



## Superluminal

*Vonda N. McIntyre , Ingrid Herrmann (Translator)*

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Kaum wacht die angehende Raumpilotin Laenea im Krankenhaus nach einer Operation auf, die sie ihr Herz gekostet hat, da hält sie nichts mehr in der Obhut der Ärzte. Sie muß erst den Schritt verarbeiten, der sie zur Pilotin überlichtschneller Raumschiffe gemacht hat, nämlich den Austausch ihres menschlichen Herzens gegen eine Maschinenpumpe. Nur durch diesen radikalen Eingriff sind Piloten in der Lage, die Überlichtflüge zu fernen Planeten überstehen zu können. Der Rest ihrer Crew dagegen muß den Flug im Tiefschlaf verbringen, um den beschleunigten und damit tödlichen Alterungsprozessen zu entgehen.

Die auserwählten Piloten zahlen einen hohen Preis dafür, daß die Menschheit ferne Galaxien kolonisieren kann. Kein Wunder, daß sie sich als absolute Elite sehen und dieses Image bewußt pflegen. Sie sondern sich von allen anderen ab, sogar von ihrer Crew. Nur so lassen sich die Belastungen dieses Berufes verarbeiten, sowohl das "herzlose" Dasein als auch die nicht ungefährlichen Flüge selbst.

Dies hat Laenea vor sich, als sie das Crewmitglied Radu kennenlernt. Sie kann nicht ahnen, welche Bedeutung der Mann für sie persönlich wie auch für die gesamte Kaste der Piloten bald haben wird. Denn ohne es zu wollen wird Radu zu einer Bedrohung für den Status der Piloten. Und die Flieger würden alles tun, um den Mythos ihrer Klasse aufrechtzuerhalten.

## Superluminal Details

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Author : Vonda N. McIntyre , Ingrid Herrmann (Translator)

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## From Reader Review Superluminal for online ebook

### **Kathy says**

Not a bad little sci-fi tale, a little slow in parts. I must say, though, the paperback edition I have, from 1984, has the absolute worst cover art ever.

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### **PJ says**

the fact that it took me 2 years and 7 months to read this does not reflect my enjoyment of it

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### **Mareklamo says**

FTL, genetically-modified humans, and star-crossed lovers.

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### **Erika Worley says**

Solid sci-fi. The love triangle thing seems excessive, but not oppressive. All three main characters have a different worldview to offer. There are fun elements of alien life as well as space travel.

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### **William Leight says**

Like the best science fiction, “Superluminal”’s story is driven by the impact of science and technology on society. The particular scientific and technological advances envisioned here make, I would say, less sense than average (to start with, the idea of looking beyond the edge of the universe into what’s outside is preposterous), but the story is good enough to encourage you to suspend a little bit more disbelief than you may be accustomed to. It helps that it’s less self-consciously political than the other McIntyre novel I’ve read, “Starfarers”: though politics is not absent, it operates as a background theme rather than a driving force, which helps to smooth out “Starfarers” occasional clunkiness and makes for more human characters. Or perhaps I should say realistic characters, as McIntyre’s strength lies in envisioning ways in which humanity could modify itself. None of our three main characters are really entirely human, at least from a biological point of view. Laenea Trevelyan has just undergone an operation to remove her heart, the final step in the process of moving her bodies’ main biological processes — blood circulation, breathing, etc. — to her direct conscious control: only thus can she survive the rigors of transit (this book’s hyperspace equivalent) and become a Pilot (always capitalized in the book when it denotes piloting interstellar ships). Radu Dracul, who is not from Transylvania but from the colony world of Twilight, is the only person known to have survived infection by a virus from his home world, which may explain why he is also the only non-Pilot ever to survive transit, as well as the powers of telepathy and precognition that he seems to have acquired. And Orca is a diver, a member of a group of humans who genetically modified themselves to allow them to live in the ocean and talk to whales (though they can still function on land as well). The story itself is driven by the discovery of Radu’s powers and their possible implications for interstellar flight, and while it comes to a reasonable resolution, there are definitely some questions that are left unresolved and implications that are

not spelled out. Unfortunately, McIntyre never seems to have written a sequel, which is too bad, as I would definitely have been interested in reading one, probably more interested than I am in the second "Starfarers" book.

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## Olethros says

-Entre tiempos y tendencias en el género que estaban cambiando, un híbrido particular.-

Género. Ciencia-Ficción.

Lo que nos cuenta. Laenea Trevelyan acaba de completar la operación que ha sustituido su corazón y parte de su sistema circulatorio por equipos artificiales que le permitan su control voluntario y ser un Piloto que maneje astronaves a velocidades más rápidas que la luz por las seis dimensiones del espacio, Orca es una joven Buzo, persona adaptada a ambientes subacuáticos, y Radu Dracul es un Tripulante originario del tristemente famoso planeta Crepúsculo que a pesar de las costumbres sociales y la separación de castas tiene una estrecha relación con Laena.

¿Quiere saber más de este libro, sin spoilers? Visite:

<http://librosdeolethros.blogspot.com/...>

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## Surreysmum says

[These notes were made in 1987:]. Despite the jacket puffs, I didn't think this one of McIntyre's better novels. The ideas behind the characters were novel enough - a web-handed girl from an amphibious humanoid earth species, a man from a plague-haunted colony world, who discovers he has unusual powers, and an ambitious and impulsive woman 'pilot' - a breed of humans who give up their hearts in exchange for machines in order to be free of biological rhythms and thus be able to survive super-light speeds. Trouble is, none of these three characters ever cast any kind of shadow for me: they were just never fully realized as people. And I guess, as usual, I found the workings-out of the rules and mechanics of this world a little tedious. One cannot really be expected to rejoice whole-heartedly at the achievement of a seventh dimension, if one has no real notion of at least three of the other six! Nonetheless, McIntyre has at least a good straightforward style and the ability to move a story forward without too many bumps and creaks. And I did read it when I was tired and grouchy!

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## David says

Maybe 2.5 stars. Some readers will enjoy the character material, a partial view of a future Earth and a different image of FTL flight.

For my tastes, the story didn't make up for the central roles of psychic powers and a more-than-usually implausible depiction of FTL. The strongest of the character material is towards the beginning while its setting the stage for the later nonsense - so it doesn't help compensate later on.

## **Fishface says**

Good sci-fi story about how the assumptions of the scientific community can be totally wrong. This story has a lot of resonance for me personally and it's the type of book you can revisit with pleasure.

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## **Marecognitum says**

[discovers he has super-special powers that will revolutionize the industry, and saves the previously-mentioned woman who has become a damsel in distress (hide spoiler)]

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## **Adriana says**

I just want this for the cover.

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## **Cécile C. says**

One of the best SF books I've read in the past months. The writing is very clever, and the book is more intent on stacking little details on top of each other to tell as much as it can on the society and characters than on straightforward explanation. The result is very rich and nuanced. The way superluminal travel transformed society (by creating castes, with pilots on one side, crew on another, and both set apart from the rest of society) is portrayed in a multi-faceted way, with no caste being shown as the Other; rather, every single character, regardless of their social class, is fully human.

The construction of the novel may be confusing at times, however (a character named Orca, for instance, has an almost independent storyline, and the ties between her subplot and the others are not always obvious); but that may be a necessity when you want to write about a complex and changing society without being heavy-handed nor showing everything in a black-and-white light. In the end, the plot doesn't matter as much as the changes in the characters and the society they live in, and it may appear as if there are lots of loose ends and thinly-wrapped-up subplots. I felt, however, that it was a very good way of telling the reader that the story of that particular world hadn't ended, and that there would be plenty more to tell or to imagine. In keeping with the rest of the story, it was subdued and nuanced, rather than clearcut.

Not a traditional read, but a very successful story with splendid worldbuilding.

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## **bluetyson says**

isbn,original

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## Kalima says

Really interesting ideas. The first third is way too much like a romance novel, complete with overwrought language. Luckily I stuck with it because the middle is great fun, good tech, interesting sci fi. And the end is not as strong as it could be. I wish she had written another in order to further develop some of the cool stuff that was introduced but not fully explored. I'd like to know how the divers ended up that way, more about the whales, more about the 7th dimension, etc.

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## Michele (Mikecas) says

Da: <http://www.webalice.it/michele.castel...> Anche se pubblicato solo ora in Italia, Superluminal e' un romanzo di 25 anni fa, di una scrittrice che mi aveva lasciato allora una profonda impressione con Il Serpente dell'Oblio, di cinque anni precedente. Dopo aver letto Superluminal sono andato a riprendere Il Serpente dell'Oblio, che non rileggevo da almeno una quindicina d'anni, ritrovandovi le sensazioni che mi ricordavo. Il romanzo non ha perso il suo vigore nonostante il tempo passato, per lui e per me. Vonda McIntyre non ha scritto molti romanzi indipendenti, dedicandosi nel seguito piu' a sceneggiare serie televisive, ma ha rappresentato, nel mondo della SF, la seconda generazione femminile, quella piu' consapevole della propria specificita', o forse semplicemente con maggiore possibilita' che questa specificita' potessero trovare il gradimento del pubblico. Il suo femminismo, piu' evidente di quello estremamente delicato della Le Guin, ma meno esplicito rispetto ad altre scrittrici di quell'epoca, come Joanna Russ o la Sargent, segue piu' il percorso aperto dalla Le Guin stessa sulla consapevolezza del corpo e di se stesso da parte dell'individuo, maschio o femmina che sia, piuttosto che una contrapposizione tra generi, e risulta quindi forse piu' efficace, perche' non cerca di identificare e rafforzare il contrasto, ma chiarisce e rende empaticamente positivi i problemi di convivenza visti dalla parte femminile. Anche la McIntyre introduce pesantemente la biologia nei suoi romanzi, tema tipico della SF femminile del tempo, ma lo fa da vera esperta con estrapolazioni del tutto credibili anche ora, che della biologia e delle sue possibilita' di manipolazione sappiamo cosi' tanto di piu'. In Superluminal vi e' una chiara "pulsione" verso un passaggio trascendente, verso una umanita' superiore, che non e' il classico "Superuomo" onniscente e onnipotente che ha spesso fatto la sua comparsa nella SF precedente, ma e' molto piu' simile al passaggio della "divergenza" di Vinge, cosi' ben illustrata anche da Stross. Seppure basata solo su metologie biologiche, e non sull'interconnessione con Intelligenze Artificiali, e' una transizione che pone gli stessi dubbi e le stesse incognite, a significare che lo sviluppo tecnico e/o scientifico possono far diventare realistica una ipotesi inizialmente basata piu' su illusioni che realta' concrete, ma non modifica sostanzialmente il quadro problematico. E' ovvio che Superluminal non puo' non risentire in parte dei 25 anni passati dalla sua scrittura, ed alcune soluzioni prospettate ci possono ormai sembrare obsolete o dimostratamente false, ma rimane una lettura piacevole e stimolante. C'e' da chiedersi perche' ci sia stato bisogno di tanto tempo per presentarlo ai lettori italiani, durante il qual tempo sono apparsi in Italia miriadi di romanzi di qualita' estremamente inferiore.

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## Serge says

I was very moved by the first part of the novel: Laenea's early experiences. As soon as the focus turned to Radu's search for her, McIntyre gave up psychological depth for space opera, fine as it is. But the other characters are interesting enough, their adventures exciting, and the universe very convincingly described. The finale, while satisfactory in tying up loose ends, does not quite ring true emotionally when related to the

beginning.

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### **Jeff Youngstrom says**

My review from April 24, 1997

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### **Isabel Jazmín says**

Me gustó mucho el personaje de Radu porque al ser nuevo en el entorno de los pilotos y los viajes, es a través de sus ojos que vamos conociendo todo ese ambiente. Es transparente y hasta cierto punto inocente y por eso me conmovió su historia.

Recomendable para quienes ya han tenido un acercamiento a la ciencia ficción.

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