

Chinese Hard Science Fiction Writers are Surging

By Nie Huichao

Recently, under the eager anticipation of science fiction enthusiasts worldwide, the official list of nominees for the 81st Hugo Awards was announced. According to the selection committee's nomination list of 2023 Hugo Awards, four works by Chinese authors have been nominated for the Best Short Story including Jiang Bo's *On the Razor's Edge* (《命悬一线》), Ren Qing's *Resurrection* (《还魂》), Lu Ban's *Upstart* (《白色悬崖》) and Wang Kanyu's *Zhurong on Mars* (《火星上的祝融》). Besides, Hai Ya's *The Space-Time Painter* (《时空画师》) is the sole Chinese work nominated in the category of the Best Novelette. The achievement serves as compelling evidence of the long-standing efforts dedicated to the advancement of China's science fiction industry. The development of Chinese science fiction has cultivated an expansive network of contributors, and as time unfolds, the boundaries of this network will continue to expand. The growth and progress of emerging writers will undoubtedly propel the high-quality evolution of Chinese science fiction.

Jiang Bo

Jiang Bo is a graduate from Microelectronics Institute of Tsinghua University in 2003. He made his debut in the realm of science fiction with his work *The Last Game* (《最后的游戏》). To date, he has published 5 novels and over 50 novelettes. His notable works include *The Galaxy Heart* (《银河之心》) trilogy, *The Gate of Machines* (《机器之门》), and *The Soul* (《移魂有术》). His work has been honored with multiple esteemed Galaxy Awards and Xingyun Awards.

Jiang Bo's writing is renowned for his "hard" style, characterized by a calm and composed language, precise and straightforward narration, and a high degree of technical sophistication. His narratives, while imaginative and grand in scope, are firmly rooted in meticulous attention to detail, and are thus, compelling and logically sound. *On the Razor's Edge* is the commissioned work for the Future Affairs Administration's "Chinese Space Station" writing project. It embodies the essence of a space action film. The story is rich in technical details, meticulously crafting a sense of realism throughout the narrative. In addition to being published in *Science Fiction World* (《科幻世界》), it has also been included in *Reaching For the Stars: A Chinese Space Voyage Story* (《造访星辰：飞往太空的中国故事》).

Ren Qing

In 2019, after two decades of reading science fiction, "It felt like the artificial intelligence suddenly woke up, or it was destined to write science fiction," says Ren Qing. He started to write *The Disappearing Circus* (《消失的马戏团》), turning dreams and the subconscious into a fantastic and surreal tale set in a small town. He submitted this science fiction debut to *Science Fiction World*, the magazine which he regarded as the "sanctuary" of science fiction literature, and his talent was im-

mediately recognized.

Following this success, Ren Qing quickly established himself as one of the finest young science fiction writers in China with works like *Resurrection*, *Vanishing Traces of the Past Days* (《弃日无痕》), and *Yesterday's Illusions* (《昨日幻梦》). This year, he has also become a columnist for the science section of *Science Fiction World*. Ren Qing's *Resurrection*, when translated into English, appeared in *Galaxy Award 1* (bilingual Chinese-English edition), which was the collaboration between *Science Fiction World* and Italian science fiction editor Francesco Verso's *Future Fiction*. This showcases the achievements of international cultural exchange in the field of science fiction.

"Science fiction is an inclusive creative field where different dimensions and various themes can be explored. Things that pure literature discussion have already formed certain rules. The main differences lie in literary style, writing techniques, and forms of expression," says Ren Qing. "Although the literariness of science fiction may not be as strong as traditional literature, it can carry a much richer range of creative themes, allowing the expression of more thoughts and ideas."

Lu Ban

Lu Ban, the pen name of Zhao Weilin, is a rising young science fiction writer from Chinese mainland. In 2020, he published his debut science fiction work, *Futuritis* (《未来症》). In 2021, this work earned him the 2021 Chinese mainland Fiction Galaxy Award for Best New Writer and it was also nominated for the Best Novel. In 2023, his novel *New Elites* (《新贵》) won the Award for Best Novella and the Award for Greatest Adaptation Potential at the 33rd Galaxy Awards. Both *Futuritis* and *New Elites* have sold the film and television adaptation rights. In particular, *New Elites* has been translated and published by well-known science fiction literature agencies in the United States and Italy.

In Lu Ban's science fiction novels, there are no usual elements of spaceships, big guns, or aliens that are common in traditional science fiction. However, his works have garnered the love of science fiction enthusiasts and readers. He believes this is because he has grasped the hot topics that the society is currently concerned with. "The most fascinating aspect of science fiction creation, as far as I am concerned, is that you can stand in the future to ponder on current problems." His debut work *Futuritis* explores 3 diseases in the future world, yet they are not genuine illnesses. For example, addressing the contemporary issue of aging society, Lu Ban explores a future where people can live forever, which would then lead to serious societal problems. In *Upstart*, Lu Ban creates a "consciousness space" for incurable patients, allowing them to face death peacefully and leave the world in the most beautiful way.

Wang Kanyu

Wang Kanyu serves as a contributing editor for *World Science Fiction Frontiers* (《世界科幻动态》), a magazine of Chinese Science Fiction Research Center, and also for *Vector*, a critical journal of the British Science Fiction Association. She has co-edited the English translation collection of Chinese fantasy

fiction *The Way Spring Arrives and Other Stories* (《春天来临的方式和其他故事》) and also been the editor of *The Making of The Wandering Earth: A Film Production Handbook* (《<流浪地球>电影制作手记》). Wang Kanyu writes science fiction, non-fiction, and academic papers in both Chinese and English. She has received numerous awards, including the Global Chinese Science Fiction Xingyun Awards, Comet-International Science Fiction Short Story Competition, and the Shanghai Writers Association Annual Award for Outstanding Works.

Wang Kanyu began publishing science fiction in 2015, with the majority of her works appearing in traditional literary magazines rather than science fiction publications. She believes that science fiction magazines tend to prioritize the creativity of science fiction, plot conflicts, and storytelling, while traditional literary magazines place more emphasis on language, character development, and literariness. There is no hierarchy between the two approaches, but they influence author's focus during creation.

Through the intersection of "female writer" and "fantasy literature", Wang Kanyu aims to break down the binary oppositions between center and periphery, progress and retrogress, tradition and future. She endeavors to shed the past limitations and stereotypes of Chinese science fiction and even Eastern science fiction.

Hai Ya

Hai Ya is a financial professional and a member of the Shenzhen Writers Association. He began writing science fiction in 2016, and his works have been published in various publications such as *Galaxy's Edge* (《银河边缘》), *Science Fiction World* (《科幻世界》), *Science Fiction Cube* (《科幻立方》), etc. He has received the Second Prize for Novelette in the Cold Lake Award and was nominated for the Galaxy Award for Best Short Story. This year, his work *The Space-Time Painter* was nominated for the Best Novelette category in the 81st Hugo Awards, making it the only Chinese work in this category.

Hai Ya has consistently explored the science fiction elements within Chinese history. He combines historical research with science fiction imagination to discover the intersection of reality and fantasy. *The Space-Time Painter* begins with the appearance of a "phantom" on the closing day of the Palace Museum. Hai Ya intertwines history, deduction, and science fiction to create a fictional masterpiece painting and the political power struggles of that era. This work, along with his previous publications *Blood Calamity* (《血灾》) and *Dragon Corpse* (《龙骸》), belongs to the same series. These stories are all reconstructed behind a certain period of history without entirely fictionalizing the real history. Hence, the stories aim to portray the grandeur of history and the insignificance of individuals, creating a sense of reality and wonder akin to a documentary.

