



sf newsletter January 1998 ט"סג

Next SCIENCE FICTION CLUB Meeting:
Tuesday, January 27, 1998, 8:15 p.m. -- Lecture (in Hebrew)

Avi Chami will lecture and lead a discussion on
"Time Travel"

Rehovot Science Fiction (*usually*) meets the last Tuesday of each month
at the home of Tova, Bill and Rami Silverman,
19 Eisenberg St., fourth floor, Rehovot, Tel. 08-947-6142.

There is a REFRESHMENT CHARGE of 3.50 Shekels (for those who partake).

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Time Travel

This month and next month's issues will be devoted to Time Travel.

Movie Review by Elliot Lazerwitz:

Star Trek as Catharsis: Some Thoughts about "ST4: The Voyage Home"

The motion picture **Star Trek 4: The Voyage Home**, screened at the recent Tel Aviv Cinematheque Star Trek festival, was rightly and truly a breath of fresh air. The film is a child of the 1980s, a product of the Reagan age, and has a dated ambience about it. Still, I'd take it over explosion movies such as **Terminator** and **Independence Day** any ol' day.

"The Voyage Home" is basically a situation comedy, wrapped within the larger metaplot of the ST movie series. I have always believed that the first ST series, warts and all (1966-68), featured far more depth of characterization than did any of the various and sundry sequels. Better special effects, to my mind, cannot make up for flat characters. Leonard Nimoy directed "The Voyage Home", and imbued the script with subtle touches of grace and humor lacking in other Star Trek films.

The core of ST4's situation comedy, brought gently to the fore by Nimoy and the scriptwriters, is this: How can 23rd-century supermen, accustomed to having wondrously powerful technology at their beck and call, survive when stranded in 1980s San Francisco? Captain Chekhov naively assaults passersby in his thick Russian accent, at the height of the Cold War, inquiring "Where is the nuclear wessel?" Reconstructed Spock, dressed in odd long white robe and headband (Kirk, in explanation: "Too much LSD") neutralizes an obnoxious punk in a bus with his legendary Spock pinch but still gets stares on the street. Kirk, desperately flirting with the pretty cetacean biologist in charge of two whales that could save Federation Earth, claims he is indeed from "outer space", and the woman of his attention does a double-take: "You are crazy!"

Director Nimoy gently pokes fun at ST's rituals and conventions, while reserving for us all a little hope for a better future. (How did we survive?)

Functioning superbly under stress, the improvised Enterprise staff, commanding a used Klingon destroyer into the past, demonstrate well their suitability for Starfleet captaincy. (Poor Uhura is still stuck with tuning in elusive space signals, as if a black woman three hundred years from now is capable of nothing more.) But, still, at movie's end we leave the Cinematheque hall with a warm feeling inside, as if a touch of humor and humanity could redeem even such dark and bleak SF avenues as cyberpunk. (Just you wait and see!)

Are There Time Travelers among Us?

preliminary notes for an article

by Mordechai Housman

In the spirit of Enrico Fermi, here are some possible answers to:

Why don't we see any time travelers?

They stay hidden

They don't exist

They are forbidden to come here

1. They Are Here, but We Don't See Them Because:

- A. They pretend to be natives, and they are in key positions of power, aided by their unique knowledge
- B. They are merely observers (and stay hidden -- if they're seen that would / could change history)
- C. All time-travelers have been captured by aliens in UFOs for study
- D. They are the PILOTS and/or crews of the UFOs that everyone discounts (explains UFOs also) They TRY to stay hidden, but sometimes slip up. (See 2H)
- E. They have all been committed to twentieth-century insane asylums, because everyone knows there is no such thing as time travel.

2. They Are Not Here, Because:

- A. They have no interest in us and our time. (Why would this be? Can we know?)
- B. The future is full of people more interested in the Internet or some new form of virtual reality game, and they have no interest in us
- C. They are afraid of us. (Can we harm them? Inadvertently, perhaps?)
- D. Time-travel technology is limited to recent past
- E. Or limited to far past
- F. They are unable to visit this era, specifically. (Why would this be? Pollution? Maybe it's a health reason, or maybe it's a technology incompatibility. Maybe they use some kind of weird life-support suit that self-destructs in this atmosphere.)
- G. Time travel has detrimental effects on human physiology. (Perhaps some famous phenomena can be explained this way? Things appearing or disappearing? Jimmy Hoffa, Judge Crater? Failed time-travelers? Or successful, come to think of it.)
- H. There is a super police force protecting us against meddlers from the future (See 1D)
- I. They find us, our time, our habits, our smell, our looks, whatever, offensive, and REFUSE to visit us. The government would have to PAY researchers to come back here and look at us.

- J. Time traveler came, someone stole his machine, went to the past or future, and never came back
- K. Someone brought his younger self a time machine, younger self took it to the past or future, never came back, so we do not have a time machine (paradox)

3. Who has the technology?

- A. Everyone (so why don't they show up?)
- B. No one
- C. Only one person (inventor? thief? inheritor? <ala David Gerrold, in **The Man Who Folded Himself**>)
- D. The government
- E. Rival governments
- F. Rival factions in one country
- G. Scientists
- H. Knowledge has been suppressed
- I. Knowledge has been lost
- J. Time travel has been rendered impossible by extensive meddling (ala Larry Niven's Rules)
- K. Time travel has been rendered impossible by a police force protecting us (see 2H)
- L. Travel has been rendered impossible by an accident

4. And These People Live

- A. In the past
- B. In the present
- C. In the future

5. And they are using it

- A. No
- B. Yes
- C. Controlled situations
- D. Access is sold (expensive / cheap)
- E. Use is covert and by CIA-type operations only
- F. Historical Research
- G. Time is being changed all the time, and we are unable to notice it

6. Why Are We Unable to Notice Changes?

- A. Changing it makes us forget it happened
- B. They do it subtly
- C. We are programmed as children not to notice, just like <fnord>s. This would mean a massive coverup

- D. Time CANNOT be changed
- E. Technology of time travel allows the traveler to be present, but not to interact
- F. Government regulation forbids the traveler to interact or be noticed. (Why would this be? Whose government? Future's? Today's? Could our governments know of time travelers and be suppressing the knowledge?)
- G. If I told you, they would kill me (there must be other people hiding the same secret)

7. They Have Already Made the Changes That They Want To.

And they are:

- A. We will die out
- B. We will be controlled
- C. We ARE being controlled, and don't know it
- D. We will be rendered harmless
- E. We have already been rendered harmless, and don't realize it. (What does this mean? Does it matter? Why do I have this strong urge to drop the matter?)
- F. We will be tested (or are being tested) for our maturity and whether to be kept alive
- G. We are experimental animals in a humongous laboratory

8. We Have No Future Because:

- A. We have all died out, in one of the following ways:
 1. We have killed ourselves by war or experimentation
 2. We have been killed by aliens
 3. We have been killed by time travelers from the future (obvious paradox)
 4. We have been killed by time travelers from the past (paradox?)
- B. We are stuck in a time-loop (on some future day, or today) and never actually reach any time in the future, past that day. (This is happening as you read this, whenever you read it.) <shudder>
- C. Our descendants have all gone to other planets, and traveling back in time does not include space travel. I.e., they would have to travel back to Earth through space first, and then travel back in time. Perhaps Earth is no longer inhabitable in their time, and they cannot do this.)
- D. There is no future because every person in twenty-first century Earth got hooked on cyberspace as a teenager, and never had any children. In fact, the only time they ever talked with a member of the opposite gender is in CHAT or e-mail, using a graphics user interface, of course, since none of them can read.

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The Israeli Society for Science Fiction and Fantasy

Monthly meetings (in Hebrew) on ***Science and Science Fiction***

Wednesdays: Tentative dates: 28/1, 25/2, 25/3, 13/5, 17/6

Call 03-528-3803 or 03-604-4959

Meetings are held in **Beit Ariela**, 25 Shaul HaMelech, Tel Aviv at 8 p.m.