

## Next SCIENCE FICTION CLUB Meeting:

Tuesday, January 31, 1995, 8:15 p.m. -- Lecture (in English)  
 Sam Braunstein, Dept. of Chemical Physics, Weizmann Institute  
 Quantum Teleportation and Other Crazy Stuff

Rehovot Science Fiction (usually) meets the last Tuesday of each month  
 at the home of Tova, Bill and Rami Silverman,  
 19 Eisenberg St., fourth floor, Rehovot, Tel. 08-476142.

There is a REFRESHMENT CHARGE of 3.50 Shekels (for those who partake).

CyberCozen SF Newsletter, Vol. VII, Num. 1, Jan. 1995. Editor: Aharon Sheer. Ed.Assist: Elana Dror. For mail delivery of CyberCozen, please donate 25 shekels per YEAR. Air Mail to U.S., \$15. If Aharon Sheer can hand-deliver it, 10 shekels. Meeting notices only, 13 shekels. Address: POB 9443, Tel Aviv 61093. Copyright (C) 1995, All rights reserved to specified authors and artists.

## ספור: השושנה מאת J. Telp

בשום מקום, בשום זמן, הי'ה הי'ה פרח.

גדול הי'ה הפרח, לבן עלים, ושנותיו, מי ידע? הוא עצמו כבר שכח מתי החלו חייו.

אך הוא ידע דברים רבים אחרים, חשובים ביותר. במשך השנים למד את מהלך הכוכבים בשמים, את חוקיות הופעת הגשם. יכול הי'ה לסגור עליו בביטחה, בידעו שעוד מעט תשקע השמש, ולפתחם בשעת זריחתה, בדיוק שהסב לו סיפוק.

ככל שחלף הזמן כן גברה ידיעתו את העולם, העמיקה חכמתו. הוא בנה תיאוריות פילוסופיות, ולשם השעשוע הי'ה יוצר מבנים תיאורטיים ומפריכם, מחשב את מסלולו של כוכב שביט לאלפי השנים הבאות, ומודד את כמויות האור שהשתקפו בטיפות הגשם.

אך יום אחד, משום מקום, הופיע יצור זר.

בהתחלה הפרח לא שם לב לנוכרי. הוא הי'ה עסוק בסיווג העננים שהופיעו אותו יום בשמים, ובחישוב ההסתברויות בעד, ונגד, מימטרים צפויים. אך בסיימו את התרגיל המחשבתי המסובך, הופתע לגלות, שאין הוא לבדו, אלא שיש בסביבה צופה נוסף - יצור קטן ירוק גבעולים.

הוא לא ידע מי הוא יצור זה, ולפיכך פנה אליו בשאלה: "מי אתה?"

"אינני יודע עדיין", ענה היצור.

"אך אולי תדע בעתיד?" אמר הפרח בנימוס.

"מי יודע?", נאנח הלז, "זמן מועט כל כך עבר מאז בקעתי מהפקעת, כך

שזהותי עדיין חדשה לגבי. דרך אגב, מה זה 'עתיד'?"

"ההיפך מ'עבר'", נחפז הפרח לחלוק את הידע שלו עם ירוק הגבעולים. אך מיד התברר שהחדש לא הבין הסבר זה, וגם לא הסברים אחרים, וגם לא התעניין בנושאים חשובים כמידות חום, או אורכיהם של הימים (והיו ימים ארוכים וקצרים, דבר שהי'ה חשוב ביותר, לדעתו של הפרח), או כל דבר שהי'ה נחוץ לדעתו. כל מעיניו היו נתונים לענינים שוליים בתכלית.

"הבט כמה יפה היום. איך קרני השמש המחממת משתקפות בטל הבוקר" - הי'ה הזר אומר. או - "הבט! הכוכבים מאירים באור כל כך בהיר", ו - "לעננים יש צורה משונה. עגלגלים הם ושקופים, והם חולפים מעל ראשינו במהירות מסורבלת, ממש מצחיק - הלא כך?".

תחילה ניסה הפרח להבין את הזר, ולענות על שאלותיו המשונוות. אולם ככל שחלף הזמן החל להתייאש ממבול האימרות והשאלות השטותיות, שלא נשאו עימן אלא

הכרזות נבובות מתוכן על העולם ( לבעלי כל דעה ישרה ) . הוא החליט, בסופו של דבר, שלא ילמד מהזר דבר, וזה לא ילמד ממנו, ולכן החליט לסבול את נוכחותו, ותו לאו.

יום אחד הכריז הנוכרי - "ניצני נפתח! אני שושנה!" .

הפרח נחפז לקטלג זאת בזכרונו, ולאחר צפי'ה מעמיקה בשושנה ביקש פרטים נוספים עלי'ה. אך זו לא ידעה להשיב מעבר לכך, שהיא פרח, שצבעו אדום. ושוב התייאש הפרח, ופנה לעיסוקיו.

במשך הזמן התרגל הפרח לנוכחות השושנה, ואף נאלץ להודות, שיש יתרונות מסוימים בנוכחותו של מישהו אחר, שישמע את הערותיו ודיוניו המחכימים את השכל ( למרות שכמעט ולא הבין אותם ). משום מה הוא החל חש חיבה כלפי השושנה, ותחושה חדשה זו גרמה לו פליאה מסוימת. זה הי'ה דבר שלא ידע להסבירו, לנתחו, לקבוע לו גבולות.

הוא החליט להשאיר את הדיון בדבר, עד שיצטבר בידיו מידע מספיק..

השושנה, משום מה, החליטה גם היא לסבול את שטף הערותיו של הפרח (אולי מתוך חוסר ברירה ), וכך חיו שניהם, בשקט ובשלוה.

... עד שיום אחד אמרה השושנה : "פרח יקר שלי, איך העניינים?"  
"בסדר גמור" - השיב הפרח, מופתע מהיחס המיוחד - "ואיך שלך?"  
"בסדר" - ענתה השושנה - "רק רציתי לדעת מה שלומך", והסמיקה.

הפרח נתמלא לפתע עונג, שלא ידע לתארו. עונג בלתי נתפס, בלתי מוחשי. אז הוא שאל שוב - "מה שלומך?"  
"בסדר גמור" - ענתה השושנה - "איזה יום יפה היום. הלא כן?"  
"כן" - הסכים הפרח ( למרות שלא ידע מה פירוש "יפה" ), ופנה במהירות לעיסוקיו, כדי שהשושנה לא תראה, שגם הוא נעשה, משום מה, בישן.

וכך חיו שניהם בשקט, שלווה, וידידות.

יום אחד אמרה השושנה : " פרח יקר שלי, אני עצובה, כי אני נאלצת להיפרד ממך, כיון שזקנתי. אני עומדת למות עוד מעט. "  
"מה פירוש 'למות'?" - התפלא הפרח.  
"אני אסגור את עלי כותרתי ולא אפתחם יותר" - ענתה השושנה.  
"לא, אל תעשי זאת, אל תלכי ממני!" - קרא הפרח.

"הדבר אינו בידי", נאנחה השושנה. "לא, אל תדברי כך!", קרא הפרח, התחנן, אך לא הצליח לעשות דבר.  
"שלום, אהובי" אמרה השושנה בקול שבור, וסגרה עלי'ה.

ושוב הי'ה הפרח לבדו...

אך עתה היו השמים עכורים, והאור רפה, והכל דהוי ודוחה. הפרח לא הצליח להתרכז בהרהוריו המלומדים, כיון שחשב על השושנה. ככל שחלף הזמן כן גברו געגועיו, והוא חש כאב גדל והולך. דמות השושנה היתה מופיעה לפניו, ופטפוטי'ה היו עוברים בראשו, ומשהו גדול וכבד הי'ה מעיק עליו. עד שיום אחד לא יכול הי'ה לסבול את המועקה הזו יותר.

הפרח סגר עליו, ולא פתחם יותר...

.....

בגן העדן האנושי יושבים שני פרחים - השכל והרגש.

אם לא יושקו שניהם - ימות האדם.

**Apologies to Eli Eshed:** Last month we announced a panel moderated by Amnon Stupp and featuring Sara Svetitsky and Eli Eshed. This was an unpleasant surprise for Eli, who knew nothing about it, and anyway had spoken in a panel just the previous month. The mistake was entirely mine. I'd like to explain how it happened. Each month I copy the previous month's disk file to serve as the basis for the next. I update the dates of the issue and the meeting, replacing the information in the box at the top with tentative information about the coming meeting. (Sometimes I do this for the next two or three months' meetings.) I then eliminate the articles and stories of the last month, leaving only headings, such as "Story", "Letters to the Editor", etc., and gradually put in new material, as received. In this case I inadvertently left in the line about Eli Eshed in the box at the top. This wouldn't normally be a disaster, since I usually check with the moderator before publication, to verify the title and participants. However, in this case, after speaking to Amnon, I neglected to write down what he said, but instead depended on my memory. Which once again proves how important the invention of writing was, at least for me. In the past, as a result of such carelessness, I have misspelled lecturer's names, or given the wrong title to a lecture. But this was the worst mistake to date. My apologies! ■ ■

### Science Fiction and Fantasy Go Together by Miriam Ben Lulu

This is a kind of game I play with myself -- trying to combine titles so that they make sense.

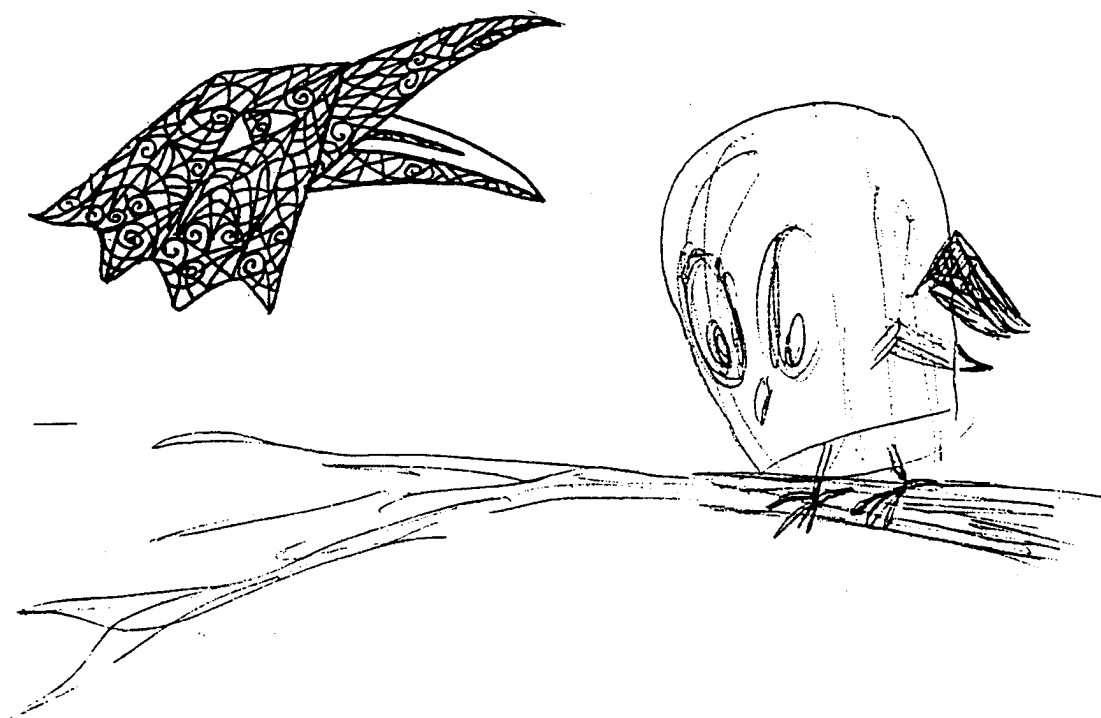
- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 1. <u>Night Mare Nightwatch</u>                                    | 2. <u>My Best Decision at Doona</u>    |
| 3. <u>Star Gate Out of the Silent Planet</u>                       | 4. <u>This Immortal Raphael</u>        |
| 5. <u>The War of the Worlds Hospital Station</u>                   |  |
| 6. <u>The Warlock in Spite of Himself Beyond the Farthest Star</u> |  |
| 7. <u>The Warlock is Missing The Water of the Wondrous Isles</u>   |  |
| 8. <u>The Demon Breed Gremlins</u>                                 | 9. <u>Unicorn and Dragon Coils</u>     |
| 10. <u>The Veils of Azloroc Stardance</u>                          | 11. <u>Glory Road Roadmarks</u>        |
| 12. <u>Forty Thousand in Gehenna Expecting Someone Taller</u>      |  |
| 13. <u>The Warlock Unlocked The Door into Summer</u>               |  |
| 14. <u>Fire Time Sundiver</u>                                      | 15. <u>The End of the Matter Slipt</u> |
| 16. <u>The Outcasts of Heaven Belt To Die in Italbar</u>           |  |
| 17. <u>Chaining the Lady Agent of Vega</u>                         |  |
| 18. <u>The Hand of Oberon Raising the Stones</u>                   |  |
- ~~~~~
- |  |
|--|
| 1. <u>David Starr Space Ranger: The Ultimate Enemy</u>       |
| 2. <u>Gladiator at Law: The Last Defender of Camelot</u>     |
| 3. <u>The Dreamstone: Silmarillion</u>                       |
| 4. <u>Eye of Cat - Catseye</u>                               |
| 5. <u>Crystal Singer, Crystal Witness - No Crystal Tears</u> |
| 6. <u>Brother Assassin: The Warlock Heretical</u>            |
| 7. <u>Citizen of the Galaxy: The Postman</u>                 |
- ■

**Advertisements**      **Advertisements**      **Advertisements**      **Advertisements**  
 Sara Svetitsky requests: if you have any books you borrowed from her before she went abroad last year, please notify her (08-467 179). Each book has the name "Beck" or "Svetitsky" written in it (or both). Sara's hard disk crashed, and she lost the list of books lent out.

**Religion in Science Fiction** Want to be a panelist on this topic at the Feb. 28 meeting? Call the moderator, Nikolai Borshevsky, 08-472 337.

**Rehovot SF** needs meeting topics and panel moderators. Want to contribute? Have some ideas? Please call Aharon Sheer, 08-471 225. ■ ■

Drawings by Miriam Ben-Lulu



## Next SCIENCE FICTION CLUB Meeting:

Tuesday, February 28, 1995, 8:15 p.m. -- Panel (bilingual)  
Panel Discussion on **Religion in Science Fiction** moderated by

**Nikolay Borschevsky** (in English), with **Yehiel Adar**

Audience questions and comments will be in both English and Hebrew.  
(Note: This is a meeting about Science Fiction, not about Religion.)

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## Comments to Editor of CyberCozen:

Re: "Who is Dr. Who?" by Alon Itzkovitz, from the December 1994 issue. Dear Aharon, I was really upset by Alon's TV review of the "Doctor Who" series, "Who is Dr. Who?" If Alon doesn't like the series, HEY, SO WHAT!! it's a free country. But! we don't have to hear him say so! Doctor Who was one of my childhood heroes, and I never missed an episode. His adventures kept me up late into the night, worrying, scheming, planning. I even read a number of the "Doctor Who" books, which were written independently of the series, and were much better than say the books that accompany the many "great" Star-Drek [sic] series. Alon thinks it funny that the manifestation of The Doctor's Time-Machine is a telephone booth. If he had paid any attention to the series he would understand that the telephone booth was the portal to a much larger 'time-ship'. Is this any worse than what the All American hero Superman immodestly uses telephone-booths for!?

Alon is not even worthy of saying Doctor Who's name. Who is he at all!! (מי הוא בכלל?) I think Alon should go back and try to improve his writing, and leave the true Sci-Fi heroes to those WHO know what they are talking about.

**Shmuel Kahn**, an insulted fan.

P.S. Hi Aharon, writing the above letter was fun! You can print it as is, but if you think that it is a "bit" too stern, you can tone it down.

Yours truly,

**Shmuel Kubla Kahn**.

Dear **Shmuel**, I wish more people would write and comment on material in CyberCozen. I'm sure Alon will enjoy reading what you wrote. If not, he can always come over and punch you in the nose. Aharon ■ ■

## Announcement

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**IGOR (Israeli Gathering of Role Players)** will hold a convention April 17 (Hol HaMoed Pesah) at the **Focus Club** in Ramat Aviv (Einstein St., next to the University). Entrance fee: IS 15 at the door; IS 10 for advance registration; IS 10 for soldiers presenting Army ID. For more information, or registration, call one of the phone numbers below:

ב-17 לאפריל (ג' חול המועד פסח) יתקיים **איגור 95** - כנס ישראלי למשחקי תפקידים, במועדון פוקוס ברמת אביב (ברח' אינשטיין, ליד האוניברסיטה). מחיר כניסה 15 ש"ח במקום, 10 ש"ח לנרשמים מראש, 10 ש"ח לחיילים עם הצגת תעודת חוגר. לדבר פרטים והרשמה, נא להתקשר לאחד הטלפונים הבאים:

03-6832161 (**Avner** מבנר) -- 03-9302475 (**Yuval** יובל)

03-6355468 (**Tal** טל) -- 03-6776430 (**Shlomi** שלומי)

NOTE NEW DATE!

בס"ד

April 4 Next SCIENCE FICTION CLUB Meeting:

Tuesday, ~~March 28~~, 1995, 8:15 p.m. -- Lecture (HEBREW)

by Dov Shub: **The Boomerang Dream** -- חלום הבומרנג על ידי דב שוב: יוצג סרט ווידאו קצר על הארכאולוגיה, הסטוריה, ומיטולוגיה של הבומרנג בהרצאה יוסבר ממה ואיך בונים בומרנג, ומדוע הבומרנג חוזר

בסוף, תהיה הדגמה של צורת זריקת הבומרנג בתוך הדירה הקטנה של סילברמן?

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*"If this goes on ..."* is a common theme in SF, as in the following Story: **ALARM CLOCK** by Leonid Resnick

I dived into the air-conditioned entrance of the Shekem department store and, at last, filled my lungs with air. Nobody stood near the door and nobody checked bags. The danger of terrorist acts had disappeared, and the people of Israel could breathe freely. It was a big plus of the agreement with Hamas.

I took a shopping cart, dropped my old rucksack in and moved forward. There was a display of TV-sets directly in front of me. Nearly two dozen Prime Ministers reported on new achievements in the peace process. But TV-sets did not interest me. I had to watch out for cameras.

I glanced at the ceiling and, at once, discovered two of them. I had to pray they're only for catching thieves. If there's anybody from the Shin Bet near the displays... I'd rather not think about it.

It was a miracle I was still free after eleven days. That's pretty good for a small country like Israel. I'm really lucky (if it's possible to talk about luck in my case).

My bad luck had begun from that evening, when that stupid Amnon promised me a job. I'd hurried into the night, reached the industrial area and stood under the evaluating glare of a fat potential boss. Alas, I seemed to him too puny. (If that stinky idiot could only know that since that night I've lived for seven days on water from public toilets and four bananas that someone left on a bench, and I'm still going strong! If he could only know how fast moving I am!) After Amnon turned me down, I went back and telephoned my wife. From her convulsive breathing, from her unusually-alien voice, I understood everything. It had happened. For the first time in my life I'd won a lottery, Lotto-Bitahon.

I knew that within thirty seconds the police can discover where the caller is calling from. So I didn't even say goodbye to my wife and children. I just hung up the phone down and ran.

The current situation began when the Israeli people, frightened by explosions every day, went out in demonstrations of hundreds of thousands, and the threat of the government's falling became real. Suddenly it was leaked out that the government had conducted three months' of fruitful talks with Hamas in Lisbon and that a solution was close at hand. The Security Lottery (Lotto-Bitahon) was established as a result of these talks. There had been no need to be a mathematical genius to count the victims of terrorist acts. The numbers had gradually risen, until, on the average, nearly fifty were killed every week, not to mention hundreds of injured. No person knew when his moment would come. The whole population was participating in a mortal lottery. An accidental process must be regulated.

The Security Lottery began with only jobless males playing. However, after the first weekly drawing, a coalition of feminist organizations appealed to the Supreme Court, demanding the removal of this sexual discrimination. The Court fully supported their demands. Unemployed women began to play also.

I went through a white labyrinth of refrigerators and washing machines. Oh! Here it is, the food section! My Wonderland, my pastures of heaven! To distract watching eyes, to appear as an ordinary customer, I threw a carton of milk, cottage cheese and bread into my shopping cart.

Terrorist acts stopped, people began to calm down, but an unexpected problem arose: two yeshiva students won in Lotto-Bitahon. The only organized force in the state of Israel - the Ultra-Orthodox - came out on the streets. The Prime Minister watched a CNN program in which the whole world could see fighting between the Ultra-Orthodox and police mounted on horses. He immediately called his cabinet to an emergency meeting. A day later the Knesset adopted an amendment to the Security Lottery Law: "... connoisseurs of Torah cannot be passed into the hands of goyim."

Streets became tranquil immediately, and the Orthodox factions in the Knesset supported a proposal to turn Nablus and Jenin fully over to the government of the Palestinian Autonomy. That led to new amendments to the Security Lottery Law. Previously, every Friday Gaza received four Israelis, winners in Lotto-Bitahon, Hebron - two, Jericho - one, Ramallah - one. But Nablus and Jenin also demanded their shares. The Nablusians had the insolence to ask for two persons every week! Here the Prime Minister showed his iron will. It was agreed on one Jew for the two cities every week. The Arabs have the responsibility of dividing him as they wish: this is in their jurisdiction. The total for all towns is now nine Jews every week. That is obvious progress compared to fifty deaths each week. And there are no terrible big-scale disasters on the TV news, there is no danger to tourists. Tourism brings in a lot of money...

I reached the shelves with sweets. Ah, that's for me! The most delicious of French candy: chocolate, thin wafer shell, crumbled hazelnuts, cocoa liqueur, cognac... I placed a box of these candies in my shopping cart, tore the bright colorful wrapper off, opened the box and took a small brown ball from its embrace of goldlike foil. There was starlight in my eyes, I don't know why. Maybe it was a fit of pleasure, or perhaps it was simply my hungry blood pouring from my brain into my stomach. I didn't understand how three candies disappeared into my mouth...

Who would have thought that this controversial Security Lottery Law would bring so many benefits to the state at once!

First: Unemployment almost vanished. The Minister of Labor was well satisfied. Only the jobless took part in the Lottery. Every job, even the dirtiest one, was worth its weight in gold. Damn it! What gold? It was the weight of life! A paradise-like life began for the few jobless too (nearly 2000, I heard on the radio before leaving). We had benefits three times more than our previous wages without any time limitation. Persons wishing to feed their families the "easy way" could leave their jobs, take the risk and participate in Lotto-Bitahon. In fact, I was at fault for all my troubles. I could have worked and worked in the carrot factory, sorting carrots into three categories... I began to hate carrots! I couldn't stand this orange shit!!! Who would have thought that for nine months I wouldn't find a job?

Second: All soldiers wanted to be in combat units. Certainly! After serving in these units they had a whole favorable year in which their identity card numbers did not play in Lotto-Bitahon.

Third: Morality in the state jumped to the heights of heaven. Really, heaven! People began to trust in God. The competition for getting into yeshivas was unbelievably hard. Everybody wanted to learn Torah.

One of the store's employees gazed in my direction suspiciously. She worked near the sweet shelves and didn't liked my chewing. For camouflage I chose a bag of cookies and placed it in my shopping cart. But after eating half of the French candies I felt that I had reached paradise a bit earlier than necessary. Maybe that was because of the candies' cognac. No-no, it's too early for paradise, I must not get drunk. Certainly not! I opened a bottle of juice and poured into myself a good half-liter of this real nectar. Well! Well-well! It's a pity I can't make coffee here. What good coffee bedouins make...

Some commentators said there is a professional army of 200,000 men trained in Gaza. The Gaza winners in Lotto-Bitahon were sent directly to these soldiers. As the Israeli government demanded, it was forbidden for TV cameramen to film what was done with them. It could undermine immigration. Now envoys of the Jewish Agency cheerfully appeared before immense groups in the former Soviet Union and authoritatively declared that Israel has the lowest level of unemployment among all developed countries. Only 0.05%! "The Jewish economic miracle" - cunningly smiled the Agency envoys. In truth, there was one real benefit for new immigrants. Their identity card numbers did not play in Lotto-Bitahon during their first six months after arriving in Israel. Most of them were lucky enough to find some kind of a job in this time.

I've such bad luck! Two weeks ago the king of Morocco announced that his state is ready to receive a considerable portion of its former citizens. My wife is half-Moroccan, we could have applied. Too bad the Lottery reached me before we could grab the offer.

Trying not to attract the attention of the security men watching the displays, I slowly moved my shopping cart to the shelves of prepared salads and placed two packages in it. My wife likes this sort... My eldest likes that one...

People's lives had become much easier, thanks to the Security Lottery! Citizens could take buses quietly, without fearing being



turned into pieces of burned meat. Soldiers could hitchhike without any danger from terrorist kidnappings. And the people slept. What force could wake them up? Nobody was interested in waking up his fellow man. Everybody was afraid to awake. Only a person like me, who had been out of the System for seven days, could do IT: could wake up.

I threw the last candy in my mouth. I drank it down with the last gulp of juice. I saw that two big guys with guns on their belts, at the far side of the room, were now moving deliberately toward me. Certainly my picture must have been sent to observation posts all over the country. Thanks, fellows, that you didn't hurry, that you gave me time to have some bliss at the last minute.

I stroked my rucksack with the explosives inside. My strange luck had helped me to steal them yesterday from an Army truck. I pushed my arm in. I touched the big metal alarm clock with two wires connected to it. The old clock was broken and didn't work, but there was no need for it to work. I simply turned the big hand. ■ ■

## Letter to the Editor of CyberCozen: WorldCon in Israel?

Dear Aharon,

I just ran across CyberCozen from July 1993, noticed the \$15 cost of a U.S. subscription and decided that yes, I want to subscribe. I still think it would be great to meet at the 1995 Worldcon in Glasgow, if you can get over there. Of course an Israeli Worldcon would be even more exciting, but I gather you don't have the people to organize one; but maybe, if you can find the people to organize a bid, Jewish fans in the U.S. will help on planning the actual convention. I know I'd be thrilled to serve on the committee. Regards, Lucy Schneidler

Dear Lucy: If we could have a one-day local Israeli convention, that would be the place to start. I can't see doing a WorldCon when we've never even had a TelAvivCon organized by local people (with all the help they can get). People in Israel don't have the time or inclination for much volunteer work. The only hope I can see for any kind of a con here is one organized by a commercial, money-making organization, with experience in conventions. Can you make a thirty percent real profit (after taxes, inflation) on your investment doing a WorldCon? If so, maybe someone would take it on. Aharon

Note: Lucy Schneidler writes fantasy and essays on fantasy topics. She also publishes a one-page monthly on Jewish material in SF and fantasy called "Jews in Space" (not to be confused with the APA Jewish Space). Subscription price is only \$5.00 a year, anywhere in the world, less than air postage to Israel. If interested, write Lucy Schneidler, 470 West End Ave., New York NY 10024, USA. ■ ■

## Israeli Gathering of Roleplayers -- כנס ישראלי למשחקי תפקידים

IGOR (Israeli Gathering of Roleplayers) -- April 17 (Hol HaMoed Pesah), Focus Club, Ramat Aviv (Einstein St., near University). Fee: IS 15 at door; IS 10 for advance registration; IS 10 for soldiers presenting Army ID. For information or registration call any phone number below:

ב-17 לאפריל (ג' חול המועד פסח) יתקיים איגור 95 - כנס ישראלי למשחקי תפקידים, במועדון פוקוס ברמת אביב (ברח' אינשטיין, ליד האוניברסיטה). מחיר כניסה 15 ש"ח במקום, 10 ש"ח לנרשמים מראש, 10 ש"ח לחיילים עם הצגת תעודת חוגר. לדבר פרטים והרשמה, נא להתקשר לאחד הטלפונים הבאים:

03-6832161 (אבנר Avner) -- 03-9302475 (יובל Yuval)

03-6355468 (טל Tal) -- 03-6776430 (שלומי Shlomi)

Next SCIENCE FICTION CLUB Meeting:

Tuesday, April 25, 1995, 8:15 p.m. -- Lecture (in ENGLISH)

**Pesah Amnuel**, Science Fiction writer, on

**Creation of Science Fiction Ideas**

**and Development of Creative Fantasy**

(with practical exercises for the audience)

Rehovot Science Fiction (usually) meets the last Tuesday of each month  
at the home of Tova, Bill and Rami Silverman,

19 Eisenberg St., fourth floor, Rehovot, Tel. 08-476142.

There is a REFRESHMENT CHARGE of 3.50 Shekels (for those who partake).

CyberCozen SF Newsletter, Vol. VII, Num. 4, Apr. 1995. Editor: Aharon Sheer. Ed.Assist: Elana Dror. For mail delivery of CyberCozen, please donate 25 shekels per YEAR. Air Mail to U.S., \$15. If Aharon Sheer can hand-deliver it, 10 shekels. Meeting notices only, 13 shekels. Address: POB 9443, Tel Aviv 61093. Copyright (C) 1995, All rights reserved to specified authors and artists.

**Some Thoughts on Teleportation Inspired by Sam Braunstein's January Talk**

Larry Niven, in his novel **A World Out of Time** (1976), described a teleportation system. If you pressed a sequence of numbers, you went to a specified destination. But one sequence of numbers didn't send you anywhere -- it renewed your body, enabling you to live forever, by deleting age poisons that were deleterious to health. But why shouldn't any teleportation (as defined by Sam) do the same?

Sam defines teleportation as "disembodied" movement from one place to another. He gave the telephone as an example. Sound waves don't travel over the wires. They are analyzed at one end and reconstituted at the other. One might say that this is a process of "copying".

Teleportation could be a method of copying: you list the position and type of every atom in the body, send the list (at no more than the speed of light), and reconstruct the body at the other end. Such a method might require "destructive copying"; that is, to get out all of the body's information, you would have to take the body completely apart. (Physicist Asher Shor, in a talk he gave us in July 1991, estimated that the amount of energy released in such a taking apart might be enough to destroy a whole city.) However, you also have the problem of the enormous quantity of information necessary to describe the whole body. Sam estimated that it would take over one hundred million centuries to transmit all that information!

A better solution would be to build on standardized parts. It's not necessary to send a description of all the atoms of each person's heart, for example. A small number of parameters might describe an idealized heart matching the subject sufficiently well. Anyway, why reconstruct a heart whose arteries have arteriosclerosis? For that matter, why reconstruct skin with liver spots, or a leg which was broken and healed slightly crooked? You'd do better to save communication time and transmit information about completely healthy organs.

It would seem that the only part of the body which has to be reconstructed in full is the brain. Every memory, every thought must be copied exactly. With the best knowledge we have today, this will require copying every molecule.

Even with the brain we have room for improvement. Why send a brain afflicted with Alzheimer's? The teleportation system could interpolate between the healthy neurons, discarding the sick ones. This would mean we would lose the information in the sick ones, but in any case Alzheimer's progression leads to loss of memory. The resultant brain

would be young and healthy. It's speculated that many mental diseases are due to viral damage to the brain in childhood (schizophrenia?). Such damage could be repaired also, eliminating from the world the mental illnesses of people like Maurice Ravel and Franz Kafka. (If Van Gogh had not been crazy, would he still have been a great painter? Was da Vinci insane? Was Picasso?)

Think of what this could do for child rearing. If you don't behave, we'll teleport the naughtiness out of you. Or when we teleport, we can insert expertise in a foreign language (or even better, turn everyone in the world into an English speaker). :)

All of the above assumes that teleportation is done by (destructive?) copying. If we travel using wormholes (hyperspace), for truly instantaneous travel, we'll be stuck with our our aches and pains. What a loss!

■ ■

### Comments to Editor of CyberCozen:

**Editor's Note:** In **Jewish Space** I made the following comment about the name of Lucy Schmeidler's monthly publication, **Jews in Space**:

"'Jews in Space'? What a ridiculous name. Are there Jews in space? Were there ever? Will there ever be? On the other hand, **"Jewish Space"** exists wherever Jews are, and the double meaning of **SPACE** here makes the name delightful."

My comment provoked the following responses from **Jewish Space** readers:

From **Mordechai Housman**: The title **Jews In Space** has a rich history. One of the earliest uses was at the end of Mel Brook's movie **History of the World Part One**, and I have heard it claimed that it was the original title of the movie **Spaceballs**. Many variations preceded that, such as the Muppets' **Pigs In Space**.

From **Mark L. Blackman**: **"Jews in Space"** was a *shtick* at the end of Mel Brook's *History of the World*. Yes, there has been at least one Jew in space, Judith Resnick, one of the Challenger astronauts, plus numerous fictitious ones.

■ ■

**Editor's Note:** The following are comments on old CyberCozen material reprinted recently in **Jewish Space**:

**Re: Commentary by Daniel Gorelik on Utopia: H.G. Wells Men Like Gods**, from the December 1992 issue:

From **Mordechai Housman**: The Jewish concept of the Messianic Age is not one of complacency and stagnation. Rather, it will be the epitome of spiritual growth and achievement. Thus, we will not have to surrender "that intensity of life" as H.G. Wells feared. We will learn to enjoy the struggle for spiritual growth much more than the material struggles we engage in today. Maimonides says (Judges, Laws of Kings, 12:4-5):

"The Sages did not yearn for the Messianic era in order to have dominion over the entire world, to rule over the gentiles, to be exalted by the nations, or to eat, drink and celebrate. Rather, to be free to involve themselves in Torah and wisdom without any pressures or disturbances so that they would merit the World to Come....

"In that era, there will be neither famine nor war, envy or competition, for good will flow in abundance and all delights will be as common as dust. The occupation of the entire world will be solely to know G-d."

Just because we will have no disturbances or outside pressures does not mean there will be no struggle. Spiritual growth is always a struggle.

**Mordechai Housman**

From **Mark L. Blackman**: Plato's "ideal state" banned poets. Re Marx, "scientific" was a 19th century buzzword; he meant his ideas were

recommended it to several people, who also liked its imaginative approach to what might conceivably be done in the near future, if the space program ever gets back on the track. This is an SF book with a solid scientific base, but it's also a lot of fun to read. A really good choice. (I read it in the Hebrew translation.)

■ ■

Next SCIENCE FICTION CLUB Meeting:  
Tuesday, May 30, 1995, 8:15 p.m. -- Lecture (in ENGLISH)  
**Amnon Stupp**, Science Fiction fan, on  
**The End of Civilization as We Know It -- in Science Fiction**  
(A Guided Discussion)

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at the home of Tova, Bill and Rami Silverman,  
19 Eisenberg St., fourth floor, Rehovot, Tel. 08-476142.

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CyberCozen SF Newsletter, Vol. VII, Num. 4, May 1995. Editor: Aharon Sheer. Ed.Assist: Elana Dror. For mail delivery of CyberCozen, please donate 25 shekels per YEAR. Air Mail to U.S., \$15. If Aharon Sheer can hand-deliver it, 10 shekels. Meeting notices only, 13 shekels. Address: POB 9443, Tel Aviv 61093. Copyright (C) 1995, All rights reserved to specified authors and artists.

## Thoughts on aliens in Science Fiction, with examples

by Amnon Stupp

When Aharon asked me to participate in a panel on "Aliens in Science Fiction" (December, 1994) my first thought was that most writers don't use aliens.

When I looked over my library to refresh my memory, starting from the letter "A", I saw: Asimov - doesn't have aliens; Piers Anthony - usually doesn't have aliens but in the **Kirilian Quest** series he does; Alfred Bester - has aliens but not in the famous books (only in **Extro**). And then, suddenly, all the writers started having an abundance of aliens: Gordon Dickson has interesting aliens (**None but Man**), Heinlein has aliens (**Stranger in a Strange Land**, **Methuselah's Children**, and more), Frank Herbert has aliens (**Whipping Star**, **The Dosadi Experiment**, and others such as the immortals in **The Heaven Makers**).

When I saw how many aliens there are I thought of another point Aharon raised, that maybe these aliens are really human beings, just with a strange shape.

So I started thinking about how aliens are used in Science Fiction, and for what purpose. I found that my personal preference is for aliens which aren't too alien. After all, what readers are usually interested in are human beings. If we want humans to interact with the aliens, they must have something in common. Perhaps the aliens are bad guys who want more space and fight us, or maybe they are good guys who want humans to join their galactic civilization. Generally there must be contact with humans; they must share the same physical space. Even if there are no humans in the story, the aliens themselves have to interest us, and therefore be enough like humans that there are parallels.

I can only remember reading one book with really, totally, *alien* aliens, and that is Stanislaw Lem's Solaris. In **Solaris** the aliens are so alien that it is impossible to understand them at all. But this device only means that the aliens become part of the scenery and might as well be natural forces, which we don't try to "understand".

Most writers have very human-like aliens. Usually the difference is only in one thing: a slightly different way of seeing the universe, a slightly different philosophy of life (or death), or some difference in the society. Trying to give a convincing portrayal of an alien is quite difficult even with only one "slight" difference, and sometimes

the author fails in that too.

I would like to mention some aliens I personally found memorable:

I will start with the **Cluster Series** by Piers Anthony and his aliens, the *Polarians*. This is a race of round bodied beings, who roll around as a means of locomotion. Anthony's claim is that their bodily shape influences their approach to the world - he contrasts their "enfolding" philosophy with the "cutting", "sword" philosophy of human beings. The theory is that the shape of an alien race influences its behavior. Anthony doesn't make much of this, and in later books the shape thing is dropped completely. I certainly understand why - it would be very difficult to think up shape-dependent philosophies for all the various creatures he dreams up in the series. In fact, Anthony uses his aliens mainly to add "color" to the story, a common usage. He has some other clever uses of alienness: for example, a laser-eyed being who can sneak a weapon into a meeting because its eyes are the weapon. But most aliens in the series could be replaced by human beings with no changes in the story.

A completely different approach is used by Frank Herbert in the books about BuSab agent McKee. Herbert describes, especially in **The Dosadi Experiment**, the *Gowachin*.

The Gowachin are very different from humans. They are a frog-like race whose individuals start their life as tadpoles fleeing their father who chases them, swallowing any who fail to escape. The Gowachin have a strange legal system in which judgements are passed in an arena-court, and the victor is the one who is killed. I admit I did not understand the system, and I suspect Herbert didn't also, but it reflects a deep difference in perception of the universe - "the just should be killed", or maybe "it isn't right to be right".

During the meeting Aharon brought up the Japanese custom in the Middle Ages of sending a representative of the peasants to their lord. As Aharon remembered it, if the request was granted the representative was executed. If this is correct, Herbert's idea isn't as novel as I thought. This shows that one way to create an alien society is to take an unfamiliar human society and replace the humans in it with aliens.

Thinking about different perceptions of the universe brought to mind a book by Gordon Dickson - **None but Man**. I think that Dickson in his various books treats the alien question very well, perhaps the best of any author I have read. Dickson builds his aliens up from one fundamental difference between them and humans. In **None but Man** the aliens are very human: they are afraid, their politics dictate their actions even if they would like to act differently, they love their children, and they make mistakes. The great difference is that for his human beings the guiding principle in life is "to be right", while for the aliens the guiding principle is "to be honorable", and even if something is "right" but "dishonorable" they wouldn't do it.

This isn't so alien that we can not understand it. There are people who wouldn't do something "right" if it isn't "honorable" and would be quite content to do the "honorable" thing even if it isn't "right". At the meeting Aharon said he really found out what alien is when he visited Japan. The honor thing was - and maybe still is - very important in Japanese society. [Ed. Assist. note: also in Romulan society.] We also know that "honor" is a prime motivator for many people in our area of the world, and was certainly the cause of much trouble, and a lot of literature, in the Middle Ages.

For Dickson's aliens "honor" is a shifting thing based on the policies of the family then in power. If what you did was in accordance with the policies, and also successful, it is honorable: if it isn't,

even if there was a change of policies you weren't aware of, it is dishonorable. This reminded me of descriptions of Japanese Samurai, where if a Samurai's actions reflected badly on his lord, he was expected to kill himself and relieve his lord of the embarrassment.

Dickson develops this difference with his usual talent, and shows how this basic misunderstanding almost brought about interstellar war.

At the meeting, Sarah Svetitsky demonstrated from C.J. Cherryh that one successful device is to take some human attribute to extremes. In **None But Man** Dickson used the aliens to present a trait, or behavior, which exists in human beings also, and bring it to an extreme. Perhaps this is what C.J. Cherryh does too. Sometimes this is done to present an alternative to the accepted way of thinking. But I think this technique is mostly used to contrast the usual way with something else, and so make the "usual" *explicit* instead of taken for granted.

Finally, I want to discuss David Brin, who also has many aliens.

In Brin's *Uplift Series*, older intelligent races find "clients" among pre-sentient races, and lift them to sapientcy. Pre-sentient usually means some use of tools; for example, chimpanzees use stones to break conches, and sticks to get at things beyond arm range. The older "patron" race genetically changes the "client" to increase intelligence, and to introduce other changes. The clients owe 100,000 years of indentured service as payment. The culture created in this way is interracial: races are uplifted, uplift other races, die, and so on, but the culture remains. This has been going on for a few billion years. Human beings haven't been uplifted, don't have a patron, and are hated and feared by the "normal" races.

Brin has many aliens, but the important ones are the uplifted clients of human beings ("our" clients): dolphins in **Startide Rising**, and chimpanzees in **The Uplift War**.

The description of Dolphins is especially interesting. Dolphins' grasp of the universe is completely different from ours. Genetic changes made to them make them nearer to us, otherwise no communication would be possible. Primitive dolphins, according to Brin, live in a world of sounds. Because they themselves can create sounds, their world is only partly real. Uplifted dolphins can also sink into that poetic half-unreal world, and hide reality behind their sound constructs.

I think the analogue to that would be if we could project holograms, indistinguishable from reality, and would do that subconsciously. Then while walking a street we couldn't know how much of what we see is real and what is our (or someone else's) projection.

Having reached only "H" in my perusal of authors and finding too many aliens, I stopped.

I would like to add some general thoughts to what was said in the panel. Aliens are used in S.F. for many things:

- 1) "color";
- 2) to make thinking explicit which is normally hidden and taken for granted;
- 3) to suggest different life styles and modes of thinking;
- 4) to give the characters something to fight against.

Fighting can be used to make human heroes examine their own beliefs and society, much as in the "making explicit" usage. A possible example of that is Orson Card's Ender's Game. The aliens are really just bogeymen, they don't appear at all except at the very end. But the whole book, especially after what we learn at the end, can be seen as an examination of human morality, in-humanness, and human-ness, including all the human failings. ■ ■

## עצור ! אל תקפוץ מהגג !

האם גם אתה משתמש מנטור מתוסכל ?

האם גם לך נפלה האפליקציה ושעות עבודה רבות ירדו לטמיון ?

לא עוד ! הצטרף גם אתה לחוג הלקוחות המאושרים המנויים על שירות ביפר Save-it. ענוד את ביפר Save-it על חגורתך, והוא יצפצף כל חמש דקות, ויזכיר לך לשמור את עבודתך על הדיסק, על כל צרה שלא תבוא, והאמן לנו, היא תבוא.

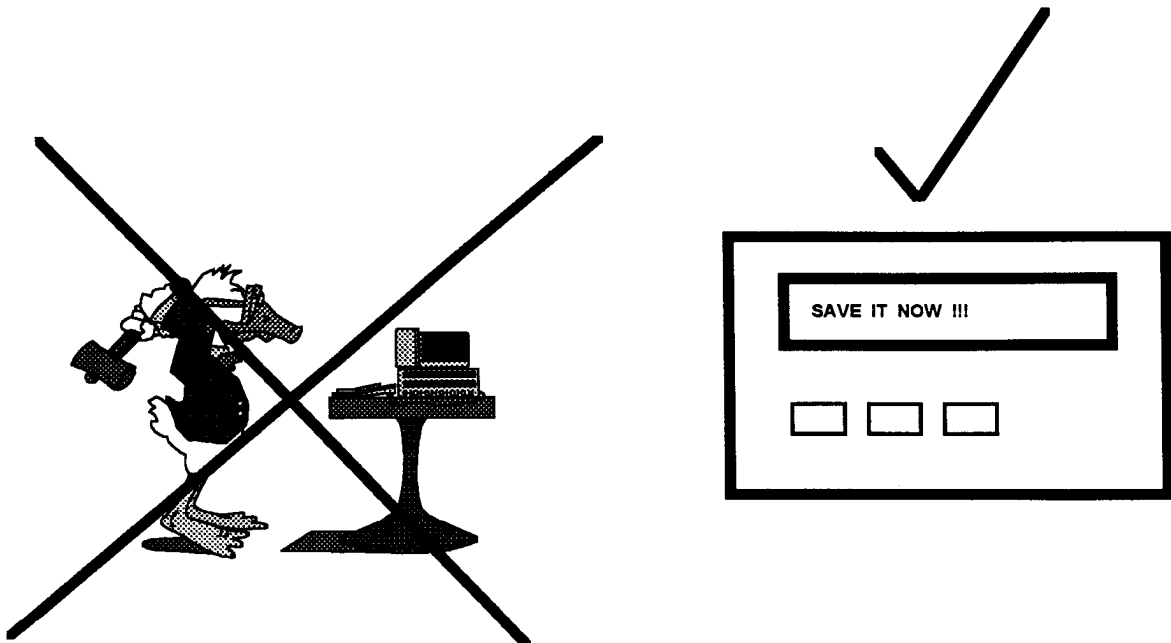
מחקרים מראים כי המשתמשים בביפר Save-it רגועים יותר ונוזקים פחות לטיפול פסיכיאטרי. עם זאת, היו מקרים בהם התלוננו נשים כי בעליהן, המשתמשים בביפר Save-it מתעוררים כל חמש דקות, ממלמלים דבר-מה ומחפשים את מקש ה-save. לכל הדעות, זוהי תופעת לוואי שולית, לעומת היתרונות הברורים.

התקשר עוד היום למפיץ מורשה של רשת ביפר Save-it, והצל את עבודתך, לפני שיהיה מאוחר מדי...

לבחירתך, מספר דגמים :

- ביפר בצבע ורוד עם נקודות אדומות, לאינדבידואליסטים.
- ביפר המצפצף כל דקה, למקרים קשים במיוחד.
- דגם שעון, למי שאין חגורה.
- דגם רוטט, למתחשבים בסביבה.
- דגם מחשמל, למי שמתחשב עוד יותר בסביבה.

אזהרה: משרד התחבורה קובע כי השימוש בביפר Save-it בזמן נהיגה אסור בהחלט.



מודעה זו מוגשת כשירות לציבור, מטעם יורם גרינברג / פיתוח מוצרים שיציעו את העולם לעתיד טוב יותר. אולי.

Next SCIENCE FICTION CLUB Meeting:

Tuesday, July 4, 1995, 8:15 p.m. -- (in ENGLISH)

**Special Effects in SF Films:** we will show a half hour film on special effects in **Star Trek** and **Star Wars**, and have a discussion on how the effects were done. Afterwards, we will present some longer special effect excerpts from the **Star Wars** film.

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**Short Reviews:** by Sara Svetitsky

**A College of Magics** by Caroline Stevermer

This is a delightful book which is both a successful alternate universe (very close to but not at all identical with 1908 Europe) and an original and extremely well-done treatment of the old "unhappy teenager discovers magical powers" theme. The magic which Faris Nallaneen learns at Greenlaw College is subtle, unobtrusive and carries more responsibilities than power, and Faris' conflict with her uncle, who sends her (the rightful heir of Galazon) to Greenlaw to get her out of the way, is handled maturely and without resorting to stereotypical villainy. The themes may be old but the treatment is fresh. Recommended to all fantasy readers.

**Larque on the Wing** by Nancy Springer

This is one crazy book. Springer has always written fantasy with touches of horror. This is fantasy (or magic realism), with touches of horror and a large helping of hysterical laughter. Larque, a forty-year old wife, mother, and commercial artist, is having a very messy mid-life crisis. She is spending quite a lot of it as an 18-year old boy -- unless she's actually the 10-year old version who is running around too. She's pretty sure she not the one who has moved in with her husband, but she might turn out to be wrong. This is a book in which people's personalities fragment and are reassembled, sexual organs are temporarily forgotten in desk drawers, and carrots become an addiction. I wouldn't give it to a kid, but I recommend it highly otherwise. ■ ■

**Editor's Note:** The following are comments on old CyberCozen material reprinted recently in **Jewish Space**:

**Re: Advertisements** in the December 1992 issue of **CyberCozen**.

The first one looks like it's real (Halper's Book Store), and the last three are obviously jokes. I'm not sure, but I think the Planetarium and Jewish Vegetarian Society ads are real and are not jokes. It doesn't help real advertisers if you mix theirs in with the fake advertisements. Assuming any of them are real. **Mordechai Housman**

**The Editor Comments:**

So that's why Halper's Book Store refused to take out a subscription to **CyberCozen**! We will publish any short advertisement on an SF or Fantasy topic readers send us, fake or not. Aharon ■ ■



Re: Unseen by Miriam Ben-Lulu from the September 1992 issue.

Non-blind people are used to relying on vision. We have come to believe that nothing is as reliable as our sight, to the detriment of the full use of our other senses. At one convention I attended, I stayed in a hotel room registered by Harold Feld. Harold, before he got married, was famous for having over-populated crash spaces at cons. The only person who never tripped over anyone during that con was the blind person staying with us. The fact is, though, that sight is the easiest faculty to use in the process of identification. I can count coins by feeling them, but it is much harder to count the instruments in an orchestra by listening to the music. Mordechai Housman

Huh? A spacecraft's sensors checking for oxygen content wouldn't use "visual clues", but chemical ("tactile") ones, though the information might appear visually on a meter or voiced by a computer, and communications would be "auditory". Also, ftl [faster than light] presents problems. Miriam omitted psychic information.

Mark. L. Blackman ■ ■

### Light Bulb Jokes from the Net -- Submitted by Shmuel Kahn

How many data base people does it take to screw in a light bulb?

Three. One to write the light bulb removal program, one to write the light bulb insertion program, and one to act as a light bulb administrator to make sure nobody else tries to change the light bulb at the same time.

How many hackers does it take to screw in a light bulb?

"Huh? You mean it's dark in here?"

How many hardware guys does it take to screw in a light bulb?

"Well, the diagnostics say it's fine, buddy, so it's a software problem."

How many IBM engineers does it take to screw in a light bulb?

None. They just let Marketing explain that "Dead Bulb" is a feature.

How many members of the U.S.S. Enterprise does it take to change a light bulb?

Scotty will report to Captain Kirk that the light bulb in the Engineering Section is burnt out, to which Kirk will send Bones to pronounce the bulb dead. Scotty, after checking around, notices that they have no more new light bulbs, and complains that he can't see in the dark to tend to his engines. Kirk must make an emergency stop at the next uncharted planet, Alpha Regula IV, to procure a light bulb from the natives. Kirk, Spock, Bones, Sulu, and 3 red shirt security officers beam down. The 3 security officers are promptly killed by the natives, and the rest of the landing party is captured. Meanwhile, back in orbit, Scotty notices a Klingon ship approaching and must warp out of orbit to escape detection. Bones cures the native king who is suffering from the flu, and as a reward the landing party is set free and given all of the light bulbs they can carry. Scotty cripples the Klingon ship and warps back to the planet just in time to beam up Kirk et al. The new bulb is inserted, and the Enterprise continues with its five year mission. ■ ■

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■ ■

### Short Reviews: by Aharon Sheer

**The Handmaid's Tale** by Margaret Atwood (1985), 395 pages. Recommended by Shmuel Kahn. This is a woman's novel. [Ed. Assistant: What do you mean, "a woman's novel"?] For reasons unknown, fertility in humans has been going down for many years. In the 1950's a couple that decided to try to have a baby had a 95% chance that the woman would be pregnant within a year. In the 1970's the chances had dropped to 85%. Some say that today (1995) the figure is less than 75%. If this drop in fertility continues, what will it be in 50 years?

Imagine a future U.S. in which almost all couples do not succeed in having babies. What do the wealthy and powerful do to have children? A revolution has taken place, and a fundamentalist Christian religious group has taken over. Women's tasks are to care for the home and to try and have children; only the men go out of the home to work. Wealthy and powerful men have large households, with many servants. If such a man's wife is not fertile, he has a *handmaid*, a woman of proven fertility (but "low morality" -- a divorced or unwed mother), who is obligated to serve that man sexually in a ritual designed solely to get her pregnant. The book is the tale as told by one such handmaid, and is psychologically very convincing. Such a future America seems quite possible, given the assumptions. Not pleasant.

**The Handmaid's Tale** was on the *New York Times* Bestseller List for over four months. It was made into an unsuccessful movie (of the same name) in 1990, in which a happy ending was added to the heroine's story.

**A Season for Slaughter** by David Gerrold (1992), 562 pages. Recommended by Rami Silverman. This is the fourth in the **War Against the Chtorr** series, which looks like it will go on for centuries. This is also one of the best in the alien invasion genre, because these aliens are really alien, and book after book gathers more information about them without getting an answer to the terrible question: Who or what is behind the alien invasion? The *most intelligent* of the invading life forms -- the size of an elephant -- only has the intelligence of a chimpanzee! Earth has been devastated by alien plagues, and is gradually being taken over by alien plants and animals. Earth is being chtorraformed, named after the sound the largest alien life form makes, "CHTORR!" Earth's ecology is being remade so that it is more suitable for these life forms. Man is being forced to live with them since all attempts to destroy them have failed. But where is the intelligence behind the invasion?

The worst part of this series is the hero, who is an obnoxious, superior, vengeful, know-it-all, with whom it is almost impossible to sympathize. I like the series very much, but I can well understand those who became disgusted after a few hundred pages (and it does go on and on and on).

■ ■



KOKO COZEN!

ALON I.

קומדי  
סליר

מקרא: "לאפלף" ויורס טמבל  
 "עארס" וגבר, קשוח לעניין  
 חלאסטרהובלאגן, בלבול עניין  
 ערב צח ערב זה ושוב אני איתכם (דיוו חלסטרה)  
 בשבוע שעבר ובחודשים האחרונים שומע אני אודות  
 כל מיני יצורים מאניבורים או מיני-בורים (מה זה?  
 סוג של דג בורי?) ושאר חיוזרים אנאלבתיים (מילה  
 לאפלטית מאוד) החודרים לעולמנו. מה זה החלאסטרה  
 הזה! אס יבוא לנו איזה חיוזר מאני-בורי קרח כזה  
 ניקח אני, סמי, ז'ק וג'ודי את הלאפלף הזה לאכול  
 איזה לאפה חריפה. אס הוא יהיה גבר-אז ניתן לו גם  
 כאפה! (מכה חזקה). ה.ג. וולס (איש הג"א שחי פעם) כתב  
 מדריך לפני הרבה שנים שנקרא "מלחמת העולמות"  
 המסביר איך להתמודד עם טיפוסים לאפלטים מסוכנים  
 מהמאדים. מה זה-צריך בקטריות בשביל זה? אני, ז'ק  
 והקומדי סטור נוריד להם כאפות ונעיף אותם הביתה  
 ותחשבו על זה! (מההההה...)



אלון איצקוביץ (דלפון)  
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 מי שיכול לעזור שיתן  
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תודה



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## פינת הסרטים

וידאודרוס (הצגה שניה) שחקן: ג'ימס וודס

סרטו של יוצר ה"זבוב", העוסק במכור לסרטים סאדיסטיים (סנף) הנכנס בעצמו  
 לתוך עולם הזוועות שהוא כה אוהב. סרט קשה לצפייה כמו שאר סרטיו של  
 דיוויד קרוננברג.

עד סוף העולם (ערוץ הסרטים) שחקנים: וילאס הארט, סס ניל, מקס פון סידוב

בעולם עתידי, בצל איום גרעיני מחפשת אשה הרפתקנית גבר חלומות מסתורי  
 המבוקש ע"י רבים בשל ריגול תעשייתי והאשמות נוספות (וילאס הארט). זה  
 האחרון מחזיק במשקפת מיוחדת המסוגלת לצלם תמונות מהמוח ולשדר אותם  
 לאחר. סס ניל הוא ידיד עשיר הנגרר אחרי הצעירה וכן ישנו בלש פרטי אותו  
 שכרה הצעירה בכדי לאתר את גבר החלומות הנעלם כל הזמן. סרט פילוסופי קצת  
 מוזר אך שווה צפייה.

**Next SCIENCE FICTION CLUB Meeting:**

**Tuesday, July 25, 1995, 8:15 p.m. -- Lecture (in ENGLISH)  
by Shmuel Safran (father of Moshe Safran),  
Professor, Dept. of Materials and Interfaces, Weizmann Institute,  
and a keyboard player:  
Electronic and Computer Music  
(with demonstrations)**

**WARNING:** This month's meeting is at the house of the Safrans,  
17 Pinsker St., Entrance #2, Rehovot, Tel. 08-361 631

There is a REFRESHMENT CHARGE of 3.50 Shekels (for those who partake).

CyberCozen SF Newsletter, Vol. VII, Num. 7, July 1995. Editor: Aharon Sheer. Ed.Assist: Elana Dror. For mail delivery of CyberCozen, please donate 25 shekels per YEAR. Air Mail to U.S., \$15. If Aharon Sheer can hand-deliver it, 10 shekels. Meeting notices only, 13 shekels. Address: POB 9443, Tel Aviv 61093. Copyright (C) 1995, All rights reserved to specified authors and artists.

**Methods of development of creative fantasy by Pesakh Amnuel**

*[Editor's Note: This is Pesakh Amnuel's summary of his talk before the club on April 25, 1995. Following it are comments by Bill Silverman.]*

The methods were proposed by Genrich Altshuller (Soviet inventor and SF writer) and Pesakh Amnuel (SF writer and astrophysicist) after investigation of nearly 10,000 SF ideas and situations. The methods are taught in Schools for Inventors (in Russia and other republics of the former USSR).

**1. The decrease method.** Any fundamental characteristic of the object is decreased sharply until a qualitative change arises.

A science fiction example: "Fantastic Voyage" by Isaac Asimov where miniaturized men in a mini-submarine travel inside arteries (see also "The magic eye" by A. Belyaev, etc.).

**2. The increase method.** Any fundamental characteristic of the object is increased sharply until a qualitative change arises.

"Flowers for Algernon" by Donald Keyes - increase of the intelligence of a man.

"Such day will go" by V. Zhuravleva - increase of the natural parameters of a man.

"Flight of the Earth" by F. Karsak - increase of a space ship's dimensions.

**3. The reverse method.** Any characteristic of an object is changed to its reverse.

"First men in the Moon" by H. G. Wells - antigravitation.

"Travels of Ion Tichy" by S. Lem - a man grows young again.

All methods have reverse ones: decrease-increase, etc.

**4. The acceleration method.** Any action of an object is accelerated until a qualitative change arises.

"The New Accelerator" by H. G. Wells - a man lives at an accelerated rhythm of life.

**5. The deceleration method.** Any action of the object is slowed-down until a qualitative change arises.

"Meeting in desert" by I. Rosohovatsky - creatures live at such a slow time rhythm that they look to us like statues.

**6. The crushing method.** An object is broken up into small parts until a qualitative change arises.

"Travel of Professor Tarantoga" by S. Lem - a man is broken up into atoms, the atoms are broadcast and collected again in another place.

**7. The integration method.** Unite objects which are not normally united.

"Owner of a bay" by S. Gansovsky - micro-organisms unite when danger arises, and thus a single creature forms.

**8. The separating out method.** Any basic characteristic of an object is separated from it.

"Little ass and axiom" by G. Al'tov - a space ship's engine is separated from it (the propelling force is a laser on the Earth).

**9. The carrying in method.** Any characteristic of one object is utilized by another object.

"Exchange of intellects" by Robert Sheckley - a man makes use of other creatures' intellects.

**10. The universalization method.** The actions of an object spread over an essentially larger class of occurrences.

"A girl near a precipice" by V. Shefner - the universal material.

**11. The limitation method.** The actions of an object are limited to a very narrow class of phenomena.

"Robot with a swelled head" by Henry Kuttner - a universal humanoid robot which can only open tin cans.

**12. The discretisation method.** If the actions of an object are continuous in time - to make them discrete.

"Farewell on the coast" by E. Voiskunsky and I. Lukodianov - discretisation of the process of growing old.

**13. The continuous method.** If the actions of an object are discrete - to make them continuous.

"The astronauts" by G. Martinov - the process of eating (which is normally discrete in time) is made continuous (the food is in the air and is absorbed when a man breathes).

**14. The dynamization method.** If an object is static - to make it changeable.

"The time patrol" by Poul Anderson - the alteration of history.

**15. The nature method.** If an object is man-made - to make it natural.

*[Editor's Note: An example of this is "Speaker for the Dead" by Orson Scott Card in which intelligent trees voluntarily split themselves into planks for use in construction.]*

**16. The man-made method.** If the object is natural - to make it man-made.

"Harbor of stone storms" by G. Al'tov - spherical clusters of stars are created by other civilizations.

**17. The management method.** If the characteristic of an object is not managed - to make it manageable.

"Discovery of himself" by V. Savthenko - management of the exterior of a man.

18. **The anti-management method.** If the characteristic of an object is managed - to make it unmanaged.

-----

Methods 15 and 18 are not usually used in SF, but are very helpful for exercises on creative fantasy.

The above mentioned methods are basic. About twenty modifications also exist. Other methods for training in creative fantasy:

- The method of "four floors" (by G. Altshuller);
- Morphological analysis;
- The pantogram method (a combination of morphological analysis and the above mentioned methods);
- The method of tendencies;
- The method of "good-bad".

All the methods are described in books:

- B. Zlotin, A. Zusman, "A month under stars of fantasy", Kishinev, 1989  
 P. Amnuel, "Puzzles for experts", Moscow, 1988  
 P. Amnuel, "Stellar ships of fantasy", Moscow, 1988  
 P. Amnuel, "The surprising world of fantasy", Petrozavodsk, in press.
- ■

### Comments by Bill Silverman on Methods of Development of Creative Fantasy

The Methods are mis-titled; substitute "Cookbook" for the phrase "Development of Creative".

1. A better example of the "decrease" method is Richard Matheson's "He who Shrank", where a man shrinks through intermediate sizes and finally emerges from our ken (and the story) into the realm of molecules. An excellent short story - I forget who wrote it (IFWWI) - described the shrinking of a man down to the atomic level, and beyond - the atomic realm was an embedded universe, with its own macroscopic galaxies, planetary systems, and so forth, down to its own (sub?) atomic realm, and so forth! A neat idea, but contrary to modern ideas of Quantum Mechanics. You might quote the bit of doggerel which goes:

*Large worlds have smaller worlds,  
 which feed on their velocity;  
 and smaller worlds have lesser worlds,  
 and so on to viscosity.*

2. A more upbeat version of the Keyes' story appeared several years ago in a series called "Children of Wonder", by Wilmar Shiras, in which a group of children with extraordinary talents and intelligence gradually emerged from hiding to become the basis of a new renaissance. The novel "Odd John" by Olaf Stapledon also comes to mind.

3. The "reverse" method is characteristic of most stories dealing with cyclic processes - e.g. Brian Aldiss's *Heliconia* trilogy in which whole race is periodically subject to alternate plagues with the same viral cause which leave them fat for a 200 year Winter and thin for a 200 year Summer.

4. A more modern example of the "acceleration" method is Poul Anderson's "Tau Zero", in which, due to an accident, a spaceship must constantly accelerate toward the speed of light, acquiring an enormous "Tau" (time contraction factor), and finally flies beyond the maximum expansion of the Universe, and is able to decelerate through the "Big Crunch" and a new "Big Bang" to arrive in a newly born Universe. (Note that this one deals with a cyclic process as well.)

5. The "Slow Glass" stories of Bob Shaw are a very nice example of the "deceleration" method. A kind of glass in which the speed of light is on the order of inches/year is used for a variety of purposes, such

as storing beautiful scenes, for rich people to install as picture windows, to solving murders, after a long delay, of course.

So far we have four methods which can be described by the equation:

$$\text{method}(t) = \frac{d \text{ characteristic}(t)}{dt}$$

6. I suppose that the "crushing" method applies to tales of mechanical teleportation, accomplished by destructively scanning the object to be transported, sending the pattern to the receiver, where the object is reconstructed. This covers 7 as well. Examples are "Venus Equilateral" by George O. Smith, where the method is used to supply a communication relay station; "Four Sided Triangle" (IFWWI), where a love triangle is "solved" by duplicating the woman who is the object of two men's affections; and many others.

7. Another popular employment of the "integration" method is the transcendence of a species through evolution or whatever. Examples range from Olaf Stapledon's "Star Maker" to Arthur C. Clarke's "Childhood's End".

Now we can throw in a simple integral in the above equation, adding methods 6 and 7.

8. The "separating out" method should be generalized to a "set intersection" method; combining it with its opposite, "set union".

I could go on to include the remaining methods in the simple mathematical model, but why bother. Maybe Science Fiction writers in Russia don't study mathematics, but clearly American hard SF writers such as Anderson, Asimov, Bear, Benford, Niven, etc., have employed much more sophisticated methods to create their gimmicks and gadgets (and alien races and societies), and then proceeded to write the story, which can't (yet) be done to formula. Maybe that's why I find much Russian SF to be dreary: they cook up the gimmicks, and toss in stock characters.

9. The "carrying in" method seems to be the attachment of some novel attribute, or possibly just juggling the parameters of a function. The example doesn't seem to suit the definition very well - I'd describe that one as turning a scalar (one intellect) into a vector (a range of intellects).

10. The "universalization" method is just adding a dimension to your model of the universe (remember, a dimension need not be geometric or temporal - lots of things are treated productively as dimensions in physics).

11. "Robot with a swelled head" appears to be a retranslation (English->Russian->English) of "The Proud Robot", one of the drunken mad scientist (Gallagher) stories of Henry Kuttner, written under the pseudonym, "Lewis Padgett".

12. The "discretization" method should be called the "quantization" method; viewing an apparently continuous phenomenon as a sum over discrete phenomena. I think that Benford was doing something like this in "Timescape".

That's enough for now. Incidentally, the methods haven't even been useful (except as road signs) in any of the hard sciences for a long time. They remind me of primitive critical methods, used for dissecting and classifying literary works, rather than creating them (ask any real author what he thinks of that kind of critic).

■ ■

Next SCIENCE FICTION CLUB Meeting:

Tuesday, August 29, 1995, 8:15 p.m. -- Lecture (in HEBREW)  
ראובן דנציגר, סופר, יספר על בעיות מדעיות ואחרות בכתיבה ופרסום ספרו:  
הפלנטה הסגולה - ממאה שערים לאפסילון ארידאני

Rehovot Science Fiction (usually) meets the last Tuesday of each month  
at the home of Tova, Bill and Rami Silverman,  
19 Eisenberg St., fourth floor, Rehovot, Tel. 08-476142.

There is a REFRESHMENT CHARGE of 3.50 Shekels (for those who partake).

CyberCozen SF Newsletter, Vol. VII, Num. 8, August 1995. Editor: Aharon Sheer. Ed.Assist: Elana Dror. For mail delivery of CyberCozen, please donate 25 shekels per YEAR. Air Mail to U.S., \$15. If Aharon Sheer can hand-deliver it, 10 shekels. Meeting notices only, 13 shekels. Address: POB 9443, Tel Aviv 61093. Copyright (C) 1995, All rights reserved to specified authors and artists.

*Letters to the Editors:* Pesakh Amnuel's July article **Methods of development of creative fantasy**, with comments by Bill Silverman, drew more response than anything we've published in the last year and a half.

I personally agree with Pesakh. Let me give an example: A TV series like **Babylon 5** is dreary partly because the writers don't know Pesakh's methods. Bill said about Russian SF: "They cook up the gimmicks, and toss in stock characters." That description applies beautifully to **Babylon 5**, but there the gimmicks are mostly taken from soap operas, which is apparently where the writers learned their trade. I would send every SF TV series writer to a course like Pesakh recommends; it could only make things a lot better.

Besides various enthusiastic telephone calls (including one from Yiddish fantasy writer Leible Botwinnik), we got the following letter from U.S. fantasy writer Lucy Schmeidler:

Dear Editors,

I am writing in response to Pesakh Amnuel's "**Methods of development of creative fantasy**." First of all, I agree with Bill Silverman's last note, suggesting that the listed methods are more useful for dissecting and classifying literary works than for creating them.

I think that the use of the term "creative fantasy" is instructive: the examples seem to fall primarily within the realm of science fantasy rather than serious, hard science fiction. I think the primary models for serious sf involve "what would happen if this discovery, technology, policy, etc. were carried to its logical conclusion?" (i.e. whatever the author considers logical) and "suppose a theory, technology, etc. was developed to answer some current problem." I haven't worked out whether any of the proposed "methods" can be interpreted to cover these questions ("What if this goes on?" and "What if this doesn't go on?")

Regards, Lucy Schmeidler

■ ■

**בקורת ספרותית מאת אהרן שיר:**

הפלנטה הסגולה - ממאה שערים לאפסילון-ארידאני מאת ראובן דנציגר, 250 דפים, הוצאת ירון גולן, 1995.

סופר אחד, שאת שמו אינני זוכר, טען שיותר קשה לכתוב רומן שלם מאשר עשרות ספורים קצרים. לשבת יום אחרי יום, בהתמדה, ולכתוב ספור כל כך ארוך, שזורם בהגיון מההתחלה עד הסוף, דורש מאמץ ומחשבה רבים מאוד, אפילו אם התוצאה היא רומן בינוני.  
בתור אדם שכתב בעצמו כמה עשרות סיפורים קצרים -- שאף לא אחד מהם מצא



קונה -- אני מודה שהסבוך של רומן הוא מעל לכוחותי. לכן יש לשבח את ראובן דנציגר שלא רק כתב רומן מד"ב אלא גם מצא מו"ל שהוציא את ספרו לאור, וזכה לבקורת ספרותית בעתונות. עכשיו לבקורת שלי:

**(א) הסופר חוזר על עצמו עד לעיפה**  
 התוכן של בטוים, משפטים, וסעיפים מסוימים, ולפעמים דפים שלמים, מופיע -- במילים שונות -- עוד פעם ועוד פעם ועוד פעם. כאן לדעתי העורך של המו"ל התרשל בצורה ברורה. דוגמה ראשונה של בטוי חוזר (מודגש על ידי קו תחתון):  
 דף 83 למעלה: "כל אחד ... חגר את עצמו אל מושב מול לוח מכשירים וצג אישי ..."  
 דף 83 למטה: "א.ו.קיי, עברנו לבדיקה! ענה ברטו, ופנה לחבריו, הישובים איש-איש על יחידת בקרה ..."  
 דוגמה שניה של בטוי חוזר (מודגש על ידי קו תחתון):  
 דף 121: אמר המחשב: "... המטרה שלנו איננה להצלות בחומו של הכוכב הכתום, אלא לנחות על פני האררט..." המחשב לא ניחן בחוש הומור, ולא אמר זאת כהלצה.  
 דף 123: אמרה הגבורה: "לא בריא להוריד בבת-אחת תשעים ושמונה אחוזים ממשקלך!"  
 "לי זה לא יזיק, ענה המחשב במלוא-הרצינות. הוא לא הבין הלצות."

אני מעריך שעורך טוב היה משמיט כ-20% מהספר בלי לפגוע בתוכן.

**(ב) פרטים טכניים עד לעיפה**  
 הנה דוגמה מדף 128:  
 כעבור שעתיים אמורה הספינה להימצא בגובה של שבעה-עשר אלף קילומטרים מעל קרבת הקוטב הדרומי ובדיוק מעל קו הצל המחלק את הפלנטה בין המחצית שסרה לממשלת היום לבין המחצית השניה המכונסת תחת מעטה הלילה. בנקודה זו ידממו המנועים ותיבת-נוח יתחיל בהקפותיה סביב האררט.  
 ברגע זה נמצאה הספינה המרחק של שלושים וארבעה אלף קילומטרים מנקודת הכניסה למסלול ההקפה שלה, ומהירותה כבר ירדה לעשרים אלף קמ"ש בקרוב. קמר כדור-אררט, שבלט מול הספינה, נראה במרחק זוויתי של שלושים וארבע מעלות מקור התקדמותה, ובמרחק קווי של שלושים וחמישה אלף קילומטרים ממנה.  
 יש עשרות דפים מלאים פרטים המפריעים לשטף הקריאה בספר. הם מוכיחים שהסופר עשה את שעורי הבית ההנדסיים שלו, והידע הזה נחוץ לסופר כדי לכתוב ספור נכון מבחינה מדעית. אבל הקורא בא לקרוא ספור, ולא מאמר הנדסי! מקומם של פרטים טכניים הוא בנספח מדעי -- עם דיאגרמות -- בסוף הספר, כמו שנעשה, למשל, ב-מעוף השפיירית מאת רוברט פורוורד.  
 גם כשתאור מפורט נחוץ במקום, לא מקובל לתת את כל הפרטים בבת-אחת. למשל, בפרק הראשון כמעט כל הדף השני הוא תאור מפורט של חיזור. לדעתי גם כאן העורך התרשל. יש לתת תאור כזה במנות קטנות, משולבות בקטעים של פעילות החיזור. כך המבנה הפיזי של החיזור נבנית לעיני הקורא בצורה מעניינת יותר.

**(ג) הסופר לא יודע כלום על תרבויות זרות**  
 ההבדל בין חרדי ירושלמי ובין חילוני תל-אביבי נראה גדול מאוד בעיני המחבר. האם הבדל זה יראה גדול בעיני כפרי סיני או אינדיאני דרום אמריקאי? אני גרתי שמונה חדשים ביפן, חמישה שבועות בפיליפינים, וחודש בהודו. לכן למדתי כמה דברים על הבדלי תרבות אצל בני אדם.

הנה כמה דוגמאות של הבדלים כאלה:  
 תשלח חרדי ירושלמי או חילוני תל-אביבי לבית השמוש. יש הבדל? עכשיו תבדוק את התנהגות היפני, פיליפיני או הודי בבית השמוש שלו. עולמות אחרים! תן מכה לחרדי ירושלמי או לחילוני תל-אביבי. יש הבדל בתגובה? לעומתם, היפני, כשמכים אותו, צועק "איתאי!" חשבת שכל בני אדם צועקים "או!" טעית! פעולה שנראית לנו כמולדת -- צעקת כאב -- מתבררת כנלמדת. החברה בה אנו גדלים שוטפת לנו את המוח כל החיים. הדרך בה אנחנו מחייכים, בוכים, מתרגזים, מתהלכים, אוכלים, או אפילו חושבים, מוכתבת לנו

ודפוסים ההתנהגות טבועים בנו כל כך עמוק שקשה לנו לתפוס שיש דרכים אחרות. אפילו הדרך בה צעירים מורדים נגד מוסכמות מוכתבת על ידי החברה. למשל צעיר ישראלי מרדני ילך למסיבת "אסיד", למרות שהדבר בלתי חוקי ומסכן את חרותו.

לעומת זאת צעיר מרדני לא יחליט להתלבש כמו שאבותינו התלבשו בארץ ישראל לפני 2000 שנה: בסדין (מצויץ), למרות שסדין הוא בגד הגיוני ונוח בקיץ החם ולח שלנו. תתארו לעצמכם מה יקרה לצעיר בן 16 שיחליט ללכת כל יום לבית הספר לבוש סדין וסנדלים בלבד! איך יגיבו חבריו ללמודים, מוריו, הוריו? אם הוא יתעקש, ישלחו אותו לטיפול פסיכולוגי.

אם תשאל צעירים למה הם לא לובשים סדין, יענו שהם "לא רוצים!" החברה הישראלית כרגע לא מאפשרת אפילו לחשוב על לבוש כזה ברצינות. מר דנציגר טוען שבחברה החילונית כל אחד חופשי לעשות כל מה שעולה על רוחו, בעוד שבחברה החרדית אנשים כבולים בתכתיבים חברתיים. הוא צודק, אבל בדיוק ההפך הוא גם נכון, ובאותה מידה. המפתח: "כל מה שעולה על רוחו". החיזרים של אפסילון-ארידאני מתנהגים כמו חילוניים תל-אביביים בכל, כולל חוש הומור! יוצאים מן הכלל הם קומץ של חיזרים דתיים קיצוניים שמתנהגים כמו חרדים ירושלמיים נאורים. בין הגבורה והחיזרים אין שום אי-הבנות. הם מבינים אחד את השני ללא טעויות. זה פשוט לא אמין!

#### (ד) יש רק דמות אחת בכל הספר

בחיי יום שמיני מכיר, יש אנשים עצבניים או רגועים, קשוחים או רכים, דקדקנים או לא-איכפתים, מהירים או אטיים, שקטים או צעקנים. לא כך בספר זה. לדוגמה: כל פעם שקורה משהו יפה או מפחיד, כתוב על כל עשרים וארבעה אנשי צוות ספינת החלל (דף 100-101, ועוד מקומות רבים): "איש לא הוציא הגה מפיו... כולם עצרו נשימתם." כנראה שמר דנציגר לא מכיר את חברי החוג שלנו.



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ראובן דנציגר ישמח לקבל תגובות על ספרו הפלנטה הסגולה - ממאה שערים לאפסילון-ארידאני, גם תגובות קטלניות. כמו כן, אפשר להזמין את הספר בדואר ישירות ממנו במחיר של 28 ש"ח לעותק, כולל מע"מ והוצאות משלוח (במקום 40 ש"ח בחנות). נא לשלוח צ'ק על הסך לפי הכתובת למטה, ולציין, בנוסף לכתובת השולח, אם אתה מעוניין בהקדשה מאת המחבר ועל שם מי.

רח' הרב קוק 42, דירה 8, נתניה 42261, טל: 09-339846, פקס: 09-663368

Author Reuven Danziger hopes to find a suitable publisher or agent for an American or British edition of his book, **The Purple Planet - from Jerusalem to Epsilon Eridani**. Can anyone help? He has a synopsis of his book, and four selected chapters, translated to English. He will send them without charge to any interested CyberCozen reader.

42 HaRav Kook St, Apt 8, Netanya 42261, Tel: 09-339846, Fax: 09-663368.



#### בקורת ספרותית מאת מרים שיר:

אם בתחילה לא תצליח מאת רוג'ר זילאזני ורוברט שקלי, עם עובד, 1995, 332 דפ.

שם הספר בתרגום העברי אינו מגלה את תכנו כשם האנגלי המקורי שהוא משחק מלים ולכן קשה לתרגום If at Faust [First] You Don't Succeed, אבל חבל על הפן הזה שהולך לאיבוד כי הוא מפתח לכל הסיפור.

זהו מסע מטורף שנובע מטעות יסודית בזהויות בו השטן מפיסטו עצמו מולך שולל ע"י מתחרהו, השד עזי דמוי השועל, המציב במקומו אדם שונה לחלוטין שאתו כורת מפיסטו את הברית המפורסמת ופאוסט האמיתי שרוגז על כך רודף אחריהם להשיג את מבוקשו. זהויות מוחלפות הן לחם חוקן של קומדיות רבות וספר זה הוא באמת פנטסיה קומית המריצה אותנו דרך ההיסטוריה וקצות תבל כאירופה וסין.

לצורך זה מגייסים המחברים דמויות הן מהמיתולוגיה היוונית-רומית (כאודיסיאוס, אכילס ואפילו חרון, ספן השאול) והגרמנית-נורדית (הגמד רוגנר והנורנות, אלות הגורל) וכמובן דיירי העולמות העליונים והתחתונים לפי היהדות והנצרות (המלאך מיכאל, מפיסטו, מכשפות ושדים). השאילות מדמויות ספרותיות ידועות מתמקדות בפאוסט עצמו וממלא-מקומו "מאק האלה" (תזכורת למאק הסכינאי

מ"אופרת הקבצנים" או "האופרה בגרוש" של ברכט-וייל). המחברים אינם מסתפקים בכפילות זו ומביאים אפילו שילוש "פאוסטי" כאשר השנים נוכחים בהצגת תיאטרון על פרשת פאוסט והשטן.

דמויות הנשים הן מגוונות: העקרת, מרגריט, אהובתו של פאוסט, פושטת ולובשת צורה עד שהיא מתגלה בצורה מפתיעה ביותר בסיום, הלנה מטרויה שמופיעה כאן אינה משתנה ויוצרת תדמית פמיניסטית וקשוחה בניגוד לציפיותינו. תפקיד חשוב יש גם לדמות החצויה: עילית, השדה שחזרה בתשובה והחליפה נאמנויות.

הנושא הרעיוני - תחרות על גורל האנושות במהלך האלף השני לספירה בין השמימי והשטני - נראה כתירוץ להפגין מרוץ מסחרר וציורי בין זמנים ומקומות שהיה יכול להתאים היטב כתסריט לסרט הרפתקאות ופעלולים. כמובן המסקנה הצינית של מחברי הספר היא שהעולם השמימי אינו ישר וצודק ולעומת זאת גם השטן לא כל כך חכם. כישופיו של פאוסט הידען לא תמיד מצליחים ודווקא הפושע הקטן והבור המשחק ככפילו מצליח להתחמק על ידי תחבולות שונות.

בתאורי הרקע יש פעמים רבות לעג המכוון למעשה לצורת החיים המודרנית, כגון תאור "מטבח המכשפות" שהוא מעין שילוב של מכוון-קוסמטי עם חדר-ניתוח מודרני. בתאור הביורוקרטיה בבנקים ומשרד הרשומות של הגהינום מודגשים האפרוריות, השעמום וחוסר היעילות למרות המיכשור המודרני.

ההנאה המירבית שמורה, אם כן, לאלה המכירים את הדמויות המיתולוגיות והספרותיות החוזרות ומופיעות כאן בלבוש מחודש ויכול להשוות את גלגולן זה לציון המקובל. ייהנו גם יודעי ההסטוריה אם כי האירועים ההסטוריים והטיפוסים המשתייכים אליהם (בין אם הם פיקטיביים או אמיתיים כנזיר סבונרולה, הצייר בוטיצ'לי או מרקו פולו), מוסברים בגוף הספר כל אחד בתורו.

שפת התרגום העברי פשוטה ושוטפת, הפרקים קצרים וקצב ההתרחשויות מהיר, כך שאין רגע משעמם גם בגלל הגישה ההיתולית. בהחלט מהנה.

■ ■

### Short Reviews: by Aharon Sheer

**The Gray Prince** by Jack Vance (1974), 188 pages. Given to me by Gina Alfandari. I always enjoy reading novels from Jack Vance's science fiction/fantasy series on the space age 30,000 years from now, after the spread of man throughout the vast expanse of the Gaeen Reach. His alien aliens with their fantastic capabilities, his clever humans, and his strange and varied societies, are always fun to read about. Sometimes he makes a political point, too, and in this particular novel the point is quite outspoken. I cannot resist quoting from it: I don't think it will spoil the pleasure of reading the book:

"Except for a few special cases, title to every parcel of real property derives from an act of violence, more or less remote, and ownership is only as valid as the strength and will required to maintain it. This is the lesson of history, whether you like it or not....

"When the galaxy is ruled by a single law, ... ideals may have substance. Until then, that which a man, a tribe, a nation or a world, or the entire Gaeen Reach possesses, it must be prepared to defend."

**Neveryona** by Samuel Delany (1983), 385 pages. Recommended by Stan Isaacs. Until I had completely finished it, I was still not sure that it is not a science fiction novel, in the sense that it might be taking place on another planet. There is a hint of a fantasy element -- but the only clearly fantastic incident occurs while the heroine is drunk, so it is probably just a dream. Frankly, to me, to read hundreds of pages of detailed description of everyday life (city and village) in what is supposedly a historically valid period in human life on earth, but one which never actually existed -- is boring.

■ ■

Next SCIENCE FICTION CLUB Meeting:

(Next regular meeting: Tuesday October 31)

*No Meeting this Month Because of the Holydays*

שנה טובה ומבורכת ! Happy New Year

Rehovot Science Fiction (usually) meets the last Tuesday of each month at the home of Tova, Bill and Rami Silverman, 19 Eisenberg St., fourth floor, Rehovot, Tel. 08-476142.

There is a REFRESHMENT CHARGE of 3.50 Shekels (for those who partake).

CyberCozen SF Newsletter, Vol. VII, Num. 9, September 1995. Editor: Aharon Sheer. Ed.Assist: Elana Dror. For mail delivery of CyberCozen, please donate 25 shekels per YEAR. Air Mail to U.S., \$15. If Aharon Sheer can hand-deliver it, 10 shekels. Meeting notices only, 13 shekels. Address: POB 9443, Tel Aviv 61093. Copyright (C) 1995, All rights reserved to specified authors and artists.

*Ed. Note: This month we will begin publishing articles by Mordechai Housman about Science Fiction on American TV. From time to time, as Mordechai finds the time, various SF TV series will be reviewed here:*

## Science Fiction Series on American TV by Mordechai Housman

### **Star Trek: The Next Generation** (Part One of Two)

Star Trek: The Next Generation (ST:TNG) has run its full course (seven seasons), and like **Star Trek: The Original Series** (ST:TOS), it never spared the chance to send the viewers a message. Since this series centered primarily around the personalities of the crew, I shall discuss the crew in this first installment.

Captain Jean-Luc Picard (Patrick Stewart) is the intellectual. A man of deep feeling and serious introspection, he is committed to peace and wisdom, though in my opinion he is occasionally too rigid in his application of the Prime Directive. *[Ed. Note: The Prime Directive forbids the Federation from interfering with the development of planets visited, for example, by introducing knowledge of new technologies.]*

Some of the crew echoes that of the first Enterprise. For the romantic, we have the ship's first officer, Commander William T. Riker (Jonathan Frakes), assuming that aspect of Captain Kirk, as well as his intensity of emotion.

In place of Spock is the emotionless android, Lt. Commander Data (Brent Spiner), who makes complex calculations instantly and flawlessly, studies the actions of humans, and misunderstands metaphors. Unlike Spock, Data aspires to *attain* emotion.

The ship's doctor is a woman, Dr. Beverly Crusher (Gates McFadden), an old friend of the captain's. Dr. Pulaski (Diana Muldaur) replaced her, but unfortunately only for the second season, after which Dr. Crusher returned. In my opinion, Dr. Pulaski's irascibility, which, incidentally, also made her Dr. McCoy's analogue, made for better crew interplay, and I mourned her removal.

There is no communications officer on board this ship, communications having been subsumed by Security. During the first season, we had a woman chief of security, Lt. Commander Tasha Yar (Denise Crosby). She was later killed, and a Klingon was made chief of Security, Lt. Worf, son of Mogh (Michael Dorn).

Yes, irony is the hallmark of this crew. The supreme irony was the blind navigator, Lt. Commander Geordi LaForge (Levar Burton), who wears a visor that allows his brain's vision center to see images, and in some cases see what we sighted people cannot. In the second season Geordi was promoted to Chief Engineer, but he is very different from Scotty, and

many were delighted to see them together for an episode (Relics).

This ship has a new element: a ship's counselor. Because she is half human, half Betazoid (a telepathic species), Counselor Deeanna Troi (Marina Sirtis) can sense emotions. She and Riker were once "involved", and they travel through many levels of relationships throughout the series.

The ship's lounge area, Ten Forward, is sometimes hosted by a unique bartender, Guinan (Whoopi Goldberg). She is of an ancient, alien race with unspecified powers, who were scattered by the evil Borg (cyborgs with hive-mind consciousness-sharing and invincible technology), yet are powerful enough to be troublesome to the ambiguous Q (an omnipotent, consciousness-sharing continuum). Guinan is the wise one, always sensing the hidden truth. She can be rather amusingly irritating about it, especially because she's always right.

One complaint (of questionable validity) leveled against ST:TNG is that they have slowly removed every leading female character of strong personality. This has certainly been corrected in **ST: Deep Space Nine**, but more about that in another issue.

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**Reviews of Otherness** by David Brin (1994), 357 pages.

The word "otherness" is defined in the Random House Unabridged Dictionary as "the state or fact of being different or distinct". In keeping with the central essay of this book, we have different opinions, all equally valid:

**By Aharon Sheer:**

David Brin got married in 1991. Since then his wife has gotten pregnant, and given birth, gotten pregnant and given birth -- at least to judge from this collection. Several of these stories beguile the reader with bold conjectures about pregnancy and motherhood (and fatherhood too) in a variety of enchanting possible futures (or not so enchanting -- some *men* may even be revolted). In addition there are some hard science fantasy stories dealing with singularities, inflation (at the time of the Big Bang), and the extremely uneven distribution of galaxies in the universe. There are also some fun essays: the best is on "otherness". This book has a lot of gentle humor, no violence (except in virtual reality), and is filled with old fashioned SF sense of wonder! It happily lacks the cynicism of Isaac Asimov, but it also lacks the deep human understanding of Robert Heinlein. Nevertheless, its best stories reminded me of the Old Masters. Strongly recommended.

**By Sara Svetitsky:**

David Brin's **Uplift Series** became a classic almost instantly and his first book of short stories **The River of Time** contained several Hugo and Nebula winners. So I read his second collection of short stories, **Otherness**, with great anticipation. I was rather disappointed. These stories don't have the intensity or the vividness of the stories in **Rivers of Time**; they are workmanlike but that's about all. And entirely too much of the book is taken up with essays or transcribed talks by Brin in which he pushes an enlightened, tolerant and rationalist world-view -- all well and good but there are people who do that kind of thing much better. A let-down.

**By Moshe Safran:**

**Otherness** by David Brin is an interesting collection of short SF stories. I enjoyed it and I highly recommend it to both science fiction fans and normal human beings who want to see what good science fiction is like. Brin comes up with many original ideas, and even stories that use ideas that I've seen before are well-written and absorbing. Story

topics range from a virus that propagates by making its host altruistic, to a "biological" human being who manages to prove his worth in a world dominated by cyborgs, to future technology that uses black holes the way today's engineers use capacitors and resistors. The stories don't only describe "gadgets"; they're about people, and most of the stories have human, well-developed characters.

There is no real unifying thread to this collection, but there is one idea that provides the general atmosphere (cultural background?) for the stories and is discussed at length in two essays - what Brin calls the "dogma of otherness". The "dogma of otherness" is basically the idea of not only being tolerant, open-minded, rational, scientific, skeptical, and all those other things modern man is supposed to have become a long time ago (but keeps unscientifically showing signs of not being), but also having an "appetite for newness", a "hunger for diversity", and an "eagerness for change". This is really an extension of the curiosity and "sense of wonder" that is the basis for all science fiction, combined with the openness and intellectual honesty of the scientific method.

Brin claims that the love of otherness is the basis for modern American and western society. To a certain degree I believe he's correct - democracy is basically the political institutionalization (wow, big word!) of both suspicion of authority and willingness for change. However, having a system of government that facilitates diversity doesn't necessarily equal love for diversity; it's just a way for different types of people to coexist and keep their individual freedom. Brin sees "Otherness" as a "meme", a living idea that is battling other ideas for people's hearts and minds, but the truth of the matter is that people rarely change their world-views, whether that world-view happens to include the doctrine of otherness or not. In the author's own words, "Sheesh (sic)! What an optimist Brin is!". ■ ■

**ALIEN CONVERTS** by **Bracha bat Avraham**. Condensed from "*Jewish Space*".  
**TEMPORAL SYNCHRONIZATION** The question of fixing the times for Shabbat and Yammim Tovim is one which we face today. The speed of modern international travel is such that it is possible either to hasten or to delay Shabbat by this means. Here are some problems:

**Is an astronaut orbiting the earth in a space station bound to the earth for a time reference and thus must only put on Tefillin and observe Shabbat in synchronicity with his home, or must he count 6 revolutions around the earth as a work week and observe the seventh as Shabbat?**

There are three possible solutions to the orbiting spacecraft problem:

1) Time is based upon the appearance of the sun as it is eclipsed by the planet. In this case, the days and weeks pass very rapidly and the problem of fixing the time of Yammim Tovim becomes acute. This happens because if the calendar is followed and the weeks and days counted, the astronaut's calendar quickly diverges from that of his earthbound co-religionists. He then has a significant problem when returning to earth. This same problem can arise in polar regions due to the absence of sunset for a considerable fraction of the year.

2) The astronaut could depend on time signals sent from the earth. This avoids the many problems caused by fixing time by physical sighting of the sun. However, deciding what time signals to use is highly problematic. Further, barring the development of truly instantaneous communications (faster than light), this solution can not be extended to interstellar colonists.

3) The best solution is that afforded by the principle of **local custom**. In this case, the orbiting astronaut and the interstellar traveler would carry his own time reference with him. Thus, every 24

clock hours a new halachic day would commence. In this way, a fixed calendar would be used to determine Shabbat and Yammim Tovim.

#### **How is time fixed in a space habitat such as an L-5 colony?**

In this case the colony provides its own time reference and since it is artificial, it will certainly conform to the biological rhythms of mankind. Thus, there will be artificial sunrises and sunsets which can be used to fix the day. Hence, such a colony can be established with the time reference brought by the original colonists and this time reference can be kept in approximate synchronization with that observed on Earth by the arrival and departure of people traveling between the Earth and the space colony. A minor variant on the space habitat is the generation ship which would depart the Earth with its own time reference and would maintain it during the voyage.

#### **How is the time reference on a colonized world established?**

If non-relativistic faster-than-light (FTL) travel and communication is developed, then it may be possible to achieve absolute synchronicity with the Earth and the observance of Jews there. However, if as currently assumed, interstellar colonization is only possible by using generation ships or possibly light-speed matter transmitters, the only feasible solution is to depend on the principle of **local custom**.

Once the colonists land on a planet, they would confront the problem of adjusting their clock to planetary sunrise. This presents no significant problem if the period of rotation is roughly equivalent to that of the Earth. In that case, they would choose an initial landing site which would be time synchronous with their internal clock and would then transfer to local time. Subsequent arrivals would observe local custom and would adjust their clocks and calendars to agree with those of the founding colonists.

If, however, the planet has a rotational period which is significantly different from that of the Earth, the colonists would not be able to adjust their biological rhythms and would thus continue to use shipboard time as planetary time. ■ ■

Drawing by Miriam Ben-Lulu

*Whoops - does she mean  
what I think she does?*



## Next SCIENCE FICTION CLUB Meeting:

Tuesday, October 31, 1995, 8:15 p.m. -- Lecture (in HEBREW)

Eli Eshed -- אלי אשד

Archeology and Science Fiction-- ארכאולוגיה ומדע בדיוני

Rehovot Science Fiction (usually) meets the last Tuesday of each month  
at the home of Tova, Bill and Rami Silverman,  
19 Eisenberg St., fourth floor, Rehovot, Tel. 08-476142.

There is a REFRESHMENT CHARGE of 3.50 Shekels (for those who partake).

CyberCozen SF Newsletter, Vol. VII, Num. 10, October 1995. Editor: Aharon Sheer. Ed.Assist: Elana Dror. For mail delivery of CyberCozen, please donate 25 shekels per YEAR. Air Mail to U.S., \$15. If Aharon Sheer can hand-deliver it, 10 shekels. Meeting notices only, 13 shekels. Address: POB 9443, Tel Aviv 61093. Copyright (C) 1995, All rights reserved to specified authors and artists.

## שירה מדעית בידיונית בספרות העברית מאת אלי אשד

בספרות המדע הבידיוני יש לשירה מקום זניח, הצורות הספרותיות הדומיננטיות במד"ב הם של הסיפור והרומאן. ובכל זאת מידי פעם יש סופרים השולחים בידם בשירה אם כי מה שהם מפיקים הוא בדרך כלל משני, חמשירים הומוריסטיים על נושאי מדע בידיוני ושירים בשביל כנסי מדע בידיוני (הנקראים FILK SONGS). בכל זאת בשנים האחרונות השירה של המדע הבידיוני הולכת ומתפתחת (אם כי כמו כל סוגי השירה אין לה קהל רב) וכיום יש פרס מיוחד לשירי מדע בידיוני, פרס RHYSLING על שם המשורר העיוור בסיפורו של רוברט היינליין "הגבעות הירוקות של הארץ".

ועם זאת מעניין לציין שלאורך הדורות היתה מסורת של שירה שאנו יכולים למצוא בה מוטיבים ברורים ביותר של מדע בידיוני. במאה ה-19 חיבר המשורר הבריטי המפורסם לורד ביירון פואמה שהיא למעשה מדע בידיוני טהור ולה קרה "DARKNESS". בפואמה זאת שהתחברה בשנת 1817 בזמן מפגש בשויצריה עם המשורר שלי ואישתו מרי שלי (מפגש שבעיקבותיו נכתב בידי מרי שלי מה שנחשב לדומן המדע הבידיוני הראשון, "פראנקנשטיין") תיאר ביירון חזון של חורבן העולם וכלל המין האנושי במה שנראה כאסון קוסמי. להלן השורות הראשונות של הפואמה הנותנות לנו רושם ברור ביותר של אופיה המדעי בידיוני:

I HAD A DREAM WHICH WAS NOT ALL A DREAM  
THE BRIGHT SUN WAS EXTINGUISHED AND THE STARS  
DID WANDER DARKLING IN THE ETERNAL SPACE  
RAYLESS, AND PATHLESS, AND THE ICY EARTH  
SWANG BLIND AND BLACKENING IN THE MOONLESS AIR

בהמשך הפואמה מתאר ביירון עולם חרב לאחר שהמין האנושי חזר לברבריות ואוכלוסיות שלמות גורעו ברעב ושני האנשים האחרונים ששרדו מתים מפחד לאחר שהם פוגשים זה את זה ומופתעים לגלות שהם אינם האדם האחרון. (בכך יש את הביטוי הראשון של הנושא הידוע של הסופר פרדריק בראון "האדם האחרון ישב בחדר ופתאום שמע דפיקה בדלת"). בנוסף לכך כתב ביירון מחזה שירי על קין שבמהלכו עורך קין סיור מודרך בידי השטן ברחבי היקום ופוגש עולמות וגזעים שונים שהתקיימו לפני המין האנושי והושמדו בידי האל כניסויים לא מוצלחים, דבר המשכנעו למרוד באל.

גם בספרות העברית שהיא עניה ביותר בתחום ספרות המדע הבידיוני ובעיקר ביצירות איכותיות של מדע בידיוני אפשר למצוא מספר משוררים ידועים שהשתמשו ביצירתם במוטיבים של מדע בידיוני.

שניים מהמשוררים העבריים החשובים ביותר בשנות ה-30 היו זלמן שניאור ויעקב כהן. שניהם נחשבו בתקופה שבין שנות ה-20 לשנות ה-50 למשוררים



העבריים החשובים ביותר לאחר ביאליק וטשרניחובסקי, אולם היום הם נשכחו לחלוטין וגם באוניברסיטאות אין מלמדים אותם יותר.

ביצירת שניהם יש מקום מרכזי למוטיבים של מדע בידיוני אם כי באופן פרדוקסלי המוטיבים של שניהם וגישתם הכללית היא הפוכה ומנוגדת.

זלמן שניאור הושפע מאוד מיצירתו של ביירון ובעיקר משירו הנזכר "DARKNESS". ביצירותיו השיריות הוא מתאר מצד אחד את מאבקו של האדם בכוחות הטבע, מאבק ממנו הוא יוצא כמנצח וכשליט אבל אז ממשיך שניאור ומתאר בשירתו חזון מקפיא דם של חורבן המין האנושי. וכך למשל קטע משירו "חזון הבריאה":

.... ונלחצו כולם בבתים  
 וחיו בלי גיל ואנכה  
 כאילו התכווצה הארץ  
 ואין עוד לשבת ברוחה  
 ועברו הדורות בחופזה  
 ובלעם הנצח בצמא  
 והלך ורפה וילכו  
 בני האדם על פני האדמה  
 וגוועו מחוסר אור שמש  
 בחומות העיר האטומות  
 ועזבו אחריהם רק שלדים  
 וחורבות של כלאים עגומות  
 וברננת תחיה רוממה  
 ונקמה ל"מתים" הרעים  
 יתפרצו אז כוחות הארץ  
 מתחת ערימות הסלעים  
 יתפרצו כמנצחים גאיונים  
 בארץ יערים ענקיים  
 בדיהם יחבקו מלא תכל  
 וראשם יפלח שחקים  
 ותמיד יספרו היערים  
 בלחישת-הוד קדושה וטהורה  
 על אודות ננסים שהיו  
 ומתו בעוון שינאתם אורה ...

פואמה זאת שנראית מודרנית מאוד היום מבחינת נושאה ה"אקולוגי" (הפואמה ממשיכה ומתארת את ניצחון הטבע על מעשה ידי האדם) נכתב ב-1910. שניאור המשיך וחיבר עוד פואמות נוספות על החורבן הצפוי למין האנושי שהידועה בם היא "ימי הביניים המתקרבים" שבה תיאר בשנת 1912 מלחמה איומה המשמידה את המין האנושי.

בפואמה ה"אחרון" שניאור חוזר לנושא של ביירון ומתאר עולם הקופא בתקופת קרח חדשה. בשיר יש תיאור חי כיצד האסקימואים עוברים במיזחלותיהם על הקרח לכרתים ולסיציליה. הקרח משמיד לבסוף את התרבות והמין האנושי ונותר רק אדם אחד שהפואמה מסיימת בתיאור גויעתו האיטית בקור.

שניאור היה אם כן פסימיסט שיצירתו השירית מתמקדת בתיאור העתיד השחור הצפוי למין האנושי, ובפואמה אחרי פואמה המציא סוף שונה ומקפיא דם יותר מקודמו עבור המין האנושי האומלל.

לעומתו יעקב כהן היה אופטימיסט שהנושא המרכזי ביצירתו הוא רעיון חיי האלמוות אותם ישיג לבסוף המין האנושי. הוא כתב אפוס שלם בפרוזה שירית בשם "אריאל" שבו תיאר את מסעותיו של "נביא" המטיף לרעיון חיי האלמוות אותם כל אחד יכול להשיג. בדרכו הוא נתקל בלעג ובזלזול אך חזונו משתלט לבסוף על המין האנושי שאכן באמצעות המדע מוצא לבסוף את האלמוות ויוצא לכבוש את הכוכבים. (יש דימיון מסוים בין התורה של האלמוות לה מטיף אריאל באפוס זה ובין הכת של ה-PHYSICAL IMMORTALITY אך האפוס של כהן נכתב בשנות ה-20 הרבה לפני שמישהו חלם על האידאולוגיה אותה מפיצה כת זאת כיום).

כהן המשיך לדון בנושא האלמוות ביצירות אחרות כמו "עוף החול" ובעיקר במחזה "בלוז" שהיא לדעתי אחת ממעט מיצירות המד"ב החשובות בשפה העברית. המחזה מבוסס על אגדה תלמודית על עיר של בני אלמוות לוז בה אין איש מת לעולם. המחזה מתאר כיצד איש קצר ימים מתרבותנו מגלה את עיר בני האלמוות שבה אין לעולם שינוי ומציע לאנשיה את החידושים של העולם הרחב. בין בני העיר נפתח ויכוח עקרוני האם לפתוח עצמם לפני העולם הרחב וחידושיו וכך לפתוח עצמם גם לסבל ולאימה שהם גורלו של האדם המודרני אך גם לדינמיות ולעושר של הקידמה, או לשמור על השקט השלווה והסטטיות של חיי האלמוות ניסתרם מפני העולם המודרני? הפיתרון הניתן במחזה הוא של פתיחת העיר לפני העולם המודרני ובתמורה נתינת חיי האלמוות לכלל המין האנושי, דבר שבו רואה כהן את הפתרון לכל חוליי העולם המודרני.

כהן ושניאור הם כמעט יחידים בתקופתם במרכזיות של מוטיבים של מדע בדיוני ביצירתם. לאחר מכן עוד שני משוררים שלמדע בדיוני יש חשיבות רבה ביצירתם ובכך הם יוצאי דופן בשירה העברית המודרנית. אלה הם נתן אלתרמן ודויד אבידן, אדם אשר יצר בכתביו אידיאולוגיה שלמה של מדע בדיוני ואף ביים סרט מדע בדיוני בשם "שדר מן העתיד", אך זהו נושא למאמר אחר.

## Letter to the Editors from Pesakh Amnuel

Dear Editors:

I would like to reply to the comments printed in **CyberCozen** in August on my article **"Methods of Development of Creative Fantasy"**.

Naturally the methods discussed can be used as a classification scheme for SF ideas because the methods were selected after analysis and systematization of those ideas. However, the classification of SF ideas was only the initial stage of the investigation. The *PURPOSE* of the methods is the *GENERATION OF NEW SF IDEAS*. Note that in my article I listed only a fraction of the obtained methods, just the most simple. A detailed description can be found in my book **Astonishing World of Fantasy** (available only in Russian, unfortunately).

The methods lead to the creation of new ideas in hard SF, not in science fantasy, in contradiction to Lucy Schmeidler's opinion. As an illustration I can give myself. The first simple methods were obtained twenty five years ago, and since then all my SF ideas (in more than one hundred of my stories and novels) were invented using the methods. Here are some of them:

1. The idea of a planet with an atmosphere playing the role of a natural laser system (astronauts use the effect and send a signal to another civilization) was described in my SF story **"The Flying Eagle"** (1969). Ten years later a similar faint effect was actually discovered in the atmosphere of Mars.

2. In the story **"Cosmic Piasters"** (1981) I presented the idea that a great number of two-dimensional civilizations can live inside a neutron star. Each civilization is located in that thin layer where physical conditions are the same. In this story the reader can also find several other ideas, in particular, the idea that a neutron star is a great natural computer.

3. In my novel **Last Day - First Day** (1993) one can find the idea of God destroying the Universe by acting in the reverse sequence: at first he destroys humanity, then he destroys animals, etc., and on the last Day (the first Day of the new Creation) he destroys light....

I could continue listing new ideas obtained using the methods. Some of them (planet-laser, background gravitational emission in the Universe) are now the subject of scientific investigations.

Note that the methods are a small fraction of the new direction in the physical sciences called "The Theory of the Solution of Inventional Problems" (**TRIZ** in its Russian abbreviation). The theory was developed in Russia by Genrich Altshuller and his students. (I worked in collaboration with Altshuller at the beginning of the investigations into the methods.) In the USA a new company, **III** (Ideation

International Inc.) is solving inventional problems (using this theory) for such companies as Rockwell International, UNISYS. etc. In particular, Ron Paulinsky, Director of Industrial Engineering, wrote: "I believe TRIZ can yield more consistent results, provide a broader range of potential solutions and at a quicker turn around than other methodologies".

Since all of my books were published only in Russian, I am interested in English publication. I would be very glad if **CyberCozen** readers could help me to find American or British publishers or agents. I have synopses of my novels in English. My address for contact:

**Dr. Pesakh R. Amnuel**  
42-B/4 Bar Ilan St.  
Beit Shemesh 99000, ISRAEL  
email: amnuel@wise.tau.ac.il

■ ■

### Request for Information from Noam Shomron

The Silvermans were kind enough to lend me a copy of Robert Sheckley's book "**The 10th Victim**". It is a shortish story (circa 150 pages), written in Sheckley's ironic style, about a future society in which persons release their natural aggression by registering to stalk and kill victims.... This is not meant as a review, though. The fact is that the very existence of this book greatly surprised me, but less than that fact that the introduction actually mentions the existence of sequels to this odd little volume. This is all very interesting, and I'm wondering if anyone is familiar with it, because I vividly recall reading a collection of brilliant short stories by Sheckley entitled "**Is That What People Do?**", which contained a short story whose plot was almost (but not quite) exactly the same as "**The 10th Victim**". I must say I liked the short story better, though, and the rest of the stories in that volume are also exquisite and highly recommended. **My big question is**, which antedates which, the short story or the novelette? And what spurred Sheckley into spewing out multiple sequels to this quaint story anyway?

Also, I **am desperately looking for** a Sheckley story entitled "**A Ticket to Tranai**". I know it appears, for example, in the "**Robert Sheckley Omnibus**", but that is decades out of print and I can't seem to find it anywhere. Please let me know if you can help!

Noam Shomron

■ ■

### Short Reviews: by Aharon Sheer

**Growing up Weightless** by John M. Ford (1993), 261 pages. The book jacket has recommendations by Poul Anderson, Gregory Benford and Gene Wolfe, which is pretty impressive. Life on the moon: People will be able to fly (indoors, with artificial wings). When a stage actor playing a Musketeer swings his sword down, his feet will lift up into the air. Trains travelling between domed cities will not be able to go over fifty kilometers per hour, because, if there is an accident, higher speeds will make loss of internal air too likely. The book is filled with lively information within the framework of a teen oriented story, complete with future teenage slang, moon sports and a role-playing game. The plot is weak. The hero and his friends are supposed to be thirteen years old (even though the tallest of them is two meters), but their behavior and maturity are more appropriate to seventeen year olds. I suspect that a typical sixteen year old SF reader will not be happy with thirteen year old heros who are both more intelligent and more mature than he is. Nevertheless, definitely interesting, even for adults, if you think we should live on the moon.

■ ■

Next SCIENCE FICTION CLUB Meeting:

Tuesday, November 28, 1995, 8:15 p.m. -- Lecture (in HEBREW)

Gil Ilutowich, writer -- גיל אילוטוביץ, סופר

תעלומת היהדות -- כרומן מדע בדיוני

The Puzzle of Judaism -- as a Science Fiction Novel

Rehovot Science Fiction (usually) meets the last Tuesday of each month  
at the home of Tova, Bill and Rami Silverman,  
19 Eisenberg St., fourth floor, Rehovot, Tel. 08-476142.

There is a REFRESHMENT CHARGE of 3.50 Shekels (for those who partake).

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בקורת ספרותית מאת אהרן שיר:

תקון -- מסע מיסטי אל יסוד היקום מאת גיל אילוטוביץ, 221 דפים, הוצאת ירון  
גולן, 1994.

נראה שספר נחמד זה מבוסס על הרעיונות של פון דניקן בספרו מרכבות האלים.  
פון דניקן טען שאת כל נסי התורה אפשר להסביר בהנחה שבאו אסטרונומים מכוכב  
אחר והתחזו כאלוהים. טכנולוגיה מתקדמת אפשרה להם לחולל את המכות, יציאת  
מצרים, האורים ותומים, וכולי. מאמרים וספרים נכתבו כדי להוכיח שספרו של  
פון דניקן שטותי, אבל הבקורת של אייזק אסימוב היתה הכי נחמדה: הטעות של  
פון דניקן, הוא טען, היא בזה שהוא חושב שיש אמת בספורי התורה. אסימוב ראה  
את התורה כספר מיתולוגיה בלבד, באותה רמה כמו המיתולוגיה ההודית שטוענת  
שבני אדם בעבר הרחוק לחמו נגד קופים אינטליגנטיים, והשמידו אותם.  
ספרו של אילוטוביץ כתוב מנקודת ראותם של צאצאי האסטרונומים בכוכב  
האחר שמתעניינים במה שעשו אבותיהם לפני שלושת אלפים שנה. הספר כתוב  
בהומור, מרתק ומהנה. הבעיה היחידה היא שחברת חייזרים נראים לי פחות זרים  
מאבותינו עצמם. לדוגמה, אבותינו העריכו את מצוות הכנסת אורחים, עד כדי כך  
שמשבחים את לוט על שהציע לתת את בנותיו למאיימים עליו, רק שלא יפגעו  
באורחיו. היום מוסרנו הפוך. היום היינו אומרים לתוקפים: "קחו את אורחינו,  
רק אל תפגעו בבנותינו!" הבדלי תרבות בסיסיים אמנם קיימים בספר, אבל פחות  
ממה שהייתי מצפה. אולי אפשר להסביר זאת בטענה שחייזרים אלה עצבו את  
תרבותנו -- לפי הספור -- ולכן הגיוני שנהיה דומים להם. מומלץ! ■ ■

Letters to the Editors:

Dear Editors,

Reading Mordechai Housman's article on ST:TNG in CyberCozen vol.  
VII, no. 9, aroused some recrudescant thoughts I thought I might like to  
share. Hence, I would like to submit my

Comments on Star Trek: The Next Generation

Firstly, I would like to state that this is not simply a rant  
against American television, and I have even been known to watch an  
episode of ST:TNG on occasion. I would simply like to make clear the  
depth of the abyss into which ST:TNG has sunk, in the science fiction  
aspect and otherwise. I am not familiar with all the technical details  
and motives behind the production of the series, therefore can only  
discuss what I see as a viewer.

As has been mentioned, ST:TOS (The Original Series) is a paragon of  
American SF drama, displaying all the admirable and less admirable

characteristics thereof. Surely **ST:TNG** has attempted to build on that foundation, and, indeed, some of what I have to say may also apply to **The Original Series**. But let us examine **ST:TNG** more closely.

Yes, as Mr. Housman explains, it is impossible to overlook the similarities between **TNG** and **TOS**. Indeed, he constructs what is essentially an isomorphism among the crew members (although Spock seems to have been split into several characters: we have the (il)logical Data, the telepathic half-human ex-porn-star Troi, etc.), demonstrating shameless plagiarism on the part of **ST:TNG**'s creators. If the show proposes to be based on the original **Star Trek**, I can see that, but such lack of originality is rather unpromising. At least spinoffs like "**Babylon 5**" do better in that respect, and a certain individual once mentioned to me that "**Babylon 5**" is real science fiction, as opposed to **ST:TNG** (more on that later), but I still maintain that both are no more than glorified soap operas.

Compared to **ST:TOS**, the **Next Generation** has really been put through the Politically Correct meatgrinder. Every episode takes some tawdry moral and really shoves it down our throats, as if we were members of the mindless Enterprise crew. Note how the society is structured: the peaceful "exploration" vessel is, in fact, run by Starfleet = the military = the Federation. Most of the galaxy seems to be run by this human junta (of course, most of the latex-forehead aliens are merely two-dimensional metaphors). What are we, the viewers being told here? Only big government will take care of our problems, as long as we behave properly and do and think whatever we are told. Picard has tremendous problems wrestling with the meaningless Prime Directive, while humanity (which, in this context, equals America; how many radically non-North-American crew members can you spot?) is doing to the galaxy what the United States did to the Native Americans. The **ST:TNG** galaxy does not seem to have much culture to begin with, but things will not exactly be better after our friend the Federation assimilates it all into its precise little scheme.

What about science fiction? Perhaps once a year these hacks come up with a decent idea, but in the meanwhile we have to deal with magical ad hoc particles, sensors that can detect everything except what is essential and work all the time except when they're really needed, "alien" civilizations that are not in the remotest realistic, artificial gravity that never fails, etc. The technology depicted is the same old stuff from the 1960s, except with a slightly higher special effects budget, certainly not a visionary or even reasonable extrapolation of current technological and scientific development. About the only thing their technology is good for is weeding out dissidents and *making* them right, in an uncannily Orwellian style. Just as the crew members are stripped of their souls, so are the rich possibilities offered by this future world.

Finally, I must apologize for my cynicism. I never said **ST:TNG** could not be entertaining. Still, for that level of entertainment, I would prefer an episode of **ST:TOS** any day; at least it was *amusing* to see Kirk punch out the baddies, it was not meant to be taken seriously, and one can laugh rather than groan at the occasional silliness. The last season of **ST:TNG** was quite egregiously a swan song, and I am thankful to be able to bid adieu to the saccharine, simpering lot of them. The next time someone tries to impress sci-fi on a combination of "**The Smurfs**", "**Barney the Dinosaur**", and "**The Bold and the Beautiful**", I am calling the Daleks.

Noam Shomron

**Mordechai Housman** replies: I agree almost absolutely! (Except for your positive implications about **Babylon 5**, which I hope to review after **ST:Voyager**.)

*Editor's note: Mordechai recently became engaged to be married (Congratulations!). His series will resume on a regular basis after the forthcoming wedding.*

■ ■

## Advice Column: More Advice to the Lovelorn from Salacious Sal

Dear Sal,

I am a fine, handsome, intelligence enhanced gander. I am madly in love with a golden-feathered goose. Unfortunately she has a very "magnetic" personality. A person who touches her is so attracted to her that he can't leave her alone. At the moment Jack is holding her and he is being followed by a long line of people who are stuck to each other like a chain of DNA, and all because a landlord's daughter tried to steal a feather! My problem is, how do I get my love alone so that she will notice me?

Sauze fer t'Gander

Dear Sauze:

Unless you want to be stuck with the silly goose forever, leave her alone. Remember, "All that glitters is not gold" and you may discover too late that she's only a pyrite blond. You need a lady who will make a good mother. Now I know just the goose for you! But there is some danger involved as some humans still have a tendency to kill the goose that lays the golden eggs. Good Luck.

Sal

■ ■

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**Rehovot SF** needs meeting topics and panel moderators. Want to contribute? Have some ideas? Please call Aharon Sheer, 08-471 225.

**Noam Shomron** seeks support for a new **anarchist collective** in Israel:

"Our goal is to edify the public as to what anarchism really is and belie the myth that it implies utter nihilism, disorder, and social chaos. We have the support of similar groups all over the world but need local support if we are to become an active group. If you are a committed individual who can help us with organizing food drives, political prisoner support, handling correspondence, reporting interesting news, and similar activities, please contact me!

"Note that the phrase 'anarchist collective' is not an oxymoron. 'Anarchy' is a Greek-based word meaning 'without ruler', i.e., the lack of a **CENTRAL AUTHORITY**. So anarchism is opposed to all forms of central government, but certainly is *not* against order. In a functioning anarchist society, the only conceivable way of getting anything done is through collective effort.

"If you want to know what we're doing, want to know about anarchism, want to help out, want more information, or want to send in donations, please write us. Since we are trying to establish a thriving collective, we do not want any money *per se*, but rather need support from committed individuals who are willing to help do things. Write to **R.I.O.T., PO Box 39219, Tel-Aviv 61391.**"

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Short Reviews: by Aharon Sheer

**Mirror Dance** by Los McMaster Bujold (1994), 560 pages. Recommended by Bill Silverman and Sara Svetitisky, which is pretty impressive. One of a series of nine novels about Miles Vorkosigan, a substantial future history. My problem is that I can't stand the insufferably successful hero, Miles, in either of his alter egos. Fortunately this novel mostly features his badly flawed clone, Mark, with whom I can sympathize considerably more. The book moves very fast, often leaving me thoroughly confused. Presumably smarter people than me (Bill Silverman and Sara Svetitisky) have no difficulty figuring it all out.

**Marco Polo and The Sleeping Beauty** by Avram Davidson and Grania Davis (1988), 300 pages. Recommended by Grania Davis. The Columbia Encyclopedia tells us that Marco Polo (1254? - 1324?), left Venice with his father and uncle in 1271, travelling east, and reached the capitol of China, Cambuluc (Beijing) in 1275. "Marco Polo became a favorite of [the emperor Kublai Khan], who employed him on business in central and N China and the states of SE Asia, including India. After 17 years the travelers left (1291) Kublai's realm...." On his return, Polo "dictated an account of his travels.... He told of paper currency, asbestos, coal, and other phenomena virtually unknown in Europe. Polo was wonder-struck at Oriental splendor and was sometimes credulous of exaggerated accounts, but the book seems to be factual and has been of great value to historians. ... until the late 19th cent. there was no other European material on many parts of central Asia."

Grania and Avram have based a light fantasy on Marco Polo's travels. Fantasies placed in ancient Asia have become popular these days, and this is one of many. It is enlivened by Grania's word play, and Avram's knowledge of far eastern philosophy and legends.

**Sphere** by Michael Crichton (1987), 371 pages. Recommended by Rebecca and Avraham Huzarsky. A few pages of this book reminded me of Arthur C. Clarke's **Rendezvous with Rama**. A few more pages reminded me of Carl Sagan's **Contact**, but **Contact** is better. A few more pages reminded me of Stanislaw Lem's **Solaris**, but **Solaris** is vastly better. This is a high-tech pseudo-realistic contemporary novel. *This is happening NOW!* It's a fast read, but the author lost my suspension of disbelief early on when the following happened: The hero, a psychologist, has chosen a top-flight team of experts to deal with first contact with an alien being. The alien begins talking to them in English, and he can hear and understand everything they have to say. The team gets into an argument about what questions to ask the alien, and finally asks the alien to break off communications so they can argue in privacy. The alien objects, but the hero smooth talks him into cooperating, and so the alien cuts off all verbal communication with them for most of the rest of the book. Great! A real superb alien contact team! I could find no explanation for this stupid incident in the book. However, the author, via his psychologist hero, does emphasize repeatedly that contact with aliens is likely to result in irrational behavior. That's for sure!

**The Forge of God** by Greg Bear (1987), 473 pages. Recommended by Nikolai Borshevsky. Written in the style of contemporary technothrillers, with characters up to and including a future president of the US. A fast-paced story about an alien attack on earth (in 1996, nine years after the publication of this book), and man's hopeless struggle against a vastly superior technology. Not as clever psychologically as Michael Crichton's novels, but a lot more scientific than most of them.

Next SCIENCE FICTION CLUB Meeting:

Tuesday, December 26, 1995, 8:15 p.m. -- Lecture (in ENGLISH)  
Dr. Josef Gilboa, Dept. of Structural Biology, Weizmann Institute  
"An Ion Storage Protein Disguised as an Electron Transport Protein  
Disguised as an Ion Storage Protein"  
(with beautiful illustrations on slides)

Rehovot Science Fiction (usually) meets the last Tuesday of each month  
at the home of Tova, Bill and Rami Silverman,  
19 Eisenberg St., fourth floor, Rehovot, Tel. 08-947-6142.

There is a REFRESHMENT CHARGE of 3.50 Shekels (for those who partake).

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Story: The Isle of Knowledge by Shaul Shiftman

My trip to the planet of Obligatto, where our customers were  
complaining about some new software I had written, obligated me to make  
a stopover on Janiado. I had never been to Janiado, had never had any  
interest in Janiado, and knew nothing about it. But I thought I would  
stay a few days, take a bit of a vacation, and see the sights, before  
going on to my obligations.

Janiado was a fortunate choice, since the planet's language was  
English.

I landed in the major spaceport of Janiado, and went at once to the  
National Tourist Board's offices to ask what they recommended my  
visiting.

"There are many beautiful places to visit on Janiado," said the  
pretty young girl behind the counter. "But perhaps you would you like a  
place which only people from Janiado usually visit?"

"The latter sounds good," I answered. Perhaps she noticed that I  
didn't carry a camera, and sensed that I would be more interested in the  
atmosphere of Janiado than in its sights.

"I suggest you go the the Island of Knowledge," she smiled. It  
will take you two days to go there, and two days to come back. And two  
days there to soak up the feeling of the place."

"I would like to go the same way a Janiadoan would go," I said.

"I think you would enjoy going by train to Yimphal, the ride is  
quite pleasant. Then by ferry boat to Histam, on the other side of the  
river Pash. Then again by train to Haish Port. And from there by boat  
to the Island."

And so I did. The scenery on the way to Yimphal was pastoral,  
small villages set nestled against small hills, with all of the fields  
worked. Janiado's population lived by choice by agriculture, and  
devoted their free time to cultural pursuits of an old fashioned nature.

On the train I found the people curious about an Earthman, and  
surprised to find one who would travel in such a primitive way.  
They were pleasantly and simply dressed, very polite. Their only fault  
seemed to be a propensity for social drinking in the evening, during  
which they rowdily sang bawdy songs, most of which I could barely  
understand because of the many slang words.

At night the train continued and I slept in an upper berth,  
enjoying the pleasant rocking of the train, and only being awakened by  
an occasional quiet conversation in the aisles.



In the morning I took the ferry boat across the river Pash, and continued by train through a rather more tropical scene, with far fewer homes and farms, and sights of occasional odd animals peering out from the brush.

When I reached Haish Port, it was midday. When I came to the Boat Company's office, I was puzzled by my reception.

"Have you been to the Isle of Knowledge before?" I was asked.

"No," I answered.

"Are you sure you want to go?" The young man, dressed very skimpily in the heat by my normal standards, shorts, sandals, a half shirt which left his navel exposed, seemed determined to discourage me. I took an immediate disliking to him.

"I've come all the way from Janiado Space Port to visit the Isle. Of course I want to come."

"Then I must warn you. This is your first visit. Follow instructions carefully. Obey the bus driver strictly when you get to the Isle. Until you have acclimatized yourself, do not wander about alone. Stay always near other people."

"If you make such efforts to frighten people," I began getting angry, "how do you expect anyone to want to come.?"

"Oh, people come from all over Janiado, for the knowledge. Many come again and again. There's no fear of frightening people away. But you must follow these orders on your first visit."

I had no desire to argue further, paid for my ticket, and went down to the boat.

The pleasant faced young black man who accepted my ticket asked me if this was my first visit.

"Yes," I said, getting infuriated. The girl in the Space Port hadn't suggested that there was anything special about this business. The ticket taker explained that he was also the helmsman on the boat, and would also drive us around the island.

"You are the only first-timer on this ride," and he repeated the same exasperating cautions I had been given in the Boat Company office. As if I was some sort of a child.

The boat ride was uneventful. When we got on the bus on the Isle, each of the riders was given a bundle of colorful fragrant flowers to hold. I breathed in the delicious fragrance. The pollen tickled my nose.

"Be careful not to touch the sharp pointed stamens in the middle of the flower," I was told. I immediately touched one, and a drop of blood appeared on my fingertip. "I told you," said the driver cheerfully.

The bus began circling the island, and I found myself bored by the view. There was nothing on the Isle of interest at all. There were hillocks, covered by grass, and an occasional plant with flowers like the reddish and yellow ones I was holding, and an occasional building, and people walking around on paths. There was absolutely nothing of interest.

I began to feel extremely stuffy. The air in the bus pressed upon me. I had to get out and breathe some fresh air. I rang the bell and walked to the back door of the bus. The driver stopped the bus, rose and turned to face me, great worry on his face. "Please sit down," he said.

I could see the worry on his face, and I didn't understand it. I returned to my seat and sat down again. The bus came up to a building. I know that I must have gotten out of the bus. But I have no recollection of where I was.

Instead I began thinking remarkable thoughts. I found to my astonishment that I remembered everything that had ever happened to me

in my entire life. Every sight, every smell, every sound, every feeling. Cold, hot, rough, smooth, dry, wet. Everything.

Suddenly I remembered the texts of books I had read in college. I could see my Botany textbook in front of me, and read pages of it again. I would turn the pages, but could only see those pages I had read then. Try as I might, I could not open the book to any other pages.

My thought turned to mathematics. I had studied mathematics in the University. I found myself remembering problems which I had seen as a student, and tried to solve them. To my amazement, problems which I could not have solved in those days seemed trivially obvious to me. I remembered difficult problems in Topology, and saw the solution instantly.

I remembered the Four-Color problem, which had been solved many years ago by computer, and found myself reviewing all of the steps of the computation in my head, as if I myself were a computer, although when I had read the proof as a student I had barely been able to follow the general idea.

I remembered math problems which we students often put to each other from the American Mathematical Monthly, problems on which students test themselves to see if they can ever do research in mathematics, and saw the answers so quickly I was amazed. I remembered as a student looking at the problems and wondering if I could ever solve any of them.

I began thinking of my work as a computer programmer. I had gone over from math to computer programming because it seemed more congenial to my way of approaching problems. Now I found myself imagining and building in my head enormously complicated programs, seeing at a glance all the difficulties that could arise in the program's use and working out solutions to every problem.

I remembered books that I had read in my youth in Spanish, in German, in Russian. They were understandable instantly. I remembered every word of every language that I had ever learned, even the few words of Japanese that I had learned on a brief stay there many years before.

I had the feeling that people were asking me questions. I was surrounded by people, but was hardly aware of them. I was thinking of so many things, seeing solutions.

I began thinking of my body. I wanted to know about my body. I felt every part of my body. My legs, my arms, my chest. I felt my heart beating and examined it carefully. I felt my liver, and my kidneys, my genitals and my ribs.

I felt my intestines and followed every curve and coil of it. I found a growth in my intestines and thought "that explains my excessive flatulence." I began studying this growth, examining each cell, going into the cell and studying the nucleus, watching the cell eat, and grow and divide. I understood what was wrong with the cells in the growth, and I interfered with them, and made them stop growing, and watched them die, and the growth disappear.

I travelled around my body. I went into my brain and saw how it functioned physiologically, and I realized that I could never fully understand how my brain worked.

I went back to my heart and studied its strengths and weaknesses. I watched it pump and the blood flow. I saw what it was doing and knew what its future was. I could do nothing about that. The damage was too far gone.

I realized that I was going to die. That old age had reached me prematurely, and that I would not live long. I began to think about the purpose of life. I thought about the afterlife. I thought about why man exists and what he does. I realized suddenly what the purpose of life was. And I knew too that man should only know this purpose in the

afterlife, and so I deliberately forgot the purpose, as if I had hypnotized myself, and told myself to forget it.

I woke up suddenly and looked around me. I was in a small hall, surrounded by chairs. I felt enormously weak. There were many dozens of people in the hall, and microphones and loudspeakers. As I looked around, puzzled, people began getting up and walking out, chatting to themselves. The black bus driver came up to me. "How do you feel?" he said. I answered that I didn't understand what was going on.

"How long have I been here?" I asked.

"Several weeks," he answered.

"How did I eat? What did I do. I can't remember."

"When a cup was put to your lips, you drank. When a spoon of food was placed in your mouth, you ate. You were washed and dressed and taken to the toilet. As you see, no harm has come to you."

"But what happened?"

"You have experienced knowledge," he answered. "You will remember the experience all your life."

"I can't remember anything! I was on my way to Obligatto, but I can't remember what I was supposed to do there. Something connected with software? Computer programming? I don't know...."

"You talked a lot about the Caratheodory Theorem. Do you remember what that is? What do you know about mathematics?" he asked me.

"Nothing," I answered, "I know I once studied mathematics, but I can remember nothing."

"Do you know what 'buenos dias' means? Do you know any languages except English?" he asked.

I tried to think. I was sure I had once studied Spanish. But I couldn't think of a single word.

"What will you do now?" he asked.

"I don't understand what happened to me? Why can't I remember things that I once knew?"

"You have experienced knowledge. You have contributed what you knew to those who were here."

"I was sick," I said. "I cured my cancer."

"Did you know you had cancer when you came here? There is nothing in your passport about your being a carrier."

"I don't remember," I said. "What did I say when I was ...?"

"You said you have a sick heart," he answered, "you will die in two years."

"What am I to do now?" I asked. I felt lost. I knew nothing. My profession was gone. How could I support myself?

"You can do what many of the rest of us do. Stay on the island, drive a bus, sell tickets, work as a waiter, clean rooms. Not many people experience knowledge. Those of us who do, usually stay here, waiting to learn from others. I learned a lot from you. You gave me a lot."

"What is the purpose of life?" I asked.

"No one ever remembers," he answered me.

Suddenly I saw my wife and children coming toward me.

"Your family has been called from Earth to see you," he said.

My son ran to me. I hugged him and held him. How he had grown in the short time I had been away!

This is the meaning of life, I thought, as I held him. And I sat down and cried.

■ ■

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