



Science-Fiction Fanzine

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The Israeli Society for Science Fiction and Fantasy

עולמות 2011 – הכנס השנתי למדע בדיוני ולפנטזיה, 20-21 באפריל, תל אביב

פסח כבר מעבר לפינה, ואיתו מגיע כנס "עולמות", שמוקדש השנה לנושא "זמן". הנה כמה מהדברים שמחכים לכם בכנס:

הרצאות

ניסויים מטורפים מהעבר: רועי צזנה, דוקטורנט לננו-טכנולוגיה וחוקר במרכז לחיזוי טכנולוגי באוניברסיטת תל אביב, ירצה על ניסויים מדעיים מטורפים: כלב דו-ראשי, ניסיון לזווג קופים עם נשים אנושיות, יונים מסוממות המשמשות ליירוט מטוסים ומסרים תת-הכרתיים שנועדו להשפיע על תוצאות הבחירות בישראל.

דוקטור הו ואדון הזמן: חגית וינר, חובבת פנטזיה ומדע בדיוני, תגלה לנו מה צריך לקרות כדי שהדוקטור הטוב, אותו חייזר אוהב אדם, חכם ומשעשע, יוחלף באדון הזמן הבלתי מנוצח וחסר הרסן – ולמה בכלל צריך את אדון הזמן הזה?

תגליות שהגיע זמנן: ד"ר רז דקל, מרצה להיסטוריה של הרפואה, ירצה על מה שקורה כשתגליות מגיעות בזמן הלא נכון. תגליות רבות הסתיימו במפח נפש או בהתעלמות מפני שהקהילייה המדעית לא הייתה בשלה להן. בהרצאה יסקרו תגליות בתחום מדעי החיים שהגיעו בזמן וכאלה שהקדימו את זמנן.

פעילויות

הכינותי מראש: הארי פוטר: בתיה עוזיאל, מגישת תוכנית הטלוויזיה הקלאסית של הטלוויזיה החינוכית, "מלאכת יד עם בתיה עוזיאל", תעביר סדנת יצירה לקוסמים ולמכשפות שבה תוכלו ליצור את חולצת אחד מארבעת הבתים המופיעים בסדרת הארי פוטר – גריפינדור, סלית'רין, רייבנקלו או הפלפאף! ההרשמה מראש.

אל תכשף את המיליון: חידון פוטריסטי. עדי בראון ומתן זיגרון יבדקו עד כמה אתם מכירים את ספרי הארי פוטר. המשתתפים יבחרו מתוך הקהל ויכללו לזכות בפרסים.

וכמדי שנה, הכנס יארח שלל מפגשים, פאנלים, סדנאות וסרטים.

לרשימת האירועים המלאה גלושו לאתר החדש שלנו: <http://www.olamot-con.org.il>

הרצאות החודש בסדרה "בין מדע למדע בדיוני" (רחובות)

עיר העתיד - ארכיטקטורה בעולם המדע הבדיוני בחינת אפשרויות תכנון עתידיות לבסיסי 27.3.2011 חלל, וסקירה של ארכיטקטורה "חוצנית" בעולם התוכן של המדע הבדיוני.

המרצה: דודי זוסימן, מהנדס חלל ומנהל תוכניות עמוס בחברת "חלל תקשורת".

מפגשי הסדרה מתקיימים בפקולטה לחקלאות ברחובות, בימי א' בשעות: 20:00-21:30. לפרטים, או miritz@savion.huji.ac.il, בדוא"ל: 08-9489996/510 והרשמה פנו אל מירי צעיד-עדן, בטלפון: 08-9470171. תינתן הנחה לחברי האגודה.

מועדון הקריאה

במרכז דיוני מועדון הקריאה בחודש מרץ יעמוד הספר "המנון לליבוויץ" מאת וולטר מ' מילר. מועדון הקריאה בתל אביב יתקיים ביום רביעי, 30.3, בשעה 19:30 בבית הקפה "קפה קפה" ברחוב אבן גבירול 38 (כשר). מנחה המפגש: דניאל פידלמן. לצורך היערכות למספר המשתתפים, מומלץ להירשם מראש, כמו כן, רצוי להביא למפגש עותק של הספר. fidelismanus@gmail.com באמצעות הדוא"ל, בכתובת ההשתתפות במועדון הקריאה אינה כרוכה בתשלום, אינה מותנית בהגעה למפגשים נוספים, ופתוחה גם פרטים על מפגשי המועדון הנוספים שיעסקו בספר זה יתפרסמו באתר האגודה. למי שאינם חברי אגודה. המעוניינים להנחות מועדוני קריאה בכל רחבי הארץ מוזמנים לפנות בדוא"ל למרכזת הפרויקט, ליאת liat42@gmail.com ששחר:

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

Book Reviews by Aharon Sheer

Coyote Frontier by Allen Steele (2005), 303 pages, plus half a page list of scientific sources.

This book could be called “Adventures on a Distant Planet, Book III”. It’s classic science fiction, a continuation of the novel *Coyote*, which was reviewed in *CyberCozen*, December 2009, and its sequel, *Coyote Rising* (reviewed August 2010). The book is subtitled “A Novel of Interstellar Colonization”.

In my review of Jack McDevitt’s *Odyssey* in the April 2010 *CyberCozen*, I made fun of McDevitt’s future universe, saying, “Politics, philosophy, religion (in a mainly secular society), human relations, are pretty much as they are in the U.S. today.” That describes Allen Steele’s *Coyote* trilogy too. Maybe it’s a fault of American writers in general, who have so little experience with other societies and cultures that they cannot imagine anything really different. America is terribly homogeneous, and everywhere one goes in America people are pretty much alike. I remember black author James Baldwin, who lived several years in France, and wrote in an essay that he had more in common with a white farmer in the U.S. Deep South than he had with a French intellectual in Paris, despite the similarities in their interests. Blurb writers for Steele’s novels like to compare him with Heinlein, but Heinlein had personal experience with people of other countries, and his characters show that he knew how different people can be. (A current good American counter-example, Allen Dean Foster, is a writer whose extensive travels on Earth have enriched his writing immensely.)

I don’t mean to knock Steele. He has a great knowledge of science, and his description of a new world and a new ecology are fascinating. But in this book he concentrates (like McDevitt in some of his books) on taking current Earth

controversies and making them central to his story. In this book the main theme is misuse of resources. Earth of the planet Coyote’s time has largely destroyed itself, having misused most of its natural minerals and land areas, leaving most of its people living in poverty. Global warming raised ocean levels, so that “Italy had lost its boot-like appearance, becoming instead a slender peninsula, with Sicily little more than a speck in a Mediterranean Sea that had become a vast gulf that altered the coastline of much of North Africa.” [p. 218]

When faster-than-light travel (FTL) has suddenly been developed on Earth, it no longer takes years to get from Earth to Coyote, it takes days. This opens Coyote to development.

“The Israeli ambassador told us that, while his country was also interested in a trade agreement, it was primarily interested in immigration; he expressed hope that small, non-spacefaring countries such as his would eventually be allowed to claim unoccupied islands as colonies.” [p. 236]

The big battle will be how to use the vast undeveloped areas of this new planet to supply Earth with what it needs, without regard for what the settlers on Coyote have worked so hard to do. Instead of bringing in new settlers gradually and helping them learn to live and work on this new world, rich and powerful Earth people are going to strip mine minerals, deforest vast land areas, and destroy unique animal habitats.

In particular, this will destroy the homelands on which live the small, monkey-like intelligent (but primitive) native beings of Coyote, who have a level of civilization like that of humans on Earth 20,000 years ago, including wall-paintings showing the human

invaders. The native *chereep* are a subject for study by scientists, but there won't be much left of them by the time the developers have stripped Coyote of whatever Earth needs. Sound familiar?

With the arrival of FTL, a Coyote government delegation goes to Earth to negotiate agreements that will benefit Coyote (for example, replacement of useful technology that is wearing out on Coyote which Coyote does not have the infrastructure to replace, such as computers), while providing Earth a new place for its adventurous citizens to settle. One character, raised on Earth, describes her culture-shock:

“Excusing myself, I went into the bedroom and, without taking off my clothes, lay down in bed. It took me a

long time to remember how to switch off the lights.

“‘Arthur, turn off the lights,’ I said.

“‘Yes, *ma’am*’,’ the AI replied.

‘*Sleep well.*’ The room went dark, and that’s when it occurred to me how many years it had been since the last time I’d done it that way. No oil lamps to be extinguished, no candles to be blown out. Just a verbal command, and the deed was done.

“Good heavens. Perhaps I *had* become a barbarian...” [p. 211]

Like the previous two novels in the *Coyote* trilogy, this is a good read, with conflict and excitement. The author has pitched it to have interest for teenagers – almost every substory in this novel has a teenaged character for the reader to identify with. Recommended.

***Sovereign* by Rebecca M. Meluch (1979), 230 pages.**

R. M. Meluch (1956-) has been publishing science fiction for thirty years. She holds degrees in communications and classical civilization. This is her first novel.

This is a very strange book.

Although it has a strong sf base, its overall feeling is like a fantasy novel. It is the story of a man, Teal Ray Stewart, from a little known planet, describing his life from childhood through middle age. Teal seems to have empathic capabilities (fantasy), he is thin and light in build but extremely strong (coming from a world with a higher gravity than Earth), and with great influence over others (fantasy).

Arana is a world mostly covered with water, but with some small land masses. But its unusual characteristic is that it circles a double star, one a central Sun, the other a dwarf star. In the planet’s dance in the gravitational attractions of the two suns, it passes through a 40 Earth-year Star Year in which it goes from warmest (when closest to both suns) to coldest (when

farthest from both suns). Humans settled this planet tens of thousands of years ago, and have directed their own evolution to enable them to survive the great changes in temperature through the Star Year. When hottest, they live in the water like whales, diving and swimming for long periods of time, when coldest they come up on land and live in houses. The human natives of Arana do not have a 24-hour circadian cycle of day and night as Earth humans have, for they do not have day and night as Earth does. One of their suns is shining in the sky almost all the time. This seems a rather unlikely idea, as every cell in the human body has a 24-Earth hour circadian rhythm. Instead they have a Star Year biological cycle from birth to age 40 Earth years.

The Arana people have written records going back tens of thousands of years. These records tell of the coming of new humans from Earth, cruel, stubborn beings that instead of adapting themselves to Arana have brought with them air conditioning and heating, and

airplanes, and bombs. The Earth people, whom the natives call "Northerners" since they live in the northern lands, consider the natives of Arana (who came long before them) to be stupid animals, with no history, no intelligence, no technology. When the planet gets colder, the Northerners move south, bombing and killing the worthless animal natives and taking over their lands. Every Star Year it is the same story. The Earth people have scientists, but those have mostly ignored the Arana natives. One of them is astounded to learn that the Arana natives have written records going back before the arrival of the Earth people, but is informed that not long ago the Earth people bombed and destroyed the original written records, and that all that remains of them are copies memorized and known by heart by every Arana native.

Teal is a Royalist, in line to be a possible king of his own people. Among Teal's people the closest connections are between father and son. But Teal's father rejects him, because at Teal's birth Teal's mother died. Teal's father hates Teal, blaming him for his wife's death. Still a young man, Teal marries but his wife is murdered by Teal's enemies among his own people who resent his kingly aspirations. (Teal is a Stewart, but there are other Royalist lines.) Teal runs away out of grief, but he also suffers from a disease, the Reill, which attacks his body from time to time (unpredictably) causing great pain and suffering:

"Homesickness became a chronic ill, like the Reill never leaving. He called no place home, living in the sea like a fish, occasionally coming to land on deserted Northern islands on a warm day to dry out in the sun. He saw no people. He dreamed of [his friend] Akelan, and his father, [his friend] Wings, his wife, and the Nomad girl long ago. Mad with loneliness he

came to a Caucan shore and met a young Caucan man who wanted to take him to bed. All he wanted was to be held and feel the after closeness. Instead, the man laughed. Soul searing, Teal would never forget it. He wanted to run. Run away from this, from memories, from everything. He ran leaving his pride far behind for the scavenger beasts, and headed for the most distant place he could call to mind. He looked up at the stars." [p. 60]

This passage illustrates a common thread of this book. The Arana people have no complexes about sex, freely walk about naked, and freely copulate with both men and women, leaving children behind as they go onward. Meluch's books are recommended by gay-bisexual readers.

Teal is a Royalist, but things are complicated. Rules describe the genetic lineages permitted to kings, and what kind of children they themselves may have. Having twin sons removes you from royal lineage.

When Teal learns that there are other planets besides Arana, and that it is possible to visit them, via superlight travel (which the Earth people have), he applies to join the Northerners' Space Academy. A Northerner, who has taken Teal under his wing as a trainee in the space academy, explains things to Teal:

"The Earthlings are people as we are -- we Northerners. My people are different from yours, more than physically. We have a different psyche. We came from an aggressive, adventurous stock. We are a people composed of individuals. Yours are not. You have a common goal, common duty. You've never felt the need to push outward. You have stayed in the same place countless thousands of years and evolved." [p. 64]

The Northerner's question is, why is Teal so different from the rest of his people?

Teal succeeds in travelling to Earth, where he must hide his planetary origin since there are several starfaring races that are fighting Earth for galactic control. Arana must not attract attention, as Earth sees it as under Earth control, while other races have other ideas. Teal does not want to attract attention to his own people. (If Earth humans treat them so badly, what might non-humans do?)

On Earth Teal succeeds. He becomes a leader of men, a starship

captain, and a leader of battles against hostile non-human races and in cooperation with allied non-human races. His crews and his fellow soldiers respect him greatly, although he keeps them at a distance. He only becomes "human" to his fellow men during the last 10 months of Star Year when he recalls the great happiness he felt in the womb one Star Year before, and is able to laugh and joke and be warm and friendly to his fellow men.

A curious novel, which kept my interest, but often left me confused.

Drawing by Miriam Ben-Loulu (September 1995)

Whoops – does she mean what I think she does?



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