



Science-Fiction Fanzine

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The Israeli Society for Science Fiction and Fantasy

נא שימו לב לשינוי מקום ההרצאות בסדרת ההרצאות ע"ש עמוס גפן. מנובמבר 2005 יתקיימו ההרצאות באוניברסיטת תל-אביב.

ערב מסע בזמן: פרדוקסים והיתכנות פיסיקאלית

האגודה הישראלית למדע בדיוני ולפנטסיה ומועדון סטארבייס 972, שמחים להזמיןכם למפגש הבא בסדרת ההרצאות ע"ש עמוס גפן. המפגש יתקיים באוניברסיטת תל-אביב, בניין מקסיקו, חדר 120 ביום חמישי 24.11.2005. לרגל פתיחת הסדרה באכסניה החדשה, ושיתוף הפעולה בין האגודה והמועדון, יתקיים הפעם מפגש חגיגי ומורחב.

בתכנית הערב:

18:00 – מסע בזמן ב"מסע בין כוכבים": הקרנת הפרק *Time's Arrow* מתוך *מסע בין כוכבים: הדור הבא*. בעקבות גילוי ראשו של דאטה בסן פרנסיסקו, בממצאים ארכיאולוגיים המתוארכים למאה ה-19, צוות האנטרפרייז יוצא לחקור את גלי הקרינה המוזרים שהופיעו בעיר ומגיע למסקנה שדאטה יחזור לתקופת זמן זו, וימות בה. במהלך מסעם נוצר פיצוץ ודאטה נעלם ואכן מתגשם מחדש בעבר. (90 דק', ללא תרגום) ההקרנה תיפתח בסקירת תופעת המסע בזמן בסדרה *מסע בין כוכבים*.

19:40 – הפסקת כיבוד

20:00 – הרצאתו של ד"ר עמנואל לוטם: "מסעות בזמן - פרדוקסים והיתכנות פיסיקאלית". ד"ר עמנואל לוטם הוא עורך ומתרגם – הנמנה עם מייסדי האגודה הישראלית למדע בדיוני ולפנטסיה וכיהן כיו"ר הראשון של האגודה. ד"ר לוטם הוא עורך האנציקלופדיה המקוונת של *YNET*.

21:30 – הקרנת הפרק *Yesterday's Enterprise* מתוך *מסע בין כוכבים: הדור הבא*. האנטרפרייז מגלה קרע מוזר בחלל ובתוכו את האנטרפרייז C, שהאמינו כי הושמדה בקרב לפני 20 שנה. במקביל, מופיעה על הסיפון קצינת הביטחון הקודמת, טאשה יר, שנהרגה לפני כמה שנים. (45 דק', ללא תרגום) הכניסה חופשית.

Rehovot Science Fiction Club - SFIR – חוג מדע בדיוני ברחובות

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

20/11/2005 – הקרנת סרט: *הנסיכה הקסומה*

27/11/2005 – הרצאה: *קומיקס*

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

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

Quote of the Month:

Benjamin Micah Rosenbaum is a young (born 1969) science fiction short story writer, whose first professional story sale was in 2001. Several of his stories have been nominated for prizes (although he hasn't won any yet). The following quote is from an interview in *LOCUS*, October 2005:

"I keep drawing on both my college majors, computer science and religious studies, in my writing. I always had a natural tendency toward religiosity. I grew up reading the Hebrew Bible a lot, and it formed many of my worldviews. The thing is, it's not logical. It was written in the age of the epics -- the **Ramayana**, the **Mahabharata**, the **Iliad** and the **Odyssey** -- where the world is mysterious and there is no requirement that God be an arithmetic expression of all virtues. Later, Aristotle and the Athenians come in saying God has to be the maximum of good, and the maximum of this and that, trying to give explanations for all the anthropomorphism, the capriciousness of God, that you see in religious texts, on the basis that God is this infinitely nice, infinitely orderly Being with a Plan. The God of the medieval philosophers is predictable, and can be reduced to a formula. 'It follows that God would not do that.' But God's really weird! In the actual Bible, God does things, then regrets them. And that's interesting. God can be pissed at some people and love other people. There's a capriciousness to God, and that makes sense to me as a model. The universe does seem capricious.

"I am a religious postmodernist. I think religion is a communal human labor to create an emotional context for the crazy, inscrutable nature of the world. It's all metaphor; but as a postmodernist, when I say that, I'm not wimpily saying 'Well, it's not really true, but it's nice to think that way.' I mean it's a powerful metaphor, one of the tools we can use to get at the world - always provisionally, always temporarily. Like art, and science. In my religious worldview -- and I think this is really very Jewish -- I think any time you think you know what God is or can proclaim with certainty what God wants, you're guilty of idolatry."

DVD Film Review by Aharon Sheer: *Memento* (2000).

Directed by Christopher Nolan, writing credits Jonathan Nolan (short story “Memento Mori”) and Christopher Nolan (screenplay), 113 minutes. Rated R for violence, language and some drug content. USA.

Classifying this murder thriller as science fiction depends on your definition of science fiction. One definition that I like is one that says that in a science-fiction story, there is a scientific or pseudo-scientific idea, and if you remove that idea, there is no story. By this definition, *Memento* is science fiction, and it’s even connected to my adopted profession, neurobiology. I’m going to give here some of the science basis.

The movie is about memory. The hero of this movie, Leonard Shelby (played by Guy Pearce), has memory damage much like that of one of the most famous case histories in the study of memory, called H.M. In the 1950s, in an attempt to stop H.M.’s debilitating epilepsy attacks, a brain operation was performed which removed both H.M.’s left hippocampal formation, and his right hippocampal formation. The epilepsy was cured, but H.M. was left permanently unable to form new memories. (This treatment is no longer done.) H.M., a young man at the time of the operation, spent most of the rest of his life in an institution (he was still alive in 2002). H.M. was the subject of numerous research projects, and the neurologist Ramachandran, in his book *Phantoms in the Brain*, wrote, “More was learned about memory from a few days of studying a patient called H.M. than was gleaned from previous decades of research averaging data on many subjects.” H.M. was a pleasant, mild-mannered person, and one could carry on a nice conversation with him for a few minutes. But if one walked away, and came back two minutes later, H.M. would not remember that he had ever met you

before. H.M. could remember his past up to a few years before the operation, but could not long remember anything that ever happened after the operation. H.M. suffered from severe “anterograde amnesia”. This means he had no memory (“amnesia”) for events that took place after (“anterograde”) his operation.

Another such case was a British musician, Clive Wearing, an expert on Renaissance music, who had set up and was the conductor of a choir which specialized in performing such music. As a result of encephalitis (an infection of the brain) he lost all capacity to form new memories. In contrast to H.M., who had lost “only” his left and right hippocampal formations, Clive suffered additional damage. He was bitter and unhappy about his state. His frequent outbursts of anger may have been the result of brain damage additional to his hippocampus (frontal lobe damage). Although Clive might not have been able to say, “I’ve lost the capacity to form long-term memories”, as Leonard does in this movie, he began keeping a diary, and writing in it everything that happened to him. Each day when he woke up he would read his diary to see what he had been doing. He was well aware that many months (later, years) had passed since his brain damage occurred, and that he was unable to remember these times. Yet each day, each hour, was new to him as a person sometimes feels awaking from sleep and being unaware of where he is or how he got there. Clive could be brought to his choir, have a music score placed in front of him, and he could conduct a choral work perfectly, and play the piano accompaniment. This was done on a TV

program about him made by the BBC. Clive mostly only remembered what he had learned in the past. In part, the hero of this movie, Leonard Shelby, is modeled after Clive Wearing, in that Leonard also keeps a diary.

Another topic that comes up in the movie is that there are various kinds of memory, and that not all are processed in the hippocampus. For H.M. the ability to form "episodic" memories was lost, memories of incidents in his life. But what is called "procedural memory" was retained. H.M. could be taught a manual task which required some skill. With each training session his performance would improve. He could do the task better and faster. Yet if you said to him, "You're doing that much better than the time before", he would reply, "What are you talking about, I've never done this before in my life."

The last event movie hero Leonard Shelby remembers is seeing his wife raped and murdered. After that he was struck over the head, which caused hippocampal damage like that of H.M. or Clive. He cannot form new memories. In fact it seems that the only new thing he can remember is that he is unable to form new memories. (Although H.M. is unaware of this fact, Clive is well aware that he does not remember what happened yesterday, and this angers him greatly.) Leonard has one great goal in life: to find that man who raped and killed his wife, and to kill that man. But with his memory problems, how can he carry out a planned and organized program to that end? His method is partly to keep written notes, like Clive's diary, and partly to take Polaroid pictures of each important person he meets, or of places that he needs to go to, like his motel. He writes notes to himself on the backs of the pictures to tell

him who the people are, or where the place is. But – out of fear of losing crucial written notes – he also goes to a tattoo parlor and has crucial messages to himself tattooed on his body. When he gets out of bed in the morning, and goes into the bathroom to shower and dress, there in the mirror image of his body are messages that he cannot avoid reading – some even tattooed as mirror images for easy reading in the mirror. Thus Leonard preserves information about the new things that happen to him, and can (and must) update regularly by referring to the notes and to the pictures that he carries in his pockets everywhere he goes.

Leonard is aware of his condition, and tells everyone about it – over and over, as he cannot remember to whom he already told the story. But Leonard also knows more about anterograde amnesia than the average person. As an insurance investigator before his injury, he had had to deal with the claims of a man who had the same memory loss. As part of his job, he investigated this problem thoroughly, even learning about the differences between episodic memory and procedural memory. And this too is discussed in the film – which includes the imaginary case history of a man named Sammy who has anterograde amnesia.

Memento is a confusing and complicated film, made more so by the fact that the script has chosen to tell us Leonard's story backwards: starting from the latest events, and going backward to earlier events. We thus discover things and gradually realize more and more about Leonard's predicament.

This film is very well acted, from the major players to the minor ones. Not a cheery film, but thought provoking indeed, and scientifically accurate, even though the story itself is entirely fictional.

STAR TREK Book Review -- Submitted by Gary Roth

Star Trek - the Next Generation: Unification (based on the 2 part television episode) by Jeri Taylor , 245 pg., 1990.

This story is a bit depressing -- Spock spends 80 years in secret diplomacy attempting to reunify the Romulans with the Vulcans, only to be brutally betrayed. There is an underground rebel movement that meets with Spock, who has been in contact with a certain elderly Romulan statesman, who in turn reports to the youthful Romulan proconsul. There is hope for the future, however, as a remnant of the underground, along with Spock, manage to survive and vow to keep the idea alive, no matter how many generations it will take.

The reader is introduced to Sarek's 2nd wife, and told some interesting facts about the Vulcan ambassador and his late 1st wife as well. A fascinating tale is told of how Tasha Yar, the former Next Generation Enterprise security officer, was abducted following the famous space battle in which she tried to help a more primitive, damaged, Starfleet ship against the Romulans, thanks to a sort of time warp. The Romulan commander decided to turn his prisoner into his mate, and the daughter that resulted becomes the one that goes undercover years later to break up much of the reunification movement. This daughter hated her mother for daring to oppose her

noble father, and vowed to take revenge against the Federation and Starfleet.

Picard, Riker and crew are called upon to check out Spock and see why a fuzzy spy photo finds him meeting with the elder Romulan senator. Even though Spock is reluctant to give any facts, eventually the Enterprise away team manages to save the day. I remember seeing on TV the impressive holographic cloaking trick in their prison room, surprising the returning Romulan guards and Tasha Yar's offspring -- it appeared as if the Starfleet personnel had escaped, when in fact they were hiding nearby enough to overtake the startled, unsuspecting natives. The author pulls off a nice description of the events visually, however.

An amusing series of episodes includes Riker attempting to extract information from workers at a space junkyard. Materials mysteriously disappear and work their way to the Vulcan-Romulan conflict. The book is worth reading for these entertaining parts alone! Further, Deanna Troi contributes her unique psychic powers to round out the action.

All in all, this is a recommended novel.

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