

Science Fiction in Translation, vol. 2

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This edited volume is under consideration to be published by Palgrave Macmillan as part of its Studies in Global Science Fiction series. It is intended to build upon *Science Fiction in Translation*, published by Palgrave in 2021: to engage with works of SF in a similar manner as the essays in that volume do. Potential contributors are encouraged to peruse that volume and its introduction before submitting their proposed essays. That first volume was recently longlisted for the annual non-fiction award by the British Science Fiction Association; this is a clear indication that there is a need and desire for further exploration of SF in translation.

Potential contributors should be aware that the primary concern of this volume is to deepen the level of engagement with the theory and practice of translation. In selecting contributions, priority will be given to chapters that go into depth on the work of influential theorists, the stated practices of the translator(s) and how these theories are exemplified and/or deconstructed by the published translation. We are interested in chapters on SF in translation to and from any language; in the event that we are forced to reject submissions due to volume, priority will be given to languages and cultures less well represented in the first volume. We are also enthusiastic about papers by graduate students, early-career scholars, alt-ac scholars and others not traditionally widely represented in edited volumes by major publishers. This in no way means that papers by experienced experts in a given subfield will not be accepted.

This volume is intended to explore SF in translation, in both senses of the phrase: the translation of works of SF from one language to another, and the translation of SF tropes into cultures outside the metropolitan West. In recent decades, scholars of SF have seen near-exponential growth both in the production of SF in regions and languages where it hitherto had little or no presence, and also in the translation of works of SF from other languages into English. This volume will focus on the process of translation and its implications. What is the state of translation into English, and how representative is the body of translated work of SF from the source language/culture? What social, political and economic choices are made in choosing a work to translate? What linguistic and cultural choices are made in translating the work? How are the tropes of SF, whether they be (e.g.) subgenres such as space opera, the extrapolation of technological progress or sociopolitical critiques such as cognitive estrangement, portrayed in a work of SF from a culture where advanced science and technology are (or were) foreign imports? To what extent does the choice of works or tropes reflect or reify a statement or critique? To what extent does the process of translation (mis)represent the culture or language whence it comes? To what extent does SF manifest differently in other cultures or languages, and to what extent does translating the text into English elide or conceal these differences? What happens when works of SF originally published in English are translated into other cultures or languages? How do

the terms, tropes and functions of SF manifest in those cultures and languages and how are they altered by the process of translation?

Since antiquity, ideas of what constitutes “good” translation have oscillated between literal fidelity to the source text and a focus on rendering its sense and style into the target language, with the latter approach usually dominant. Cicero said in 46 BCE that he translated Greek into Latin “as an orator”, expressing figures of thought in language that conforms to his readers’ usage; St. Jerome, four centuries later, translated the Septuagint “not word for word, but sense for sense”. For Walter Benjamin, a hundred years ago, translation has a quasi-mystical effect: it gives to a work an “afterlife” by expanding its reach in time and space. He also argues that the task of the translator is to release in their own language that “pure language which is under the spell of another, to liberate the language imprisoned in a work” when re-creating the work anew in the target language.

Scholars of the then-new discipline of translation studies began to develop more complex and rigorous theories of translation in the second half of the twentieth century. In the same period, philosophers and literary theorists deconstructed the hierarchical separation of referent and sign; the sort of transcendence Benjamin seeks has become next to impossible. Translation studies examines the sociocultural factors that exist in parallel with language: dialect, voice, metaphor, cognition, as well as visual and ideological phenomena are now perceived as integral to the process of translating from one language to another. Contemporary theories and practices of translation, at least in the West, generally also address the ideological and economic conditions that pertain to the selection and promotion of work for translation: texts given an “afterlife” in English may not fully represent texts from the source language and culture. These developments are paralleled by the increasing application of cultural materialism, feminist and gender studies theory and postcolonial theory to translation and translation studies. Cicero’s conception of a fluent translation that sounds as if it were written in the target language is a matter of contention for twenty-first century theorists, with some arguing that such a paradigm inevitably domesticates texts and minimizes cultural differences. This is especially true for translations of literature, given the outsized role of literature in defining and reifying culture.

It should be clearly noted that this volume will have an inclusive perspective on “translation”: it would be within its purview to submit a paper that discusses works of (e.g.) subsaharan African SF originally published in English and the representativeness of these works of SF in their original culture. Such analysis would be especially valuable if the work discussed was subsequently republished for an Anglo-American audience. Papers discussing similar phenomena in (e.g.) works published in French in former French colonies will also be welcomed, as would papers on works on SF from an Indigenous culture, even were the works originally published in English.

Abstracts submitted in response to this call for papers should address at least one of the following: 1) the translation of works of Anglo-American SF into the target language and culture; 2) the manifestation of the tropes of SF in works composed in the target language and culture; 3) the translation of works of SF from the target language and culture into English for a primarily

Anglo-American audience. How does the sort of translation St. Jerome or Cicero would approve of make fundamental changes in a work, and what are the effects of these changes? Alternatively, what are the effects of an English translation that retains (some of) the foreignness of the source text? How do tropes of SF manifest in the target culture and language, and what are the effects of this?

Each paper is required to provide a brief overview of what has been translated from the work's source language/culture into English and to evaluate the representativeness of this body of work. It is important for scholars who do not speak the source language to understand the extent to which the selection of works translated into English represents SF from that language/culture. Information on sf translated from other languages into the work's source language, if it is other than English, would also be of interest.

The ideal paper will do all or most of the following:

- examine at least one work available in English or in English translation
- include scholarship in the original language on the work and/or on SF: what do scholars in the source language/culture think of SF or of the work's place in local discourse?
- relate the work to another text from that language or culture, whether available in English translation or not
- engage with theories of translation studies
- engage with the approach the translators take in their own writings about translation
- perform a close reading of its primary text, involving its original language, in such a manner as to make clear to those who do not know that language how the source text differs from its English translation
- use this close reading as support for an argument on how the translated text (mis)represents the source text or the culture whence it comes
- address the question of power or authority that results from the choice of the work(s) as worthy of translation

These characteristics should serve as guidelines, not demands. Finished chapters should be from 7,000-10,000 words in length, including notes and bibliography. Please avoid discursive footnotes. Please use endnotes rather than footnotes; please do not use the word processor's feature that automatically creates notes; rather, manually make footnote numbers into superscripts and add the notes at the end of the document. Please refer to [this page](#) for submission guidelines, including formatting (scroll down to #5 under Manuscript Guidelines).

Please submit a short CV, a chapter abstract of no more than 300 words, and a one-paragraph bio to Ian Campbell (icampbell@gsu.edu) no later than 01 April 2023. Finished chapters will be due no earlier than 01 August 2023; the volume will be published in early 2024.