



Science-Fiction Fanzine

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The Israeli Society for Science Fiction and Fantasy

כנס מיתופיה 2012: כנס מיתופיה הוא כנס שנתי המוקדש לספרות פנטזיה. בכנס תהיינה הרצאות מרתקות בנושאים מגוונים, ולצדן יתקיימו אירועים בידוריים, חידון וסדנאות שונות, וגם מפגשים של חברי הקהילות המארגנות את הכנס - [קהילת טולקין הישראלית](#) ו**קהילת הארי פוטר לבוגרים**. הכנס יתקיים בתאריך **23 באוגוסט, יום ה'**, בספרייה המרכזית של מודיעין. אתר הכנס: www.mytopia.org.

מועדון הקריאה של חודש אוגוסט יוקדש לאסופת הסיפורים "היה יהיה", של אגודה ישראלית למדע בדיוני ולפנטסיה, 2009. **מועדון הקריאה** התל אביבי יתקיים ביום חמישי, 30.8.12, בשעה 19:30, ב"קפה גרג", ויצמח 2 (פינת שאול המלך, מול בית המשפט), תל-אביב. המקום כשר. מנחה: **דפנה קירש**. לצורך היערכות למספר המשתתפים, יש להירשם מראש דרך הדואל של המנחה. כמו כן רצוי להביא למפגש עותק של הספר. הכניסה חופשית ואינה כרוכה בתשלום, בחברות באגודה, או בהגעה למפגשים נוספים. מועדון חודש ספטמבר יעסוק בספרה של דיאנה וויין ג'ונס "שבוע המכשפות". תאריך יתפרסם בהמשך. המעוניינים להנחות מועדוני קריאה במרכז ו/או בכל רחבי הארץ, על ספרים לפי בחירתם, מזמנים לפנות במייל למרכזת הפרויקט, **דפנה קירש**. לקבלת עדכונים שוטפים על מפגשי מועדון הקריאה ברחבי הארץ ניתן להצטרף ל**רשימת התפוצה** של מועדון הקריאה בדואל, או לעשות "לייק" ל**דף האגודה בפייסבוק**.

כדאי גם לבקר גם **בלוח האירועים שלנו**, שבו אפשר למצוא עוד שפע אירועים ז'אנריים, כמעט ז'אנריים ובעלי עניין. בקרו גם לפעמים **במדור הדורשים של האגודה**. אנו מחפשים **אחראי/ת מחשוב** ואחראי/ת מזכירות.

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

Quote of the Month

Different Acoustical analysis has revealed the presence of complex communication
Dialects signals across a variety of animal species. Information may also be
by **Sacha** conveyed by the arrangement of sounds, known as syntax. Syntax is
Vignieri thought to be rare outside of humans and birds, but the ability to transmit
complex information vocally is likely to be beneficial across social species.

Male rock hyraxes, a type of social small mammal, make a complex call that consists of wails, chucks, snorts, squeaks, and tweets and conveys detailed information about the caller's identity. Kershenbaum *et al.* applied methods borrowed from information theory and genetics to show the existence of distinct syntactical dialects in male hyraxes across regions within Israel. Specifically, populations near to one another were more similar than those farther apart, whereas at larger distances, differences varied without regard to proximity. The breakdown of the relationship between dialect and distance at larger scales suggests that dispersal distance is a limiting factor in the transmission of dialect learning. These results demonstrate that syntactical structure and vocal learning may occur in a more diverse group of species than has been previously recognized and that sociality may be a driving force for its development. *Proc. R. Soc. London Ser. B* **279**, 10.1098/rspb.2012.0322 (2012).

HELP! Aren't you getting bored by a *CyberCozen* which contains almost only book reviews by Aharon Sheer? And I am getting old....

Would you be willing to help? Couldn't you help? Write some book or movie reviews or commentary for *CyberCozen* which I will be delighted to publish no matter how good they are.

Book Reviews by Aharon Sheer

Star Trek by Alan Dean Foster (2009), 312 pages.

This is the novelization of the 2009 *Star Trek* movie which was written by Roberto Orci and Alex Kurtzman. That was the eleventh film based on the *Star Trek* franchise and featured the main characters of the original *Star Trek* television series, portrayed by a new cast.

Alan Dean Foster has novelized numerous movies. The first one I read was *Alien*. He also did *Aliens* and *Alien 3*. Here are some other film novelizations he did (from Wikipedia): *Dark Star* (1974), *Luana* (Italian film) (1974), *The Black Hole* (1979), *Clash of the Titans* (1981), *Outland* (1981), *The Thing* (1981), *Krull* (1983), *The Last Starfighter* (1984), *Starman* (1984), *Pale Rider* (1985). Although I never read any of these novelizations (except for *Alien*), three of these movies are among my favorites: *Dark Star*, *Outland*, and *The*

Last Starfighter. So Foster has good taste as to what to novelize.

This novel is not as good as Foster's original sf, especially those about the **Humanx Commonwealth Universe**. In that universe are his numerous Flinx books, which I enjoy very much. I'm reading one right now.

My chief objection is that this *Star Trek* is a time travel story. From my point of view, the idea is absurd. Both a Romulan, and the original Spock (played by our beloved Jew, Leonard Nimoy), travel through time. This enabled the script writers to ignore all of the history of the original series, since the story here can only be in a parallel universe. Poor Foster had no choice but to tell this ridiculous story, and I felt as I read it that he really did not believe in it. I hope he did it for the money.

Expendable by James Alan Gardner (1997), 337 pages.

The author is a Canadian born in 1955. He has written a number of novels in a future "League of Peoples" universe with faster-than-light travel. This is the first book in the series. The League of Peoples are aliens so advanced that their abilities are like magic. Murderers are defined by the League as "dangerous non-sentients", and are confined to their solar system. If they try to leave, they die. How does the League know (and they always know)? No human knows.

The League has provided Earth people who are willing to give up

violence with interstellar faster-than-light travel technology. In this series the heroine is a woman named Festina Ramos. She is an Explorer who is "expendable". That means that she is sent to explore new planets which might be extremely dangerous. A few expendables land on a new planet, and communicate with their starship, telling them what they have found. Sometimes the planet is so dangerous (for example, ferocious wild animals), that the last communication the starship gets is likely to be, "Oh, shit!"

Well, who cares? They're expendable.

Their job for the Technocracy is to visit hostile planets and to make first contact with alien cultures. Many do not survive.

Why would anyone volunteer for such a job? Every expendable has some kind of physical defect which makes it difficult them to have normal relationships with normal human beings. The defects could easily be fixed, but fixing them up is illegal. Instead they become Explorers. Sometimes the defects are so disgusting that one expendable might find it difficult to even look at his/her expendable colleague.

The book is written with humor, and I found it so exciting and interesting that I did something I almost never do. I began skipping forward to see what was going to happen next. I quickly got to the end of the book, and then went back and read the whole book from the beginning. It was a little frustrating because I already knew what was going to happen, so I had lost the advantage of suspense, and could only enjoy the details as I read them.

There is planet named Melaquin. Its dangers are unknown, but what is known is that no Explorer who landed on this planet ever came back. They didn't say "Oh, shit!" They didn't say anything, but they were never heard from again. Naturally Festina and her male colleague Yarrun are told to land on the planet, taking an old space Admiral with them. It would appear that the Admiralty has decided to get

rid of Admiral Chee. And Admiral Chee is ordering Festina and Yarrun to take him there.

"Chee: Ramos, are you suggesting that I would knowingly send a human being to her death.

"Me: Not in so many words.

"Chee: Look you two. The League of Peoples classifies murderers as non-sentients, right?

"Me: Murdering a sentient is a non-sentient act, yes.

"Chee: A dangerous non-sentient act, Explorer.

"Me: Yes, sir.

"Chee: And what's the penalty imposed by the League for taking a dangerous non-sentient into interstellar space?

"Yarrun: Immediate execution of everyone who knowingly participates,

"Chee: Have you ever heard of humans foiling the League? Smuggling killers, lethal weapons, or dangerous animals into open space?

"Me: No.

"Chee: And you won't either. Damned if we know how they do it. But take it from me, the League's quarantine against homicide is absolute – a law of the universe, more certain than entropy. Am I here?

"Me: Of course.

"Chee: Then I never ordered anyone anywhere I thought they were sure to die. Q.E.D." [p. 47-48]

The rest of the book tells what they found on Melaquin. Pretty good, with lots of sf ideas that are so outrageous that one cannot believe that they are possible.

The Rosetta Codex by Richard Paul Russo (2005), 375 pages.

This has the form and feel of a typical fantasy novel. A poor young man grows up amidst suffering and poverty, makes a great trip across the country meeting interesting people and doing exciting things, and eventually

discovers that he is actually a prince, and in the end takes his rightful place as ruler.

Still it is a science fiction novel. At age five his father's space ship is attacked by unknown enemies. The

boy and his nanny are placed in space shuttle and told to land on the nearby planet. He is warned to never tell anyone his family name, but insist that he has only one name: Cale. His nanny is told to try and get him to the largest city on the planet, Morningstar.

The shuttle crashlands. The boy and his nanny survive although the nanny is injured. Local people find them amid the ruins of the shuttle, rape the nanny and take the boy to be one of their child slaves. Cale grows and develops despite harsh treatment, and when he sees that his adopting tribe is attacked by murdering marauders who come by sea, swims out to the attackers' boat and begs them to take him with them since his people beat him. This they do, turning him into one of their child slaves, but beating him less often.

Cale grows up in his new village, but when as a young man he is propositioned by a good looking young woman of the village, he is attacked and driven from the village. Much to his surprise, he finds that he has been given a well-stocked back pack, which makes his lonely travels much easier. So he begins to travel the countryside, meeting strange people.

One of the people is an old woman, who helps him in a snowstorm by taking him into her home. She turns out to be highly educated, having a library of numerous books. She is an anchorite (someone who, for religious reasons, has withdrawn from secular society so as to be able to lead an intensely prayer-oriented, and ascetic life). Cale does not know how to read or write, and the old woman does not feel capable of teaching him, but she wants to educate him. The two of them, trapped in their cabin because of the heavy snow all around, begins reading to him. She reads him literature, history, philosophy, religion. The process, which goes on until the

arrival of spring, gives Cale a basic education, and a desire to learn more.

When the weather gets better, he continues his travels through deserts and swamps, and for a while is joined by another man. Together they find a building in which there are ruins which are clearly of very strange origin. Written on the walls are text and pictures unlike anything the anchorite has shown him. He realizes this place is something special. His colleague takes some blue jewels they find hidden under a heavy stone the two of them together can move only with difficulty. What interests Cale is that next to the jewels is a book written in the same script as the wall markings, but with additional text in the language the old woman had read to him.

Eventually (with some help) he gets to the city of Morningstar, where he takes whatever kind of work he can get, learning to read and write, and working hard. He discovers that there is a group in the city that are studying underground remains. It seems that the city of Morningstar is built upon the ruins of an ancient alien city. He joins these archeologists. The builders of the ruins have long ago disappeared, but he sees drawings and paintings obviously in the same language as that in the building he had found in the desert. He tells them about the book he had seen, and they insist he take them there. This may be the Rosetta Codex alluded to in the title of the book. If the alien language in the book and the local language in the book tell the same story, this book could be a clue to reading the alien language.

Well, many more things happen. Cale discovers he is indeed a sort of prince, the long-lost leader of a ruling business conglomerate, and after that he has money and power which enable him to explore the secrets revealed in the ancient Rosetta Codex. But there

are people what want these secrets for themselves.
Etc.

The characters and incidents kept me reading, but frankly, it was too conventional for me.

Drawing by Miriam Ben-Loulu to illustrate the story
The Dungeon Master by Nachman Israel (February 1997)



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