

Cyber Cozen

Science-Fiction Newsletter

Vol. XII, No. 10; October, 2000



Letters to the Editor

Dear Aharon,

I am always pleased to receive the *CyberCozen* and read the reviews. But I was FURIOUS to see in the issue I received today that you had given a page and a half (September 2000) to a review of the books of L. Ron Hubbard!! My God! Who is this Gal Haimovich, doesn't he know that Hubbard was the founder of Scientology? Then I got to the end (without reading it all) and saw that he *does* "credit" Hubbard. But Scientology is NOT a religion – it is a destructive cult second only to the "Moonies" -- the Unification Church of Reverend Moon. I know personally a young man very close to me who had already signed away all his assets to Scientology before he was rescued by his loving family.

If Mr. Haimovich would read *Dianetics*, Hubbard's book on which Scientology is based, he would see for himself what utter hogwash (to be polite) it is. The fact that a famous movie star "believes" in it does not raise Scientology, it only lessens that star.

Hubbard may be dead and buried, but the evil he has done lives on, still doing damage.

Clara Rimon

Dear Clara,

I read Hubbard's original article on Dianetics in *Astounding Science Fiction* when I was in junior high school. When the book came out, I got it. With several high school friends we read the book cover to cover. We read passages out loud to each other and discussed them intensively. At the end of the book Hubbard gives a variety of exercises. We practiced those exercises on each other. These included relaxation exercises followed by regression to the past. I used these techniques on my mother and she recalled a very upsetting and moving part of her childhood, which she then discussed with me at length. In its emotional content this conversation with my mother was almost unique in my life. I can verify that some of Hubbard's techniques worked. The Dianetics Center in Los Angeles where I lived was (when I was 15 years old) headed by famous science fiction writer A. E. Van Vogt. That certainly impressed me. At the time I would have loved to be "audited" by Dianetics, but I couldn't afford it. When I later went on to take some courses psychology in college, I never learned anything that convinced me that Hubbard's book *Dianetics* was nonsense. If anything, some of Freud's writing are far more nonsensical, and Freud did enormous damage to the field of psychology because of his emphasis on the individual's unconscious, without regard to social interactions. That field would have developed in a far more sensible and useful way had it not been for Freud's influence. So I cannot agree with you as regards Dianetics.

Although I know little about Scientology, I understand that Hubbard once told a friend that the way to get rich in America is to found a religion. Many years later, Scientology made Hubbard a very wealthy man. It may well be that everything bad you say about Scientology is true. It's a cult, and a destructive one.

But is that a reason not to read Hubbard's humorous and fast-moving science fiction books? He does not preach Scientology in his books! He doesn't even talk about Dianetics. Even the money from his books doesn't go to Scientology, since each of the "churches" became autonomous when Hubbard retired in the 70s. So if you like his books, you can read them without fear of being tainted. **Aharon**

The Israeli Society for Science Fiction and Fantasy

Armageddon Convention

First international Sci-Fi convention in Israel. For more details see link below.

Guests of Honor: **Larry Niven, Joan Vinge, Paul McAuley, Dr. Jack Cohen, Ian Watson, Jim Frenkel**



01.01.01

The end is also the beginning...



www.armageddoncon.org

(Letters to the Editor continues)

The X Men movie

After reading Guy Eldar's review of *The X-Men* in *CyberCozen* of September, I almost decided not to go. Fortunately, Eli Eshed told me he had enjoyed the movie, so I went, and I'm glad I did.

The movie is not exactly like the comics. Not all the characters appear, the characters that do appear are somewhat different than in the book, and the plot is also new. But that is the usual case in movie adaptations of books, or in this case comic books.

We expect the characters and the plot to be changed, and the question should be whether the movie does justice to the book. In *The X-Men* movie you recognize the characters, and the plot could have been in the comics, with all the ingredients of the comics including the personality and motives of the characters.

So, even though the movie was shortened to 80 minutes from Guy's reported 105, I would recommend it to people who like *The X-Men*, or like Comics, or even just like Science Fiction action movies. One thing is certain, as a movie it's 5 times better than *Star Wars Episode 1: Phantom Menace*.

P.S. One pesky typo remark - the young mutant is Rogue, not Rouge, but to those who don't know I won't reveal the reason for her name.

Amnon Stupp



Why Haven't We Gone Back to the Moon?

The Moon by Homer H. Hickam, Jr. (1999), 494 pages.

Recommended by Sara Svetitsky.

1) **Cheap energy with fusion.** With the explosion of the first hydrogen bomb in the 1950s, physicists began talking about using nuclear fusion for peaceful generation of cheap, clean energy. Within ten years, said the physicists, energy produced by fusion will be available by an economically sound process. Science fiction writers believed the physicists. Asimov had people in the future carrying around fusion powered pocket flashlights. Physicists are still saying the same thing, but so far the amount of energy you have to put into the process to get fusion is still greater than the amount of energy you get out. As recently as ten years ago we had a physicist give a talk on fusion in our club in Rehovot, and he said that within ten years we would have cheap energy produced by fusion. Billions of dollars have been spent trying to make fusion energy profitable, with no success yet. Arthur C. Clarke, in his book *2061*, has physicists in 2061 *still* saying that within ten years, fusion

2) **Men going to the moon.** Over thirty years ago NASA landed the first men on the moon. For three years repeated trips were made to the moon, collecting moon rocks and making geological studies. Suddenly these trips stopped. The next planned trips were cancelled. The rocket ships which carried men off the earth and into space heading for the moon were taken apart and destroyed. The equipment used to make those rockets was taken apart and destroyed. The plans for the rockets and for the equipment to make the rockets were destroyed. The space shuttle was developed with a deliberate design

limitation that would make it impossible for it to be used for a manned voyage to the moon. Every effort was made to guarantee that man would no longer set foot on the moon. Instead of today having productive and profitable colonies on the moon exploiting properties of the moon that were unknown thirty years ago, we have nothing.

3) **What is the connection between fusion and NASA?** Why was the moon program deliberately disbanded and destroyed so thoroughly that it is difficult to imagine its ever being resurrected? Simple. On the last trip, it was discovered that there are large quantities of Helium 3 right on the surface of the moon, locked into small nodules. Readily available Helium 3 would make fusion energy cheap and practicable using the Helium 3 – Deuterium process. Helium 3, brought back from the moon, could enable fusion to provide all the energy the world needs, cleanly and cheaply. That's why the moon program was shut down.

How did this happen? The oil energy producers, with their enormous financial capabilities, cajoled, persuaded, bribed, suborned, threatened, and corrupted a generation of U.S. politicians and NASA employees to destroy the moon program. This is the idea behind *Back to the Moon*, a near future novel in which NASA and the U.S. are brought back to the moon over the concerted and violent and murderous opposition of the hired servants of the energy companies and some corrupted employees of NASA. In a fast-moving and extremely unlikely scenario, private enterprise

takes over a space shuttle, converts it, while in space, to a vehicle capable of flying to the moon, and tries to go there. The shuttle is attacked, sabotaged, and shot at. Not only does NASA try to shoot it down, but others do too, and even the Russians get into the act.

Will they make it to the moon? Will they get their Helium 3? Will they get it back to the earth? Can sand containing Helium 3 really be used to produce cheap energy? Three guesses!

The author, Homer Hickam, previously wrote the book *Rocket Boys* (1998) describing

his teenage years in a small West Virginia coal mining town, where, inspired by Sputnik in 1957, he organized a group of friends who designed and built rockets. Eventually he became an aerospace engineer at NASA. The book was made into the successful movie *October Sky* (1999). Presumably the author, as an ex-NASA employee, knows what he is talking about. I wonder if we can believe it? Anybody out there know? I asked two experts on space at WorldCon in Chicago last month about the book, but neither had read it. So I leave it to you to read the book and tell me what you think.



בקורת ספרותית: עושים היסטוריה/סטיבן פריי (1996)

Book Review: *Making History* by Stephen Fry

מבקר: גל חיימוביץ' Gal Haimovich

יצא לאור בעברית בהוצאת בבל, 1999, בתרגומה של דפנה לוי-ינוביץ'.

English summary: *Making History* by British actor Stephen Fry (1996) is a serious and funny story of a PhD student of History, together with a physicist who invented a time machine, who manage to prevent the birth of Hitler. The result was not what they expected. Reviewed by Gal Haimovich.

אחד הנושאים הפופולריים ביותר בז'אנר ההיסטוריה החלופית הוא מלחמת העולם השנייה ובמיוחד, מה היה קורה אם הנאצים היו מנצחים בה (לדוגמה *האיש במצודה הרמה* של פיליפ ק. דיק).

בספר זה פריי שואל את השאלה ההפוכה: מה היה קורה אם היטלר לא היה נולד?

כולנו בוודאי שאחנו את עצמנו את השאלה הזאת. התשובה המתבקשת היא שההיסטוריה הייתה שונה לגמרי ממה שאנו מכירים אותה, אבל יותר טובה. ללא מלחמה ארוכה וכואבת, ללא השמדת היהודים. אולי אף ללא פיתוחים כמו הפצצה האטומית או טילים בליסטיים.

האם באמת העולם היה יותר טוב ללא

היטלר?

מייקל יאנג הוא דוקטורנט להיסטוריה באוניברסיטת קיימברידג' המתמחה בילדותו של היטלר. מייקל הוא בחור רגיש, עם חוש הומור קצת מוזר, מנסה להיות מאצ'ו ללא הצלחה יתרה. הוא גרוע בספורט והוא חסר כשרון אומנותי. הוא אוהב לקרוא אבל לא ספרות. הוא טוב בהיסטוריה אבל לא ממש אוהב את זה.

ביום בו הוא מסיים את התזה שלו, חברתו עוזבת אותו, לוקחת לו את האוטו ומשאירה אותו ללא קפה.

כשהוא מגיע לקמפוס על אופניו, התיק נקרע ודפי עבודת הדוקטורט מתפזרים על פני מגרש החנייה. האירוע הזה מוליך למפגש עם ליאו צוקרמן, פרופסור לפיסיקה, אשר כפי שמסתבר, המציא מכונת זמן.

מייקל מגלה שלליאו יש אובססיה לגבי השואה, מכיוון שאביו היה באושוויץ, ולכן, מייקל

מצליח בקלות לשכנע את ליאו להשתמש במכונת הזמן כדי למנוע את הולדתו של היטלר. איך? הם שולחים לעבר כדורי עקרות לגברים (אשר נגנבו ממעבדה בביולוגיה), לתוך הברז של משפחת היטלר.

לאחר שהוא לוחץ על הכפתור, מייקל מתעורר בפרינסטון ארה"ב לתוך עולם שונה ממה שהוא הכיר.

הוא מאוד שמח כשאנשים לא יודעים מי זה היטלר. אבל, מהר מאוד הוא מתפכח ומגלה שהעולם החדש אינו ארץ הממתקים שהוא תיאר לעצמו. לא, היטלר לא נולד. במקומו נולד רודולף גלודר.

רודולף גלודר, היה קצין גרמני במלחמה הגדולה, הפך למנהיג המפלגה הנאצית אשר עלתה לשלטון ב-1932. ב-1938 גלודר איחד את כל אירופה תחת שלטון נאצי, לאחר שהטיל פצצות אטום על מוסקבה ולנינגרד. אמריקה נותרה גזענית, הומופובית ובמצב של מלחמה קרה מול גרמניה.

וכעת מייקל צריך למצוא את ליאו ולתקן את הנזק שגרם.

הספר כתוב בשלושה סגנונות שונים. את הסיפור מספר לנו מייקל. בין כל פרק מסיפורו של מייקל מובא פרק מההיסטוריה - על הוריו של היטלר, היטלר הצעיר וגלודר, בצורת סיפור.

מספר פרקים מייקל מספר כאילו היה זה תסריט לסרט קולנוע. הסיבה היא שבזמנים אלו מייקל הרגיש כאילו הוא בסרט. זה נותן לקורא ריחוק מסוים מהזירה וגם מזיז את העלילה קדימה מכיוון שאין תיאורי רגשות ומחשבות אלא רק סטים ומונולוגים.

זהו ספר בעל עלילה רצינית משופעת בהומור בריטי משובח. זהו סיפור הרפתקה ומסע מרתק להיסטוריה אלטרנטיבית המעלה שאלות על טבע האדם, טוב ורע ואהבה. הסוף, הוא סוף טוב.

סטיבן פריי הוא שחקן בריטי הזכור לטובה מהסדרות *ג'יוס ו-ווסטר* או *עלילות הפתן השחור* והסרטים *החברים של פיטר*, *וויילד* (בתור אוסקר וויילד) ו-*אהבה אטומית*. ספריו הנוספים של פריי (לא מד"ס) הם *השקרן* ו-*ההיפופוטם*.



Reviews of Books by Vinges by Aharon Sheer

The Snow Queen by Joan Vinge (1980), 469 pages.

This book won the Hugo award for best novel in 1980. In case you were wondering, the author's name is pronounced VIN-jee. Since author Joan Vinge (the ex-wife of author Vernor Vinge) is scheduled to be a guest at ArmageddonCon at the end of December 2000 in Jerusalem, I thought it was about time I read one of her books. This book is *very good*. I found it fast-paced, jam-packed with interesting ideas and characters. It seems like every page something new happens, some unexpected situation, some new character, some new idea. It is a science fiction novel with a lot of fantasy flavor. It has the favorite plot of the young person who, in the course of the book, discovers that she is really destined to be the most important person on her world, and perhaps (we'll have to read the sequels, such as *The Summer Queen*, to find out), one of the most important people in the universe. We have descriptions of a variety of human societies, some quite familiar but still different enough to invite our curiosity. We learn about an ancient Old Empire that once controlled enormous reaches of starry space, and which, as it declined, left behind things from which mankind can learn. The action takes place

on the watery planet Tiamat whose eccentric orbit around its star cuts it off from the rest of human space for many years at a time (when the wormhole near it cannot be used), which provides part of the background for the whole book. Preparing for this cutoff period, and then going through it, has been part of the planet's experiences for the last thousand years. Tiamat also has something of great value to the well-to-do on other worlds: a natural substance, which prevents aging. If you are wealthy enough to be able to purchase this rare substance, you can live and appear young indefinitely. Naturally the well-to-do on other planets want to retain control of this substance, which has never been synthesized. I could go on citing ideas from the book, but I suggest you read it. I found the first few dozen pages dense and difficult to get involved in, but once I was involved, I didn't want to stop. Not only that, when I finished, I felt that I had read something worth reading. I certainly intend to look for other books by Joan Vinge, preferable before I meet her at ArmageddonCon.

A Deepness in the Sky by Vernor Vinge (1999), 774 pages. Recommended by Shmuel Kahn.

This book won the Hugo award for best novel in 1999. In case you were wondering, the author's name is pronounced VIN-jee. Author Vernor Vinge is the ex-husband of author Joan Vinge (see review of *The Snow Queen* above). A previous novel of his, *A Fire Upon the Deep* won the Hugo award for best novel in 1992. This novel takes place in the same future history as that one, but is a prequel. The author creates three societies in detail, two of them human, and one alien. The three societies are well-drawn, although the alien one is more like one of the two human societies than the other human society is. The title refers to a planet whose star alternates between long periods of being too cold to support life on the planet revolving around it, and then short periods (tens of years), in which life can flourish. The spider-like alien intelligent beings on the planet have developed a system of survival: as the cold period approaches, they prepare "deepnesses",

deep underground caverns where they will remain frozen for hundreds of years, and then when the planet warms up, they wake up, eat the food they left for themselves, and gradually go back to living outside, reestablishing agriculture, rebuilding their society and technology, etc. That such a system can have existed for thousands of years raises questions, and answers are suggested. The aliens are described with great affection, and are much more likeable than most of the human visitors studying their planet. I had great fun reading this book; it kept me reading and I was always interested in what would happen next. Unfortunately when I finished, as often happens with such exciting novels, I sort of said "Eh! So what!" Since it got the Hugo award, obviously a lot of people liked it very much, so you just have to try it and make up your own mind. And, as I said, I liked it a lot as I read it.



Science Fiction and Fantasy
News and Rumors
Collected and brought to you by **Guy Eldar**

Did you go Icon 2000? First let me congratulate the organizers on a job well done. The schedule was filled with thing to see and do and not all of them were *Star Trek* episodes. And this brings me to this issue's of "news and rumors" topic – TV series.

If you haven't signed the petition to start a Sci-Fi channel in Israel, you must have missed it. Not that it'll help – look what good it did us to sign for the broadcasting of the final two seasons of *ST: DS9*. But that petition, as well as the introduction of some shows never before aired on Israeli TV, took me off on a search for TV Science Fiction. Those Sci-Fi shows that we probably won't ever get to see (and by that I mean that most of them will never hit the screens in our living rooms).

As well known and mentioned above, our biggest frustration is *Star Trek*. I don't know about you, but I couldn't bring my self to watch the final episodes of the series in the last Icon with not seeing the two seasons in between. I'm still hopeful that some day the endless reruns of *DS9* will continue on to new episodes. With that, of course, there's the next series that will never get here – *Voyager*. With the "Chinuchit" (Educational Channel) holding the rights to the *Star Trek* series chances are slim. But there is a ray of light – Star World. The channel also has rights to the *Star Trek* legacy, and chances are, in the far future (and again, probably before the "Chinuchit"), both series will be aired.

The same hope is as I've reported here before, concerning the animated series *Futurama* (pilot episode seen in Icon 2000). Although our first channel seems to be building up to the new episodes of the great series *Star Gate: SG1*, *The Simpsons* is nowhere in sight and it seems its futuristic sister isn't either.

Again, as reported here, Star World has

purchased *Futurama* and my guess it'll be aired within a year.

Star World is also my best bet for the *Buffy, the Vampire Slayer's* spin off – *Angel*. There is a small chance that Channel 2 will air the good vampire's tails in LA in a season or two, but I wouldn't bet on it.

My biggest disappointment is the delayed return of *Gene Roddenberry's Earth: Final Conflict*. With a great alien invasion story line, the show was aired on METV, but with all the reruns they keep showing now, I doubt if they have the budget to buy the show now that it has picked up in ratings.

And then there are the new series. After a careful search I have found two that are worthy of discussion. The first is yet another of Mejal Roddenberry's resurrections of her husband's name in *Gene Roddenberry's Andromeda*.

Kevin Sorbo (TV's *Hercules*) stars as Dylan Hunt, captain of the ship *Andromeda Ascendant*. After being frozen, with his ship and crew, for several centuries, he returns to find his world in chaos. He decides to roam the galaxies and try to bring order back to the universe. I haven't seen the show myself, but judging from the short video samples on the official site (www.andromedatv.com) it has potential.

Another new series, one that I got to see the premier of, is *Witch Blade*. Based on a conic book series, it tells of a young policewoman who comes across an ancient artifact that turns her in to a forceful worrier out of the medieval ages.

With high-tech *The Matrix* like effects, this show promises to be the next big thing on television. If the two-part pilot is an indication of the rest, I say they might just get their way. At any rate, unless *Witch Blade* and *Andromeda* become hits, chances are they'll join the many Sci-Fi series we might have enjoyed and never got to see.

Comments, News and Rumors' facts and sites would be appreciated. Write to: eldarguy@netvision.net.il
Please subject messages as "News and Rumors".

For Comments: POB 9443, Tel Aviv 61093. Email: asheer@netvision.net.il. Tel: Aharon Sheer 08-947-1225.

Editor: **Aharon Sheer**.

Graphic Editor and Design: **Guy Eldar**.

Logo by: **Miriam Ben-Loulu**.

For mail delivery of *CyberCozen*, please donate 30 shekels per YEAR; For airmail to US \$15; If Aharon Sheer can hand-deliver it, 15 shekels.

עבור משלוח בדואר של *CyberCozen*, הנכם מתבקשים לתרום 30 ש"ח לשנה; עבור דואר אוויר לארה"ב \$15; אם אהרון שיר יכול למסור את העיתון באופן אישי, 15 ש"ח.

Copyright ©2000.

All rights reserved to specified authors and artists.
כל הזכויות שמורות למחברים וליוצרים, כפי שצוינו.