Welcome back to the SF in Translation Universe! As often happens, we may not have a boatload of new SFT available this spring, but what is available packs a real punch. Especially exciting is the arrival from Aqueduct Press of the first work of Basque science fiction in English translation. From Japan we get two new works of horror fiction—one of which comes from the pen of internationally-acclaimed horror writer Koji Suzuki. Finally, we're treated to one of German modernist author Peter Weiss’s works, thanks to New Directions.

One of the most interesting phenomena related to the upswing in SFT is that, as the saying goes, a rising tide lifts all boats. Sure, the usual source languages are well-represented each year (Spanish, Japanese, etc.), but along with them, over the past several years, have come Czech, Hebrew, Arabic, Hungarian, Galician, Korean, and others. Italian science fiction, for instance, has also made its way more often into English, despite the fact that the genre is still not overly popular in Italy and very little funding is available to bring Italian literature into English.

Basque can now be added to this list of source languages gaining attention through SFT. Thanks to Aqueduct Press, which published excellent feminist science fiction from Spanish authors Lola Robles and Sofia Rhei in 2016 and 2019, respectively, Anglophone readers can now get a taste of Basque author Mayi Pelot’s unique perspective on writing and the future. Considered one of the first writers to have crafted science fiction in Basque, Pelot (who died six years ago) co-founded a literary magazine, participated in a Basque-speaking radio station, and contributed to a French-Basque dictionary. Her collection Memories of Tomorrow (tr. Arrate Hidalgo, April)—written between 1982 and 1992—includes five short stories and one novella, all focused on the aftermath of an imagined third world war. Each story zeroes in on just one or two characters trying to scratch out a life after widespread destruction. In her foreword to the book, Hidalgo looks forward to readers appreciating “the lyrical possibilities of [Pelot’s] elliptical, synthetic style of writing.” Having sat on many an SFT panel with Hidalgo, I can say with confidence that she understands not just the mechanics of translation but also the complex issues surrounding it as a craft. It’s always been a pleasure for me to talk to Hidalgo about translation and many other subjects, and I want to congratulate her on bringing Pelot into English where more readers can enjoy her creative mind.

For those of you who are more into surreal horror fiction, April and May have you covered. It should come as no surprise that both of these books are from Japan, since that country has given us more horror fiction in recent years than almost any other (besides Spain and Sweden). First up is Masatugu Ono’s *At the Edge of the Woods* (April), translated by Juliet Winters Carpenter, known to the SFT world for her Kobo Abe translations. In this unsettling story set in an unnamed
country, a family has just moved into a new house in the woods. The ghostly coughing and laughing drive the pregnant mother back to their previous home, since she's worried about the growing fear in the house causing another miscarriage. Thus her husband and young son are left to face the isolation in an area rumored to be haunted by fantastic creatures and warriors from ancient history. And yet, this disquiet seems downright cozy compared to the increasing violence and environmental catastrophe that the two watch on TV every night. Even the mail carrier brings bad news of the outside world. This swirling mix of myth, fantasy, horror, and the surreal make *At the Edge of the Woods* a book you'll likely want to read on a bright summer's day, surrounded by cheerful people and chirping birds, because, man, that sounds scary.

“Scary” is also something Koji Suzuki knows well, having written a tetralogy that blends horror and science fiction. The *Ring* books focus on a psychic virus that spreads through various media, including film, video, and television; some Anglophone readers will recognize this story because of its own jump from book to TV and film. In his latest book in English, *The Shining Sea* (tr. Brian Bergstrom, May), Suzuki weaves a story about a pregnant woman left behind by her lover, who went to sea on a tuna boat. Feeling desperately alone and hopeless, the woman had tried to drown herself but was ultimately rescued and now remembers almost nothing. Over the course of the book, Suzuki explores the intersection of human fate and the indifference of the universe, and how relationships are either strengthened or frayed by this reality.

You might be thinking “yes, well, these sound interesting but I’m more of a Modernism fan,” so you’ll be glad to hear that German modernist author, playwright, and filmmaker Peter Weiss is in English again with *Conversation of the Three Wayfarers* (tr. E. B. Garside, April). Redolent of Kafka, Music, and Gombrowicz, *Conversation* features Abel, Babel, and Cabel monologuing about a steeplechase that occurs on a floating pontoon. Though each narrator describes the incident from his own perspective, the lives of the three men start blending together until the question arises as to whether or not these men are really just one person.

In terms of short SFT so far, April brought us another story by Chinese writer Pan Haitian. Titled “Hanuman the Monkey King” (tr. Emily Jin, Clarkesworld Magazine), this story imagines the complicated interactions between humans and an alien species in a spaceport city.

The rest of the year promises some further exciting SFT, including Shimon Adaf’s *Lost Detective* trilogy and Lavie Tidhar’s anthology *The Best of World SF 2* (which includes my translation from the Italian of Clelia Farris’s story “The Substance of Ideas”).

Thanks for reading, and I’d love to hear what you’re reading now and what you’re looking forward to: rachel@sfintranslation.com.

Until next time in the SFT Universe!