



### The Israeli Society for Science Fiction and Fantasy

#### **פסטיבל "אייקון" ה-17 למדע בדיוני, פנטזיה ומשחקי תפקידים**

אירוע הדגל השנתי של חובבי המדע הבדיוני, הפנטזיה ומשחקי התפקידים – פסטיבל "אייקון 2013", יחקור השנה את הנושא "זהויות": האם הזהות האישית שלנו היא סיפור דמיוני שאנחנו מספרים לעצמנו? האם לכולנו יש גם זהות סודית, ואולי אנחנו מספרים לכל אחד פנטזיה שונה על עצמנו?

את כל זאת נחקור בעזרת **מעל 250 אירועים**: מופעים פנטסטיים והרצאות מדע פופולארי, משחקי תפקידים וסדנאות כתיבה ויצירה, הרצאות על משחקי הכס, טרי פראצ'ט ומסע בין כוכבים, שעשועונים ואירועי חוצות המתאימים לכל הגילאים. **הפסטיבל מארח השנה**, בשיתוף עם "גרף הוצאה לאור", את סופר המדע הבדיוני האמריקאי דריל גרגורי, שישק בפסטיבל את ספרו החדש בעברית וישתתף בפאנל עם בכירי סופרי המד"ב והפנטזיה בארץ, בסדנת כתיבה מיוחדת ועוד. **אורחת מיוחדת נוספת** היא השחקנית צ'ייס מסטרסון, המוכרת לקהל הישראלי מהסדרה "מסע בין כוכבים: חלל עמוק תשע".

בכל ימי הפסטיבל תוצגנה הפקות מקור מיוחדות שיעלו לראשונה בפסטיבל – המחזמר הקומי למבוגרים בלבד "ספר בית התה", המופע "סוף העולם למתקדמים", דרמה קומית על משחקי תפקידים המהלכת על הקו הדק שבין החיים והדמיון, וסרט הפנטזיה הישראלי "הרועה האחרון", שמתכתב עם הקבלה והעולם העל-טבעי בהקרנת בכורה. במסגרת התכנית הקולנועית, הפסטיבל יקרין השנה גם את "כנס העתידנים", סרטו החדש של ארי פולמן, ויצג תכנית של סרטים ישראליים קצרים בז'אנר המדע הבדיוני והפנטזיה.

הפסטיבל ישלב תכנים אקדמיים לצד פעילויות הפונות לקהילות החובבים. כחלק מה**כנס האקדמי של פסטיבל אייקון**, יארח הפסטיבל את מיטב החוקרים ממגוון אוניברסיטאות ומכוני מחקר. רצועות הרצאות יוקדשו לספרות, קומיקס, אנימה, טלוויזיה וקולנוע. כמו כן, ייערכו אירועי מחווה לזכר סופר המדע הבדיוני ריי ברדבורי שהלך השנה לעולמו. לפרטים נוספים ניתן לבקר [באתר הפסטיבל](#).

**הפסטיבל יתקיים בחול המועד סוכות, 21–24 בספטמבר, במתחם אשכול פיס ברח' שפרינצק 4 בת"א, ובמתחם ZOA (בית ציוני אמריקה) ברח' אבן גבירול 26 בת"א.**

#### **הפאנל המרכזי בפסטיבל "אייקון 2013" בהשתתפות הסופר האורח דריל גרגורי: 'לכתוב את עצמך למוות: זהות היוצר בתוך היצירה'**

דיון מזווית אישית מאוד בהשתתפות [דריל גרגורי](#) וכמה מסופרי המדע הבדיוני והפנטזיה המובילים בארץ. על כל הדרכים שבהן סופרים מוצאים את עצמם בעולמות ובדמויות שבראו – מרצון, שלא מרצון או ממש בהפתעה; על שימוש בזהות האישית שלך ביצירה; על כל הניסיונות להימנע מכך ועל הדרכים לעשות לעצמך "דווקא" אפילו בלי לדעת את זה.

**הפאנל יתקיים ביום שני, 23 בספטמבר, בשעה 20:00 במתחם ZOA, אולם 1.**

#### **הפקת המקור "סוף העולם למתקדמים" בפסטיבל "אייקון 2013"**

כן, סוף העולם הגיע – האם אתם יכולים להציל אותו? נראה שלא, אבל בואו ננסה. גלגלו את הקובייה. יאיר רוצה שקבוצת ה-D&D החדשה שלו תצליח – הרי כל כך קשה לגרום לדברים האלה לעבוד והמשתתפים אף פעם לא לוקחים את הדברים מספיק ברצינות! הוא מצא את הפתרון המושלם: סוף שבוע בבקתה עם ההרפתקה המושלמת. כל מה שהוא צריך זה קצת שיתוף פעולה... ושליאת, החברה של גיל, לא תהרוס את הכל (למה הוא מביא אותה בכלל?)... וגם שצבי יקשיב לו ולא יהיה מוזר, וגם שסיוון... טוב, היא דווקא די בסדר. אוף. יאיר בחיים לא יצליח לכתוב את ההרפתקה כמו שצריך. ולמה דין הזה לא מגיע?

"סוף העולם למתקדמים" היא דרמה קומית על משחקי תפקידים המהלכת על הקו הדק שבין החיים והדמיון. מחזה מקורי המביא את סיפוריה של חבורה הנכנסת לסוף השבוע החשוב בחייה. פרטים נוספים ניתן למצוא [בעמוד האירוע בפייסבוק](#).

**המחזה יוצג פעמיים במהלך הפסטיבל: ביום ראשון, 22 בספטמבר, בשעה 20:00, וביום שלישי, 24 בספטמבר, בשעה 16:00.**

לעוד הפקות ומופעים שיתקיימו בפסטיבל, ניתן לבקר [בעמוד המופעים באתר הפסטיבל](#)

**Book Review by Aharon Sheer**

***Accelerando*** by Charles Stross (2005), 415 pages.

Charles Stross is one of the youngest (b. 1964) and most successful sf writers today. In July I had trouble comprehending Peter Watts novel, ***Blindsight*** (2006), and now I'm having trouble comprehending this novel, although it's not as hard. I'm beginning to wonder if I am capable of understanding 21<sup>st</sup> century novels. Perhaps they are too modern for me. Perhaps I should stick to old-fashioned 20<sup>th</sup> century novels?

The heroes of this book are post-humans. In this future (a hundred years from now?) everybody has been modified. Brains, bodies. Not only that, but the contents of people's brains have been uploaded to computers where they can interact with other post-human uploads, but take up much less space. For example a group of post-human uploads takes a long trip in space, doing things (accelerating, for example) which old-fashioned hard-copy humans could not do.

It's possible that in a hundred years brain function will be well-enough understood to be able to do such things, although I am skeptical. Can something (a human brain) having a certain level of complexity, fully understand something (a human brain) of the same level of complexity? Perhaps comprehension of the human brain will only come for beings of a higher level of complexity, something we cannot even imagine?

Suspension of disbelief.

Some things are comprehensible.

For example, in the second decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century (that is, now), the following happens:

“A marginally intelligent voicemail virus masquerading as an IRS auditor has caused havoc throughout America, garnishing an estimated eighty billion dollars in confiscatory tax withholdings into a numbered

Swiss bank account. A different virus is busy hijacking people's bank accounts, sending ten percent of their assets to the previous victim, then mailing itself to everyone in the current mark's address book: a self-propelled pyramid scheme in action. Oddly, nobody is complaining much. While the mess is being sorted out, business IT departments have gone to standby, refusing to process any transaction that doesn't come in the shape of ink on dead trees.” [p. 46]

This is humor, and some parts are indeed funny.

Here's another example of humor:

“... You can't evade your responsibilities forever. You've got a wife and a helpless daughter to care for – ’

“A daughter?’ ...

“Didn't you know?’

Glashwicz sounds pleasantly surprised. ‘She was decanted last Thursday. Perfectly healthy, I'm told. I thought you knew; you have viewing rights via the clinic webcam.” [p. 57]

Or how about this meeting in Italy between Manfred and Gianni Vittoria:

“Five minutes later, Manfred is buried up to his ears in a sofa covered in buttery white cowhide, a cup of virulently strong espresso balanced precariously on his knee, while Gianni Vittoria himself holds forth on the problems of implementing a postindustrial ecosystem on top of a bureaucratic system with its roots in the bullheadedly modernist era of the 1920s. Gianni is a

visionary of the left, a strange attractor within the chaotic phase-space of Italian politics. A former professor of Marxist economics, his ideas are informed by a painfully honest humanism, and everyone -- even his enemies -- agrees that he is one of the greatest theoreticians of the post-EU era. But his intellectual integrity prevents him from rising to the very top, and his fellow travelers are much ruder about him than his ideological enemies, accusing him of the ultimate political crime -- valuing truth over power." [p. 60]

Or this: Manfred and his French girlfriend Annette meet with Gianni in Italy:

"The office translator is good, but it can't provide real-time lip-synch morphing between French and Italian. Annette has to make an effort to listen to his words because the shape of his mouth is all wrong, like a badly dubbed video. Her expensive, recent implants aren't connected up to her Broca's area yet, so she can't simply sideload a deep grammar module for Italian. Their communications are the best that money can buy, their VR environment painstakingly sculpted, but it still doesn't break down the language barrier completely." [p. 79]

And here they are travelling in a space ship:

"Amber, like most of the postindustrialists aboard the orphanage ship *Ernst Sangel*, is in her early teens. While their natural abilities are in many cases enhanced by germ-line genetic recombination, thanks

to her mother's early ideals she has to rely on brute computational enhancements. She doesn't have a posterior parietal cortex hacked for extra short-term memory, or an anterior superior temporal gyrus tweaked for superior verbal insight, but she's grown up with neural implants that feel as natural to her as lungs or fingers. Half her wetware is running outside her skull on an array of processor nodes hooked into her brain by quantum-entangled communication channels -- her own personal metacortex. These kids are mutant youth, burning bright: Not quite incomprehensible to their parents, but profoundly alien -- the generation gap is as wide as the 1960s and as deep as the solar system. Their parents, born in the gutter years of the twentieth century, grew up with white elephant shuttles and a space station that just went round and round, and computers that went beep when you pushed their buttons." [p. 120]

I find it difficult to care about characters so different from us. While this future is fascinating, some parts are almost incomprehensible.

Some things are still meaningful. Early teenage Amber has a father and a mother who are divorced and Amber's mother has custody of her. By court order Amber is under the control of her mother. Does this still sound familiar? She calls her father:

"I want out, Daddy. I mean it. Mom's getting loopier every week -- she's dragging me round all these churches now, and yesterday she

threw a fit over me talking to my terminal. She wants me to see the school shrink, I mean, what for? I can't do what she wants -- I'm not her little girl! Every time I tunnel out, she tries to put a content-bot on me, and it's making my head hurt -- I can't even think straight anymore!' To her surprise, Amber feels tears starting. 'Get me out of here!'

"The view of her father shakes, pans round to show her tante Annette looking worried. 'You know, your father, he cannot do anything? The divorce lawyers, they will tie him up.'

"Amber sniffs. 'Can you help?' she asks.

"'I'll see what I can do,' her father's fancy bitch promises as the break bell rings." [p. 127]

Charles Stross is a good writer. But this book is not easy for me to read. It alternates between passages which are deliberately understandable, and passages which are beyond my comprehension. You'll have to try it yourself, and decide.

## 'The end of civilization' as we know it

### Three Reviews by Leybl Botwinik

The following reviews compare three novels that deal with 'the end of civilization' as we know it. More appropriately, the aftermath of some fantastic/cataclysmic upheaval or event that drastically changes life on Earth. In one case, the classic after a 'Great War'. In another classic case, after an 'Alien Invasion'. In the 3<sup>rd</sup> case – In the far, far distant future. In fact so far into the future, that the Sun is dying.

The reviews begin with an overview of each book individually, and then I'll compare certain aspects of the 3 novels.

### 1- *Melvaig's Vision* by Richard Ford

Book 2 of the *Faradawn Trilogy*

Panther books 1985 / Granada publishing 1984 [446 pages]

Cover: Shows a bleak desert-like plateau with a cracked texture and what looks like geysers or spirals of steam. Off in the distance, center-stage is an ominous lone and tall mountain, on whose peak is an imposing castle/fortress. Two large birds are seen circling in the air, and a rainbow is off to the side. The desert floor and sky are in reddish-brown hues.

About the Author: At the time of the writing, he is known for only one other book – the *Quest for the Faradawn* that is linked to this novel, which was hailed as "A blend of Tolkien and *Watership Down* unfolded in masterly style".

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We find ourselves in a post-Apocalypse world, many generations after whatever destroyed civilization as we know it has taken place. People are living a stone-age existence – reminiscent of Einstein's depiction of the near future: when asked how **World War III (WW-III)** will be fought. He said he didn't know..., only that **WW-IV**

would be "fought with sticks and stones"...

The book begins with the depiction of a tranquil scene not far from his village with the main protagonist Melvaig enjoying an afternoon out in the hills with his woman Morven and son Bracca. In this society, there is a rule of not being attached to anyone. After the

procreation and initial upbringing of a child, the parents should distance themselves from each other and from the offspring so as not to create emotional ties. This seems to be a psychological defense built into a society that has seen so much death (there is also mention of a Sickness which has taken many a life), that it is 'best for all' to be as detached as possible from one another, so as not to suffer if someone dies.

Melvaig's mentor (and possibly father) Jarrah the chief village elder, had recounted for him many tales and legends from "Before the War" – all utterly difficult for Melvaig's imagination to grasp, of "...men who flew through the air, of self-propelled transport, ...", etc. At some point, Jarrah divulges that he is the owner and protector of a hidden **Book** "... which, if it was known to be present in the village, would lead to great danger for them all... What the **Book** contained no one knew for the art of reading had long been lost to them...".

With this introduction in the first 5-6 pages of the novel, Melvaig's afternoon is abruptly disrupted by a raid on the village by strange riders. Melvaig runs down to help his people in the battle, but is clubbed unconscious and left for dead. Almost everyone else is taken away as prisoners. Upon reviving and speaking with the few who survived the raid, he finds Bracca but learns that his woman Morven was also taken prisoner, and he sets out on a quest to singlehandedly rescue her and the other villagers. Before he sets out, he searches for and unearths the hidden **Book**, returns to set up Bracca with an old lady to watch over him while he is gone, and prepares for a long journey ahead.

From page 50 on, we follow Melvaig's various adventures, trials and tribulations in seeking out and finally locating the prisoners (including the discovery that his son was later also captured and joined them).

The novel is well written and held my attention throughout. There is nothing particularly outstanding or memorable either concerning the main characters, nor those in supporting roles that join the quest as the tale unfolds. Nothing particularly climatic or tragic happens, other than the 'typical', including no major plot twists. There are no major/epic battles, or a particular 'Great Escape', etc. There is nothing I can point to that makes this story (exceptionally) different from numerous other prisoner escape stories I've read or seen in films – and yet, it is well written and worth the time to read.

That having been said, I do admit to having been stunned, that the 'end' of the story was more than I bargained for, and totally threw me. The main storyline is an enjoyable, easy-reading, but typical post-Apocalypse tale with the hero searching for and battling to free his loved ones. Throughout the novel, however, there are hidden and subtle hints about the **Book**, and its portent. In the final pages of the novel, I realized that this is **not entirely a stand-alone tale**, but rather linked to Richard Ford's earlier novel *Quest for the Faradawn* – which I have not read, and that would probably have put many things in perspective. Apparently, there is also a 3<sup>rd</sup> book, making this a trilogy.

All in all, a good read, but it may be, that reading the first book would be recommended – but not having done so, I can't officially make that claim.

### **Next Month: Another review in this series by Leybl Botwinik**

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