Award for Best Editor. He has written many books of poetry and science fiction.

<https://spacecowboybooks.com/>

Cristina Jurado (issues 1 & 2) is a bilingual speculative fiction author, editor, translator and promoter. Creator of LIBRISIMO, a YouTube podcast for sf new releases in Spanish, her fiction includes the collection *Alpha-land & Other Tales*, the weird eco-horror novella *ChloroPhilia*, and many stories in various venues, such as *Strange Horizons*, *Clarkesworld*, *Apex Magazine*, and *The Best of World SF* by Head of Zeus.

Monica Louzon (issue 1) (she/her) is a queer USian writer, translator, and editor from Maryland. Her essays, translations, stories, and poems have appeared in over 50 publications. Her story "9 Dystopias" was a Best Microfiction 2023 winner. Monica was Founding Editor of the open access, peer-reviewed *MOSF Journal of Science Fiction*, served as Acquiring Editor for *The Dread Machine*, and has co-edited three speculative fiction anthologies. To learn more about Monica and her work, please visit

<https://linktr.ee/molowrites>.

Cheryl Morgan (issue 1) is a writer, editor, and publisher. She has won four Hugo Awards and owns Wizard's Tower Press. Cheryl has been a Guest of Honour at three European conventions and a keynote speaker at two academic conferences. She will be a GoH at BristolCon 2026.

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Jessica Rose Sanford (issues 1 & 2) is a writer and healthcare worker residing in Oakland, where she haunts local bookshops and spends as much time next to bodies of water as possible. A graduate of the University of Notre Dame's MFA program, her work has previously appeared in *Nashville Review*, *Tulane Review*, *Ozone Park*, *jmww*, *Hot Metal Bridge*, *The Alarmist*, and elsewhere.

Alex Shvartsman (issues 1 & 2) (Brooklyn, NY) is the author of *The Best of All Possible Planets* (2026), *Kakistocracy* (2023), *The Middling Affliction* (2022), and *Eridani's Crown* (2019). His short stories and translations have appeared in *Analog*, *Asimov's*, *Clarkesworld*, *F&SF*, *Nature*, *Reactor*, *Strange Horizons*, and elsewhere. His website is www.alexshvartsman.com.

Jake Casella Brookins (issue 2) is a critic and scholar of speculative fiction. He's the publishing editor for the *Ancillary Review of Books*, and the host of the podcast *A Meal of Thorns*. His reviews and other writings can be found at *Locus*, the *Chicago Review of Books*, [and elsewhere](#).

Born in Moscow, **Julia Meitov Hersey** (issue 2) moved to the U.S. at the age of nineteen and has been straddling the two cultures ever since. Julia is the translator of *Vita Nostra*, *Assassin of Reality*, *School of Shards*, and *Daughter from the Dark* by Marina and Sergey Dyachenko, and numerous short stories by Tatsiana Zamirovskaya, H. L. Oldie, and other Russian-language authors. Julia is the winner of the 2021 Science Fiction and Fantasy Rosetta Awards for best translated work (long form).

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Roseanna Pendlebury (issues 1 & 2) is a London-based reviewer mainly interested in scifi and fantasy, but occasionally prone to dabble in historical and mythological fiction. She is currently an editor at Hugo and Ignyte award winning fanzine *Nerds of a Feather*, has her own blog at readerofelse and a monthly column at *The Ancillary Review of Books*. When not reading, she can be found playing rugby, collecting too many crafting hobbies or attempting to learn how to fight with a longsword.

Gord Sellar (issue 2)

Jonathan Strahan (issue 2) (www.jonathanstrahan.com.au) is a World Fantasy Award-winning editor, anthologist, and Hugo Award-winning podcaster. He has edited more than 100 books, is reviews editor for *Locus*, a consulting editor for Subterranean Press, Tor Books, *Reactor* and Tordotcom Publishing, and co-host and producer of the Hugo-nominated Coode Street Podcast.

Austin Wagner (issue 2) is a literary translator, editor, and teacher based in Hungary. His translations run the gamut from speculative fiction to contemporary prose and poetry to children's literature, and you can find his work at *Apex*, *khōréō*, *Asymptote*, *The Continental Literary Magazine*, *Versopolis*, and elsewhere. His translation of Anita Moskát's "Liecrafft" won the 2026 BSFA Award for Best Translation, and his translation of Péter Fritsi's dark thriller *Black Heart* is now available through Vulpine Press.

"A casual observer should expect science fiction to be more international than other kinds of popular fiction, precisely as a result of this stress on change: for isn't it reasonable to assume that the hopes, fears and expectations of people will be different in different countries, their ways of looking at things unlike those in one's own country?"

- Franz Rottensteiner, *View From Another Shore: European Science Fiction* (1999)

