



Science-Fiction Fanzine

Vol. XVII, No. 3; March, 2005

### The Israeli Society for Science Fiction and Fantasy

אגודה הישראלית למדע בדיוני ולפנטסיה, בשיתוף עם בית אריאלה מרכז תרבות, שמחה להזמין למפגש הבא בסדרת ההרצאות ע"ש עמוס גפן. המפגש יתקיים בבית-אריאלה מרכז תרבות, שד' שאול המלך 25, תל-אביב, ביום רביעי 23.2.2005 בשעה 20:00 הכניסה חופשית  
נושא ההרצאה: צלילי קסם ודמיון  
על המוסיקה בסרטי "אנימה" יפניים

ההרצאה תעסוק במאפיינים המיוחדים של המוסיקה המלווה סרטי אנימה יפניים בתחומי המדע הבדיוני והפנטסיה, ותתמקד במוסיקאי קנג'ו קו-וואי (Kenji Kawai) האחראי לפסקול הסרט *Ghost in the Shell*. ההרצאה תלווה בהשמעת קטעי מוסיקה ובהקרנת קטעים מהסרט.  
המרצה: ריקי לנדסברג

ריקי לנדסברג היא מוסיקאית ומלחינה. בין עיסוקיה המגוונים היא יוצרת ושותפה בחברה להפקות סרטי אנימציה ותלת-מימד.

ז'ול ורן

אנו שמחים להודיע על אירוע לציון 100 שנה למותו של הסופר ז'ול ורן: יתקיים ב-31 למרץ בשעה 20:00 בבית יד לבנים בראשון לציון.

### חוג מדע בדיוני ברחובות – SFIR - Rehovot Science Fiction Club

פעילויות התא מתקיימות בימי א' בשעה 20:00 בפקולטה לחקלאות ברחובות, חדר 2, בבניין ליד הבריכה.

מידע נוסף ניתן לקבל באתר התא ( <http://sfir.tk/> ) או בדוא"ל [sfir42@yahoo.com](mailto:sfir42@yahoo.com).

More Society information is available (in Hebrew) at the Society's site: <http://www.sf-f.org.il>

### Film Review: *The Forgotten* (2004), 91 minutes

Reviewed by **Eitan Chaimovich**

Directed by [Joseph Ruben](#), written by [Gerald Di Pego](#), starring [Julianne Moore](#) as Telly Paretta the mother of Sam, and [Dominic West](#) as Ash Correll the father of Loren. Just came out in DVD. This film starts out as a psychological thriller, as Telly discovers that nobody remembers her nine year old son Sam who was killed in a plane crash a couple of years earlier, not even her husband. Soon she finds that her son's photo albums are empty and videotapes are blank. When her psychologist doesn't believe her, and when he says she made it up, it almost

breaks her up. To avoid hospitalization she runs away and eventually she meets Ash, whose daughter Loren was killed in the same plane crash. Telly finds that Ash had also forgotten about his daughter, but she manages to make him remember his daughter again. Now that she has an ally in trying to find out who has erased the memories of their children, all hell breaks loose and they find themselves chased by everybody for an unknown reason.

The film is beautifully photographed, and the acting of [Julianne](#)

[Moore](#) and [Anthony Edwards](#) is excellent.

This is a thriller, with lots of chase sequences; the police and the National Security Agency are involved, although it is not clear just exactly why, before the end of the film. Gradually the heroes find out the truth and then it turns out that there are people who already know – but they are reluctant to talk about it. The science fiction aspect in the film is concealed in the first half of the film and regretfully, I might add, left me unsatisfied in a way, since the “Why” was not clear enough to me, even in the end. We are never really told enough to fully believe the sf part of the story, even though it is in the background for everything bad that happens. But the bottom line is I liked the film even though

I did not have the “Why” question answered, since it was done well. I must add that I preferred the alternative ending that was on the DVD bonus section, mainly since it explained things better than the ending in the final cut.

I would assume that since the film is based on a dream that the author, [Gerald Di Pego](#), had, in which he saw a photo of a couple with a kid, and the kid slowly disappears from the photo, he could not find a real hard wood answer to the “why” question. I guess it may be easiest to accept the whole movie as a bad dream, from which the two heroes wake up, at the end.

Rated PG-13 for intense thematic material, some violence and brief language.

## Letters to the Editor

**Aharon,**

Thank you for the January 2005 *CyberCozen*. As usual it was a pleasure to read it, particularly the interesting letter from Mordechai Housman, a fellow Pratchett fan – Adams fan.

Your December issue was written *entirely* by you, without a word from an outside source. How do you do it? All that time and work!!!

I’ve been reading a lot of rubbish lately (what my late husband would have called “crap”). Friends will push a book at me telling me it’s “a good read”. I *detest* that expression! The blurb writers now find it perfectly acceptable, but I can’t stand it. And the books are NOT what I want. I want another book by Connie Willis.

I saw the film *I, Robot*. Don’t. Asimov must be turning over in his grave – robots killing people all over the place! Awful.

Yours, **Clara Rimon**

**Clara,**

The fact that the December issue was written entirely by me is unfortunate. I’m so busy studying neurobiology (and working in it too, a little) that I don’t read more than one sf book a month. The other reviews in the December issue were reviews that I wrote long ago but never had room for them to publish. NOW I have too much room, and it won’t be long before the backlog is all used up, and I’ll have to start printing empty pages. Maybe I’ll mark them “CENSORED” so people will *think* I wrote them but that the government wouldn’t let me print them?

**Aharon**

**Aharon,**

Thanks for the latest (February) *CyberCozen*. I really enjoyed the opening piece by Miriam Ben-Loulu. She focuses well on something that has occurred to me in passing many times: the anachronistic elements in sf, and the varying levels of depth that sf writers display in their depiction of other worlds and other times. At least some of the *Star Trek* writers knew that all aliens don't have two arms, two legs, and eyes and a head, and so forth.

Another thing that has amused me about almost all battles in sf: the combatants usually carry what are essentially guns or knives or things to throw. The weapons may be huge or tiny or weird-looking, but they are essentially six shooters.

Ben-Loulu's piece looks like a table of contents for an important book. I hope she writes it.

Another fascinating issue. Thanks very much.

**Sid Berger**

**Aharon,**

As I suspected, this is to be the last season of *Star Trek Enterprise*. The final episode is to be shown in May. It has been in the bottom ten in the ratings for some time now, and I didn't think it could continue at that rate. It is shown on the United Paramount Network (UPN), and, with the exception of wrestling, UPN's programs are all low in the ratings.

The producer, Rick Berman, a disciple of Gene Roddenberry, claims the reason for the cancellation is due to franchise fatigue and fan apathy. However, as I have stated before, I think it is due to poor stories and writing. As I previously mentioned, the episodes of the previous incarnations of *Star Trek* were like a series of short stories with an underlying theme which led to great variety in the stories. *Enterprise* has long story lines like a novel which extended over several episodes or, even, the whole season. Some of these long story lines got to be boring or tedious.

With *Babylon 5* and *FarScape* gone, there are no more sci-fi programs of the type I call space operas running. The SciFi Channel has a couple of series going (*Space Gate* and *Battlestar Galactica*), but I do not watch those. I think the originality of Gene Roddenberry is greatly missed.

Yes, there was a continuation of *Babylon 5*. It was called *Babylon 5 Crusade*, and it ran for 13 episodes in June thru August of 1999. It contained some characters who were introduced in some of the last episodes of *Babylon 5*. It concerned the story of a captain and crew of a starship assigned to find a cure for the plague released on Earth by the Drakh as spoken of in the *Babylon 5* telefilm, *A Call To Arms*. It apparently wasn't considered worth repeating. Programs with 13 or fewer episodes are not considered candidates for syndication.

**Ted Henderson**, Los Angeles

**Ted –**

It doesn't help that Rick Berman is a complete idiot when it comes to science (see comet example discussed in February *CyberCozen*). At least the earlier series had some interesting ideas which could be made pseudo-scientifically valid.

**Aharon**

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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. For **free email delivery** write to [asheer@netvision.net.il](mailto:asheer@netvision.net.il) (specify XP Word format, or RTF format).

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כל הזכויות שמורות למחברים וליוצרים, כפי שצוינו.

## Short Book Review by Aharon Sheer

*Trapped* by James Alan Gardner (2002), 382 pages.

Recommended by Amnon Stupp. The League of Peoples, an interstellar outfit of super-beings, took over Earth a few hundred years ago. They gave those Earth people who they considered to be nicely behaved a choice: go out into space with interstellar star ships provided by the League, or stay on Earth. Most Earth people left Earth. This book is a story about the descendents of some of the ones who stayed on Earth.

However, this is a new Earth in which 21<sup>st</sup> century technology (you know, computers, lasers, fluorescent lights, automobiles) no longer works. Instead you have some people who can become magicians, and a world mostly like medieval Earth, with magic. Plus scattered extra-terrestrials. This new Earth is lightly supervised (and protected) by people who have been given super-technology, called Spark Lords. The Spark Lords are good guys, in some ways – long ago they eliminated nasty things like biological and chemical weapons, not to mention atomic weapons. But why would anyone stay on such an Earth? Well, the nastier ones were not allowed to leave (the League doesn't want them in space), and others perhaps had romantic ideas of what life on Earth would be like in a return to the medieval life.

As for the interstellar League of Peoples, many of the League peoples are very smart, much smarter than human beings, as the following conversation between two Earth humans explains:

“Just between you and me, I hate the way aliens can predict the future. It’s fucking spooky.”

“How do they do it?”

“According to them, superior brainpower. One of them gave me this analogy: suppose you see a rock perched on the edge of a cliff. You’re smart enough to know the rock will fall sooner or later; a wind will blow it over, rain will erode the ground underneath, some kid will shove it off just for kicks ... however it happens, you have no doubt the rock will plummet eventually. But lesser intelligences can’t make that connection – as dog or a cat or something similar just can’t see what’s bound to happen.”

“And these aliens compare us to dogs? We’re surrounded by rocks on the edges of cliffs and we’re too stupid to recognize the inevitable?”

“Exactly.... Our brains are only a few millions years ahead of a dog’s; and some alien races evolved billions of years before we did. ... it sure is a bitch living in a universe where so many species are smarter than you.” (p. 64)

Since this is a science fiction novel, and not fantasy, there is also an “explanation” as to how magic and psionics work. Here is a short part of the discussion:

“Do you know what nanites are, Phil? Nanotech? Microscopic machines the size of bacteria ... or even smaller, viruses, single molecules?

“... thirty percent of all microbes on Earth today – things that look like bacteria and viruses – are actually nanites in disguise....

“Outside intervention.... Somebody covered our planet with nano: land, sea, and air. The nanites are designed to replace natural microorganisms, then work together to make sorcery and psionics possible.” (p. 81)

As in a good fantasy novel, bad things happen and friends go on a quest to try and make things better. These friends – mostly teachers at an undistinguished residential school for mediocre wealthy teenagers (and a few smart scholarship students), find themselves faced with a serious problem which they decide they are going to try and solve. These teachers are people who, as teenagers twenty years younger, had dreams of doing great things. They were outstanding students who pictured themselves making major contributions. Instead they all ended up teaching in this second-rate academy. So here is a chance to face danger, perhaps to do really important things – and maybe survive it.

As they travel they meet remnants of the old days. "...in places one could still see concrete steps with rusty metal railings leading up to doors that weren't there, and netless basketball hoops standing on poles in the middle of tumble-down trash heaps." (p. 101)

They horseback ride until they get to the sea. "The so-called 'sea' is actually Lake Erie, entirely fresh water." (p. 118) So we learn that this future middle ages fantasy is actually taking place in what was once the United States of America. So we have a fantasy of what the U.S. might become when modern technology no longer works.

It's a bloody story. Lots of people get killed, including some of the heroes. And yes there are some love stories too. But then lovers can also be killed. I found the novel much more worth reading than Gardner's *Expendable* (reviewed by me in the December 2004 *CyberCozen*), but over all there is a lot of killing, and it's a pretty depressing future. I think I prefer escapist literature.

Other books by James Alan Gardner were more favorably reviewed by Amnon Stupp in the January 2004 *CyberCozen*.

### Quote of the Month:

"An excellent plumber is infinitely more admirable than an incompetent philosopher. The society which scorns excellence in plumbing because plumbing is a humble activity and tolerates shoddiness in philosophy because it is an exalted activity will have neither good plumbing nor good philosophy. Neither its pipes nor its theories will hold water."

From *Excellence, Can We Be Equal and Excellent Too?* p. 86 (1961)  
by John W. Gardner.

**Note:** The above quote was sent me by Sid Berger, who wrote: "Gardner was a prolific scholar and writer -- fiction and non-fiction. He did a brilliant modernization of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, and a fiction piece that became a minor best-seller, *Grendel* (a retelling of the *Beowulf* story from the perspective of the first monster)."