

**חדשות האגודה – ינואר 2019 The Israeli Society for Science Fiction and Fantasy**

- המועדון בירושלים יעסוק בספר "השתנות" מאת קרול ברג (גרף, 2004). המועדון יתקיים ביום שלישי, 29-01-2019, ב-20:00 בבית פרטי בירושלים (ובפייסבוק). מיקום מדויק ימסר למתפקדים ב"פתיל האוכל" בדף האירוע, ב-facbook. מנחה: גלי אחיטוב.  
 - המועדון בת"א יעסוק בספר "כשהתירס לוחש" (עוזן, 2018), ביום חמישי 24-01-2019 בשעה 19:30, בבית פרטי במרכז ת"א. כתובת מדויקת תינתן לנרשמים למועדון. מנחה: דפנה קירש.  
 - המועדון בחיפה יעסוק בספר "מכונן ההשתקפויות" מאת סרגיי לוקיאנקו (אופוס, 2017). המועדון יתקיים ביום שני, 14-01-2019 ב-19:00 מנחה: אילנית גרישין. כתובת מדויקת תינתן לנרשמים ולנרשמים למועדון, במייל של מרכזת המועדון - [טניה חייקוב](#).  
 - המועדון בגליל מערבי בכרמיאל-משגב יעסוק בספר "מעוף הדרקון" מאת אן מק'קאפרי (אופוס, 2002). המועדון יתקיים ביום רביעי, 23-01-2019 ב-20:30, בבית פרטי במשגב. כתובת מדויקת תינתן לנרשמים ולנרשמים. מנחה: ד"ר קרן פייט.  
 כל האירועים של האגודה מופיעים בלוח האירועים (שפע אירועים מעניינים, הרצאות, סדנאות, מפגשים ועוד) לקבלת עדכונים שוטפים על מפגשי מועדון הקריאה ברחבי הארץ ניתן להצטרף לרשימת התפוצה או בדף האגודה בפייסבוק. Society information is available (in Hebrew) at the Society's site: <http://www.sf-f.org.il>

First, I'd like to wish

**One and All: A Happy New Year and Season's Greetings!**

... and second, I'd like to apologize for the late appearance of this issue. I've had a bit of a cold ('tis the season... and I'd rather be in bed right now...) and due to some other things that came up that have taken up a lot of my free time.

This issue will be mostly devoted to the legendary Stan "the Man" Lee and his legacy.

**This month's roundup:**

- In Memorium: Writeups about the legendary Stan Lee (of the Marvel universe) fame – and various links
- Sorry, no "Sheer Science" this month
- I'm beginning a multi-part review of Zion's Fiction that has been delayed until now – As usual, interesting tidbits from various websites.

– Your editor, Leybl Botwinik

It's not even been two months, but we already miss him – moreover, since so much has been written up about STAN LEE and his legacy.

Born Stanley Martin Lieber on Dec. 28, 1922, he passed away Nov.12, 2018.

For those of you who have tried to name the various superheroes and characters

depicted in the portrait we put up last issue, this is my take – feel free to add/correct:



**Clockwise from the "A" on top:**

- "A" – for Cap America/Avengers
- Wisp of Rogue's hair?
- Vision's forehead?
- Funny little hat (maybe from one of the many spoofs he wrote???)
- Silver Surfer's face
- Thor's helmet feathers & locks
- 4 Fantastic Four (FF) fingers
- Dr. Strange's cape
- Magneto's silvery hair?
- Spiderman's mask

There are many and various tributes written up across the entertainment and news media, and we're pretty sure this is just the tip of the iceberg. These are some that I found most interesting:

<http://www.aish.com/ci/a/Stan-Lee-Creator-of-Flawed-Superheroes-Has-Died.html>

Dr. Yvette Alt Miller

... While his Jewishness seems to have had little space to play in his family life, many fans credit Lee's Jewish roots with altering the course of comic book history. Previous comic book heroes were two-dimensional creations whose defining characteristics were their outlandish physical strength. Superman and Batman were the most popular superheroes of the time. Lee introduced a new type of comic book hero: tormented outsiders who harbor self-doubt and are often tormented by the very gifts that make them special.

Until Lee came along, comic book heroes "were all cardboard figures" Lee later explained. He sought to change all that, writing stories about flawed, introspective, complex heroes. Lee wanted "to make them real flesh-and-blood characters with personality," he explained in a 1992 interview.



<https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/heat-vision/stan-lee-dead-marvel-comics-real-life-superhero-was-95-721450>

By Mike Barnes

**Includes a clip with scenes from Simpson's, interview with Stan, shots of cameo appearances in films, etc.**

"I used to think what I did was not very important," he told the *Chicago Tribune* in April 2014. "People are building bridges and engaging in medical research, and here I was doing stories about fictional people who do extraordinary, crazy things and wear costumes. But I suppose I have come to realize that entertainment is not easily dismissed."

**More cameos here – with descriptions** By: Shane Edwards

<https://screenwritingmagazine.com/2018/11/13/we-honor-stan-lees-writing-by-sharing-his-most-exciting-movie-cameos/>

Throughout his long career, Lee never shied away from dealing with tough topics like war, drug abuse, and even racial tensions. Despite having superpowers, his characters felt like real people: hopeful, principled and flawed. The characters in the *Fantastic Four*, for example, often argued with each other, were jealous and even played tricks on each other. People loved all his characters because they were relatable and fun. What's unusual about Lee's career is that it seemed to take off exponentially the older he got. Comic books led to movies and TV shows, then videogames, then to entire franchises in the last two decades. A visit to Lee's IMDb page shows that he has projects slated for 2020 and most likely, beyond.



**Stan Lee in Thor. Photo courtesy: Marvel Comics**

<https://blogs.timesofisrael.com/stan-lee-our-superhero/> By Michael Starr

This is a story about stories, as much as it is about a man. After all, Stan Lee was a storyteller. His stories are some of the most enduring and impactful myths of Judeo-Americana. The Marvel superheroes he co-created and wrote have been adapted in every medium beyond the frames of their comic panels. They've appeared in movies, video games, and novels; and alongside their capes and banners, so too has appeared

the smile, sunglasses, and mustache of Stan the Man, an icon all himself. As a storyteller, Stan Lee must have known that stories can only really be impactful when they reach their end. It's only at the end that the story can be taken stock of. All stories must end. Even a story about stories. With the end of Stan Lee's story, we can truly feel the significance of one of the world's greatest figures. The truth about Stan Lee can finally be revealed – He was a superhero.

....

He wasn't bitten by a radioactive spider or bombarded by cosmic rays, but Stan never needed powers to inspire. A hero by his hard work alone, he was always creating, always showing us by example how to be our own heroes. To motivate so many on such a massive scale to be righteous is nothing other than super. And though his story is at its end, we can now understand that it's only so many others can begin. This is a story about stories, as much as it is about a man as it is about us. With Stan gone, it's now our responsibility to continue telling stories. It is our responsibility to act as examples, to show what is good, and what is true. Thankfully, we had a superhero for us to model ourselves after. Stan Lee inspired us to inspire.

Excelsior.

**Twitter praises (Includes side video with cameos of "Every Stan Lee marvel movie cameo" and two excerpts from "Stan's Soapbox" – which I loved to read as a youngster – and find fascinating to this day):**

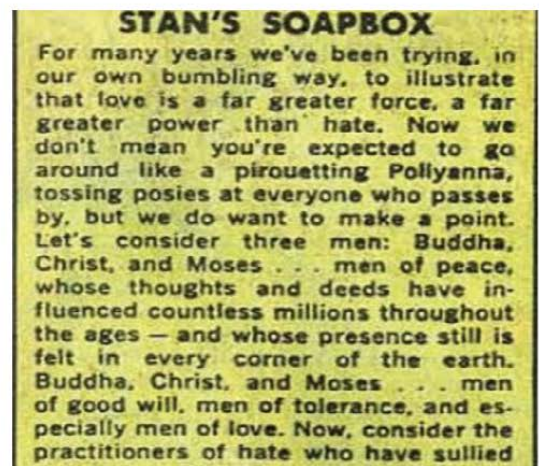
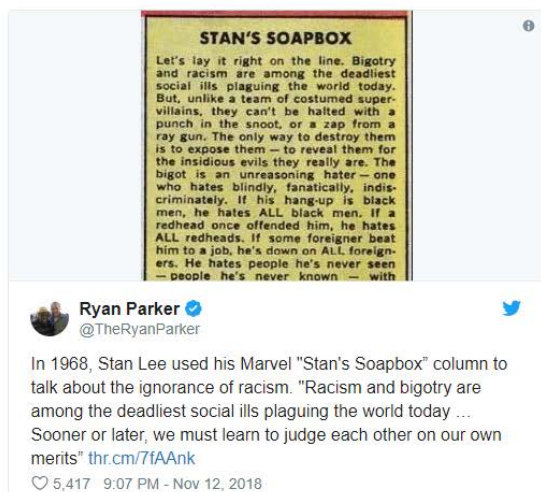
<https://www.cnet.com/news/stan-lee-dies-at-95-remembering-marvels-biggest-icon/>

By Morgan Little

...

As news of his passing spread, those who have worked with Lee or been inspired by his work took to Twitter to honor someone who for decades has been either one of Marvel's driving creative forces, or a public figurehead across films and conventions.

Others took a moment to recognize Lee for his ability to focus on the heroes within us all, regardless of who we are or where we came from.



**See his character creations — Best Stan Lee Characters (By CNET Staff):**

<https://www.cnet.com/news/the-best-stan-lee-characters/>

as well as: <https://www.cnet.com/pictures/stan-lee-iconic-marvel-comic-book-characters-mcu-anniversary/>

AND: <https://www.cbr.com/stan-lee-first-superhero-creation/> - By Brian Cronin

AND: A Brief History of Stan Lee and DC Comics: <https://www.cbr.com/stan-lee-dc-comics-work-bibliography/>

And see this one too: <https://www.cbr.com/dc-comics-honors-stan-lee-twitter/>

And the one we published last issue, in case you missed it:

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/films/2018/11/12/stan-lee-tribute-one-seismically-influential-creators-time/>

And finally (this issue), my interview with Stan (3 parts at bottom of page): <http://leyblsvelt.co.il/v-eseyen.html>



## And now, back to our regular programming:

### Some fun from the Websites:

#### While we're on the subject...

A Complete History Of The Marvel Cinematic Universe (MCU) – By Thomas Bacon

10 years ago, Marvel introduced moviegoers to a unique, innovative movie universe with a shared timeline. That story is about to come to a head with **Avengers: Infinity War**, which will celebrate the last decade's worth of big-screen action and adventure. **But there's a lot more to the MCU than just the movies. The wider MCU has come to embrace a wide range of mediums; from comics to YouTube videos, from one-shots to Netflix shows. All of these comprise a single, continuous narrative that delights fans.**



But how do you weave this ongoing story into a single, cohesive narrative? That's the fundamental challenge facing Marvel visionary Kevin Feige, in the face of an ever-expanding canon. He's promised an official timeline will eventually be published, and claims it will answer every fan's questions. But this timeline is unlikely to resolve all the issues, and if it's published by Marvel Studios, it may not even include the TV shows and tie-in comics.

To read more, see:

<https://screenrant.com/marvel-mcu-complete-timeline/>

#### Does God Like Star Trek...?

Beam Us Up! Colliding Galaxy Clusters Look Like Starship Enterprise (Photo)

By Mike Wall, Space.com Senior Writer

Is that the USS Enterprise blurring as it makes the jump to warp speed?

Well, no. But a new photo of the galaxy cluster Abell 1033 certainly does call the famous "Star Trek" starship to mind.

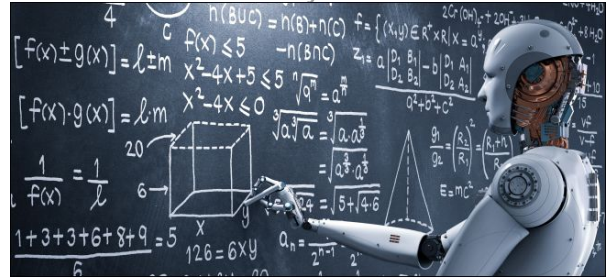
**A newly released composite photo of the galaxy cluster Abell 1033, which lies about 1.6 billion light-years from Earth, bears a striking resemblance to the Starship Enterprise from "Star Trek."**

To read more, see:

<https://www.space.com/42453-galaxy-cluster-star-trek-enterprise-photo.html>

#### Smart or Dumb?

The Problem With AI: Machines Are Learning Things, But Can't Understand Them — By Chris Hoffman



Everyone's talking about "AI" these days. But, whether you're looking at Siri, Alexa, or just the autocorrect features found in your smartphone keyboard, we aren't creating general purpose artificial intelligence. We're creating programs that can perform specific, narrow tasks.

**Whenever a company says it's coming out with a new "AI" feature, it generally means that the company is using machine learning to build a neural network.**

**"Machine learning" is a technique that lets a machine "learn" how to better perform on a specific task.**

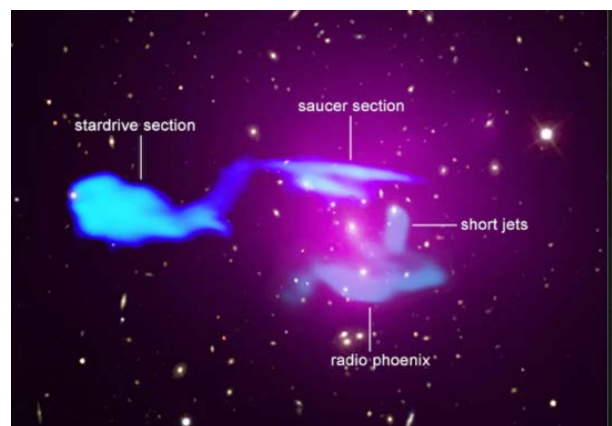
We're not attacking machine learning here! Machine learning is a fantastic technology with a lot of powerful uses. But it's not general-purpose artificial intelligence, and understanding the limitations of machine learning helps you understand why our current AI technology is so limited.

The "artificial intelligence" of sci-fi dreams is a computerized or robotic sort of brain that thinks about things and understands them as humans do.

...

To read more, see:

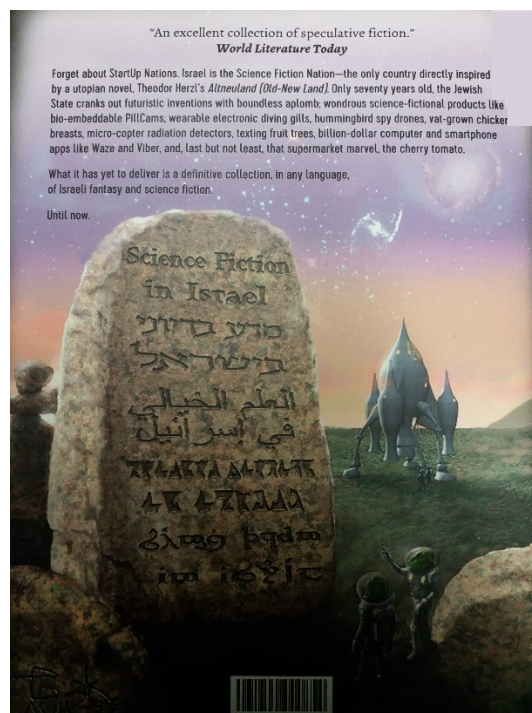
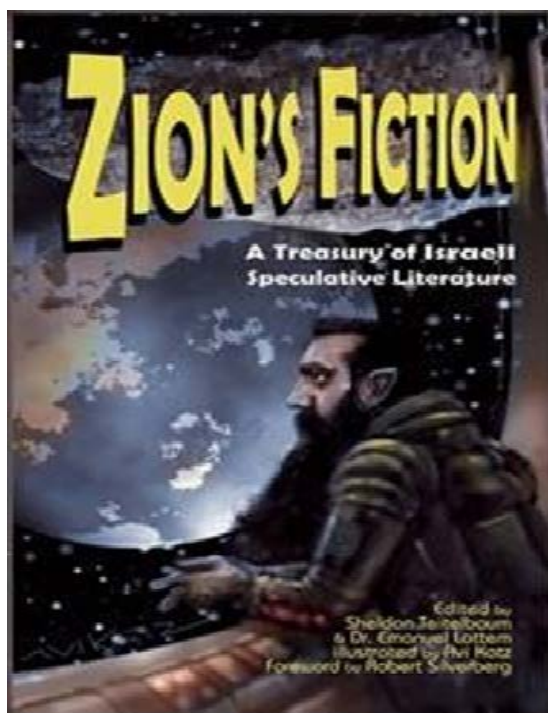
<https://www.howtogeek.com/394546/the-problem-with-ai-machines-are-learning-things-but-cant-understand-them/>



**Credit: X-ray: NASA/CXC/Leiden Univ./F. de Gasperin et al; Optical: SDSS; Radio: LOFAR/ASTRON, NCRA/TIFR/GMRT**

## Review: “Zion’s Fiction” ed. Teitelbaum & Lottem (Pt. 1) – Now Coming to You, From the Prime SF Nation of the World

Reviewed by Leybl Botwinik



If you’ve not bought it yet – you should! *Zion’s Fiction* (sub-headed: “*A Treasury of Israeli Speculative Literature*”) is worth the investment. The intros are fascinating, the stories are great – as SF should be – and include great front and back artwork, also accompanying each story, by veteran SF illustrator Avi Katz.

Following is a very quick synopsis of some of the contents and stories of this exciting new 311 page anthology, containing 17 short stories, co-edited by Sheldon Teitelbaum and Emanuel Lottem, and co-published by Mandel Vilar Press (CT-USA) and SiAL Publishing (TA-Israel), 2018.

These are some of the best representations of SF writers and their short works – though by far not the only ones (apparently, Volume II is in the works). I would like to add, that some of the stories are universal in both content and context, while others contain specific references to Israeli culture, geography, etc. In addition, some are translations and some originally in English, but all are worthy contributions to the multiverse of SF.

### Inside cover flap

You’ve probably heard of the now well-known description of modern Israel as “The Start-up Nation”, well the inside cover flap begins:

*Israel is the “Science Fiction Nation” – the only country whose establishment was directly inspired by not one but two seminal works of wonder: The Hebrew Bible...and the utopian novel *Altneuland* ... [by Theodore Herzl]*

This concept is further expanded on, in the editor’s introduction and also touched upon by Robert Silverberg in his opening statements (see below). – How great minds think alike... Though I have to admit, that I didn’t think about it myself, but after studying their definitive arguments, it seems to me to be quite naturally true...

### Foreword: Robert Silverberg

The 4 page forward takes us through a short but fantastic journey beginning with the Bible and its stories, and through to some other fantastical story elements in Jewish History of the past 3000+ years. Silverberg then continues with a very curt overview of the significant Jewish contribution to Fantasy & SF, notably in the USA. He follows that up with some notes about Israeli SF – and the fact that it is mostly in Hebrew, concluding that this new and worthy collection – now in English – represents the exposure of SF “Messages from another world” (i.e. Israel), that have now been made now accessible to the English reading audience.

### **Introduction by the co-editors: Sheldon Teitelbaum & Emanuel Lottem**

The co-editors have written an excellent and very thorough 28-page introduction (with additional three-and-a-half pages of notes and references) to this collection of stories. They begin with the concept – as noted above – of Israel’s conceptual creation based on turning fantasy/dreams into reality. They then discuss the early cultural restrictions and the how and the why – including the ‘heroes’ who made it all possible – for SF to develop and blossom in primarily the last two decades, in this tiny far-away nation.

I can well understand, when Sheldon and Emanuel made their personal statements at the book launching in Tel Aviv in October 2018 (at the annual ICON fest), how difficult it must have been to both gather the relevant material and then to write it up in such a compelling way. According to them, the introduction took them a long time to piece together and fine tune – to the point where it was done and redone so many times, that it began to become an exasperating experience for them.

From my point of view – as a reader and lover of SF, and a keen follower of the development of interest in SF in Israel – it would be great to see them collect all their previous work in preparing the 28 page intro, and make an expanded presentation on SF in Israel – past, present, and potential (i.e. where it’s headed, down the road).

As current editor and publisher of *CyberCozen*, I was, however, disappointed. Although Aaron Sheer (founding editor of *CyberCozen* and also founding member of the Rehovot SF group) is mentioned with 4 others on an inner page “In Memoriam” – there is no mention of him or his merits in the Israeli SF world (there are 2 lines mentioning the Rehovot SF group and *CyberCozen* on page 15, footnote 23 – but no connection is made to Aaron Sheer).

### **Story #1 – The Smell of Orange Groves by Lavie Tidhar**

This story is – appropriately – about memory, which is commonly associated with the history and tradition of the Jewish people. It takes place in a future Tel Aviv with its own spaceport. The land is still divided – or at least there still seems to be friction between Jew and Arab, but there is also a large percentage of foreign workers who have lived and intermarried with the locals to sink in several generations of family roots. Thus, the protagonist Boris Chong – whose ancestor (great grandparent) was a Chinese worker who married an Israeli woman – tries to escape the memories of his past and of his family and people by travelling to other planets, etc. He can’t entirely escape, however, because that ancestor, Weiwei, had a biological memory-bridge procedure performed on him, that would affect all future progeny: All family memories and experiences would somehow always be intercommunicated and never be lost. It may seem ironic, that a non-Jew – a Chinaman – has done this, since this one of the foundation pieces of Jewish civilization – our long and shared memory. (Then again, Jews and Chinese seem to have much in common – including love of Chinese food...)

### **Story #2 – The Slows by Gail Hareven**

In a future where humans can be bred and grow up almost instantaneously (under lab-sterile conditions), there remains a small group of humans that insist on carrying out the birthing and growth of the body (and mind) according to the ‘savage’ old (traditional) ways. This story recounts the experience of one of the – for lack of a better word – social workers who is trained to deal with Slows who reside in a special camp – like some kind of prison or fenced-off Reservation. The story takes place as the last of the camps are being shut down by government order – as she is about to lose her job – and her final contact with a female Slow. She refers to the subjects as savages, and the babies as ‘larvae’.

This somehow reminds me of the Bible passage two weeks ago, in the book of Exodus, where the Jewish slave women were considered ‘savages’ when giving birth, unlike the ‘normal’ Egyptian women.

## **MORE ZION’S FICTION QUICK STORY REVIEWS – NEXT TIME !**

For more on the book, see the official website at: <http://www.zionsfiction.com/>

Also:

[https://www.amazon.com/Zions-Fiction-Treasury-Speculative-Literature/dp/1942134525/ref=sr\\_1\\_1](https://www.amazon.com/Zions-Fiction-Treasury-Speculative-Literature/dp/1942134525/ref=sr_1_1)

***We’d love to hear your thoughts on the above topics and with your OK, we may publish them!***

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And <http://fanzines.com/CyberCozen/index.html>

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