

Next SCIENCE FICTION CLUB Meeting:  
Tuesday, January 30, 1996, 8:15 p.m. -- Lecture (in ENGLISH)  
**Dr. Jack Cohen**, Visiting Scientist,  
Dept. of Membrane Research and Biophysics, Weizmann Institute  
**"How to Design Aliens"**

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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### Who is Dr. Jack Cohen?

I'll answer that question by presenting some books Dr. Cohen has  
been involved with:

**The Legacy of Heorot** by Larry Niven, Jerry Pournelle, and Steven  
Barnes (1987), 383 pages, is a paean to the philosophy of "always be  
prepared to defend yourself" by two of the authors of Reagan's Star Wars  
program (Niven and Pournelle, who actually wrote Reagan's speeches on  
Star Wars), with a little help from Steven Barnes.. "Don't ever assume  
that nature is benign", they seem to be saying, "you will be  
surprised". Their alien creature, the grendel, is one of the most  
frightening natural enemies (in contrast to conventional monsters) in  
any SF novel. The book starts with the following announcement:

"Jack Cohen is one of the world's experts on fertility and  
reproduction. He is also a rabid science fiction fan who --  
inspired by his knowledge of the queerer forms of earthly life --  
constantly generates new concepts for aliens. He tends to give his  
aliens away to whatever science fiction writer is standing nearest.

"He was at Larry Niven's house when he described an African  
frog with nasty habits.

"It's been a long time, Jack. Thanks for waiting."

**Dragonsdawn** by Anne McCaffrey (1988), 431 pages, is a prelude to  
McCaffrey's **"The Dragonriders of Pern"** series, detailing as it does the  
first days of the settlement of Pern, on its southern continent, man's  
first encounter with the destructive thread, and the development of  
man's symbiotic relation with dragons. The biology of thread and of the  
dragons is strongly developed. The book starts with the following  
announcement:

"Profound Acknowledgments. This book could not have been written  
without the advice, assistance, and aid of Dr. Jack Cohen, D.Sc.,  
lately Senior Lecturer of Reproductive Biology at Birmingham  
University, England, whose expertise and enthusiasm helped me  
create the dragons of Pern, and attendant botany/biology/ecology.  
Jack made fact out of myth, and science out of legend. I am not  
the only writer of his acquaintance who owes him a tremendous debt  
of gratitude."

McCaffrey has also used Jack Cohen as the model for biologist Pol  
Nietro in the novel. A quote (from p. 121) will illustrate Jack's

style:

"Humans are very poorly designed, you know. I mean, surely you can see how ridiculous it is to have an air pipe--' He touched his nose. '--that crosses the food pipe.' He touched his rather prominent Adam's apple. 'People are always choking themselves to death. And a vulnerable cranium: one good crack, and the concussion can cause impairment if not fatality.... [Do] you think having the playground between the sewers makes ... sense? ... Oh my, oh my, there I go again, falling into the lecture attitude. But there are endless ways in which we humans could be profitably improved . . .'"

All the **Weyrs of Pern** by Anne McCaffrey (1991), 433 pages, seems to be the conclusion to McCaffrey's "**The Dragonriders of Pern**" series, detailing as it does the *final* battle of men and dragons against thread, some 2500 years after the original settlement of Pern described in **Dragonsdawn**. The book starts with the following announcement:

"Acknowledgments. The author gives full credit to Dr. **Jack Cohen** once again for making fact out of her fiction and rationalizing the whimsies of her imagination."

Additional books that Jack Cohen has helped with are Harry Harrison's **West of Eden** series, and David Gerrold's **War with the Chtorr** series. ■ ■

### The Holocaust as a Horror Novel?

**Carrion Comfort** by Dan Simmons (1989), 884 pages. *THREE* reviews:

Reviewed by Nikolay Borschevsky: I have always wondered about the American expression "a Russian novel", meaning "a thick book". This is another stereotype that has no place in reality. In contemporary Russian literature one can hardly find really long novels. In classical Russian literature only Count Tolstoy, who had a lot of time for writing, and Fyodor Dostoevsky, who desperately needed money, managed to produce several thousand plus page novels. Apparently those enormous Russian novels like **War and Peace** or **The Brothers Karamazoff** caused such a deep trauma in college students who grew up on Marvel comics that another cliché was born.

But let us be objective! What about contemporary American novels? What about the endless family sagas and sequels? What about Stephen King and John Jakes, Piers Anthony and Daniel Steel, James Clavell and Tom Clancy? Is it a literary obligation now to produce at least 700 pages? And who needs it? Critics, readers or book publishers? I wonder if Mark Twain were to start writing **Tom Sawyer** today, how many pages and sequels he would have to produce?

Anyway, my first reaction to this novel by Dan Simmons (884 pages) was: "Oh, not another one of these!". But when I started reading the book it turned out to be a real "page turner" (pardon my French). To my connoisseur of horror mind **Carrion comfort** is genuine literary overkill. One can find everything in this book: mind vampires and Nazis, billionaires and gangs of black kids, Jews and politicians, the CIA and the FBI (only the KGB is missing). The author has managed to forge elements of different genres such as horror novels, spy novels and political thrillers into a very exciting alloy. I definitely recommend this book to any lover of horror and the macabre.

It seems to me that Dan Simmons is a very smart and educated writer who knows the anatomy of American literature well enough to dissect it and construct a very alive monster who can scare and entertain you at the same time.

There is another aspect to this novel. The hero is a Jew.

Actually one can see very distinctively Jewish subjects in other books by Simmons (for example, **Hyperion**, based on the Akeda dilemma of Abraham). The author demonstrates such a deep and profound knowledge of Jewish life, Judaism, the Holocaust and Israel that I cannot but ask a very typical and Galut question: "Is this guy Jewish? How come he knows so much and understands so well?" (Look up for example the dialogue between the Oberst, a German mind-vampire, and Saul, the Holocaust survivor, on pp. 838-839.)

Somehow these Jewish topics make Dan Simmons' books more serious and meaningful for me than just another horror novel. But maybe this is just another sign of my Galut mentality.

Reviewed by Aharon Sheer: Wasn't the Holocaust horrible enough without using it as a basis for a horror novel? The main character, Dr. Saul Laski, is a Holocaust survivor who made aliya to Israel after the war and helped to build a couple of kibbutzim, then moved to the U.S., finally becoming a successful psychiatrist specializing in theories of violence. Dr. Laski's memories and current activities occupy about a third of this book, making it an interesting one for Jewish readers of horror fiction. It also qualifies as science fiction as Dr. Laski attempts to analyze scientifically the supernatural horror phenomenon which is the basic theme of the book.

The basic premise of the book is that there are people who can control the behavior of others through the power of the mind. Frank Robinson's novel **The Power** (1958) developed that idea *much* better. A person with such a power might prefer to live quietly, enjoying his unlimited control of others on a day to day basis. But the power could potentially make such people rulers of the world, if they want that. **The Power** was so successful it was made into a movie of the same name (1967), and its Hebrew translation (הכוח, 150 pages) of many years ago is still in print, making it one of the great successes of SF in Israel comparable to works of Douglas Adams, Asimov and Zelazny.

**Carrion Comfort** is much more modern than **The Power**. It has explicit sex, mostly perverted, numerous senseless and horrible murders, and it is vastly longer! Nevertheless I, even not being a horror lover, could not put the book down. It is well written, fast moving, and has just enough SF and Yiddishkeit in it to make up for the horror.

Reviewed by Sara Svetitsky: The copy of **Carrion Comfort** that I was given to review had once been mine: I read the book about two years ago and sold it to the used book store the next day. I would have liked to have an exorcism done as well, but my rabbi didn't have the text. Is this a slam of the book? Not at all, it's actually a compliment: **Carrion Comfort** succeeds brilliantly at what it sets out to do, which is to terrify. My problem with it was that I am not a reader of horror fiction (I am perhaps the only English-literate adult alive who has never read a Stephen King novel) and I have never seen the appeal of having the living daylight's scared out of you. But if you do like horror fiction, or for some reason don't want to sleep for the next few nights, then **Carrion Comfort** is highly recommended. (With one caveat: if you are unusually sensitive to bad things being done to small children then avoid this book no matter how insomniac you are. Avoid all Simmons except "**Phases of Gravity**").

The monsters of **Carrion Comfort** are a group of five "vampires" who make the classic blood-suckers look positively lovable. They are human in appearance but have mutated the ability to take over people's minds and use the bodies as they please. They use people for sadistic or sexual thrills and in long-running power games among themselves and their general attitude towards the human race is that of Amon Goeth towards the Jews in "**Schindler's List**". The analogy is especially

fitting because there are strong overtones of the Holocaust: the story starts in a death camp where one of the vampires is Oberst, and the powerlessness, helplessness, degradation and doom felt by the Jews there are extended to the whole human race. The book, like all Simmons, is very well written and has good characters, some of whom survive. To repeat: highly recommended to the fan of horror fiction who has strong nerves.

■ ■

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

Dear Sal,

What can I do? I'm desperate. I am a beautiful female, intelligence-enhanced Secretary Bird. I love dancing, but I can never find a good partner because I have two write feet.

**Ms. S. Bird**

Dear Ms. S. Bird:

I suggest you find a war veteran -- perhaps one of the Eagle clan since they have many talons -- who has prosthetic feet. Ask him to remove them and leave them in your care. With your two write feet and his two left feet you should do all right.

**Sal**

■ ■

## Short Review: by Sara Svetitsky

**NOBODY'S SON** by Sean Stewart (1994), 316 pages. This is a charming short novel that bears the trappings of the traditional fantasy while it turns it on its head. The king has announced that whoever lifts the curse from the Red Keep will have anything he wishes including the hand of the princess in marriage. Shielder's Mark, a poor village lad, lifts the curse. So far, so good -- but that is only the first chapter. After that, things get complicated. Shielder's Mark find himself in the middle of court intrigue, about which he knows less than nothing. Luckily for him the princess and her friends actually like him and try to educate him in court ways before his ignorance kills him, which leads to some funny scenes. Then strange things begin to happen near where Red Keep used to be; maybe some curses are better left unlifted? Mark has to face the new threat, and confront some history that has been forgotten on purpose, and his own inner weakness, which is his need for a father to replace the one that deserted him. The writing is smooth, the main characters are well-done (although the villain and some of the others are pretty stock) and Mark's inner crisis is convincing. (Although reading this book right after "Glimpses" makes a pretty big dose of the "son comes to terms with absent/dead/disliked father" theme, which is real popular these days: are there any equally widespread literary themes involving mothers and daughters?). An enjoyable and sometimes thought-provoking book, also for teenagers (quoting Shuli Svetitsky).

■ ■

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 Rehovot SF needs meeting topics and panel moderators. Want to contribute? Have some ideas? Please call Aharon Sheer, 08-947-1225.

## Life on Jupiter?

Can you lend us -- well before the February meeting which will be on this topic -- any of the following: **Jupiter**, an anthology of short stories on Jupiter, edited by Frederick Pohl. Pohl Anderson's short story "**Call Me Joe**". If the **Stars are Gods**, a novel by Gregory Benford and Gordon Eklund. Clifford Simak's **City**. Please bring to the January meeting, or call Bill Silverman, 08-947-6142.

■ ■

Next SCIENCE FICTION CLUB Meeting:

Tuesday, February 27, 1996, 8:15 p.m. -- Lecture (in ENGLISH)

**Dr. Moshe Podolak**, Dept. of Astrophysics, Tel Aviv University

**"Life on Jupiter?"**

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### REVIEWS: by Sara Svetitsky

**GLIMPSES** by Lewis Shiner (1993), 328 pages. This novel won the World Fantasy Award and got glowing reviews from both the science fiction and the music press, and in my opinion it deserved them all. The hero is Ray Shackelford, a likable enough but apparently ordinary fellow. Ray has some not-very-unusual trouble: he is almost 40, he has had to admit that the '60s are over, and neither his life nor his marriage are working out the way he wanted them to. He is in a specific but also not unusual crisis: when the book opens his father, with whom he had a very bad relationship, has just died. But Ray has a very unusual talent: he can record on tape music which he hears in his head. It starts harmlessly enough, with him daydreaming a Beatles recording session that gives him a tape of "The Long and Winding Road" the way it should have been played. But as he goes after more of the never-recorded rock legends, the daydreaming becomes more than daydreaming. Ray starts rewriting history.

There are many very good things in this book. The writing is flawless, the dialog is perfect, and most of the characters are extremely well done. Graham, the owner of the reissue/bootleg CD business who markets the music Ray "recovers", is someone I would like to meet. Shiner displays his mastery of the craft of writing by pulling off two very difficult tasks: he makes Elizabeth, the wife Ray is losing, sympathetic and believable, and he makes Ray's near-death experience (where he confronts his father) moving but not hokey. I have only a few very minor quibbles. First, the "fantastic" element, that this fellow can sit down in a room with a tape recorder and make music appear on the tape, is played way down. Ray demonstrates it once to Graham and Graham isn't shocked, doesn't want to know if Ray is an alien or a time-traveler, just accepts it. Second, the woman Ray falls in love with sounds like nothing but trouble, but his affair with her is presented in glowing terms. Perhaps a man would see that part of the story differently. This book is a must-read for anyone who ever wished that the Beatles hadn't broken up or that Hendrix had lived to record his next album, but even those who don't like rock music will enjoy it. Very highly recommended.

**THE IRON DRAGON'S DAUGHTER** by Michael Swannick (1994), 424 pages.

This book won the Nebula Award and has been highly praised. This review is going to be respectful, but not glowing. This book takes the "elf-punk" atmosphere, which Emma Bull, Mercedes Lackey and others have dealt with in romantic or lighthearted fashion, and paints it very, very black. The Faerie world here presented combines the nastiest aspects of Dickens, Detroit on a bad day, the bloodier parts of the Golden Bough, and any number of doomed youth/Generation X novels. It is very imaginative, creative and original, but not exactly pleasant. The protagonist is Jane, a human changeling who escaped from indentured servitude making war dragons with the help of a psychopathic dragon who wants her aid in destroying the universe. Jane makes her way through the society and the University of the Great Gray City, discovering how to work magic (and anyone who thinks traditional magic was pretty or politically correct is in for a shock), falling in love with and/or having sex with many people, all of whom die horribly, and finally reaching the point where she is willing to help the dragon in his plan. The society is painted with disconcerting humor: the equivalent of the Homecoming Queen in Faerie is the Wicker Queen, who is burned alive on the football field at the end of her reign, and there are many more such cases where Swannick turns fantasy convention upside down.

So what don't I like about it? I found it didn't engage my emotions, except for that of disgust at the fates that befell some of Jane's acquaintances. Jane herself is an oddly bland character who never feels anything but hate with conviction. I have never read a book which had so many characters dying such bizarre deaths and cared so little about them. But your mileage may vary, and you should read this and decide for yourself.

■ ■

Limerick by **Miriam Ben-Lulu**  
 Alone and shunned by his peers,  
 The sorcerer spent his last years  
 In spelling and making,  
 And then decorating,  
 Silk purses from tiny sow's ears.

■ ■

## To Live Forever -- Reviewed by Aharon Sheer

**To Live Forever** by Jack Vance (1956), 252 pages. Given to me by Gina Alfandari, recommended by Miriam Sheer. Vance speculates about a society with the *technical ability* to provide anyone with immortality (clones can be kept in reserve and up-to-date to protect immortals against accidents or foul play). To prevent overpopulation, that prize is reserved to a small number of the most successful, the rest being assassinated if they reach their legally allotted life span. Constant striving after permitted greater longevity, and the ultimate prize of immortality, leads to a society in which "creative thinkers tended to work in proved fields.... The arts became dominated by academic standards.... Hobbies and sport became rare; social functions were poorly attended." The story has no heroes and no villains; or more precisely, the hero does evil acts for fully understandable reasons, and so do the villains, and we understand that the real fault is the social system. This kept our interest throughout, but the end is dissatisfying because I don't think the raging crowds will be persuaded so easily; and the proposed solution is not easy at all.

swallowed up by his world's understanding but by the emptiness around them." "He had established a circle of tired, cynical tranquillity around him."

These are sentences that have to be read more than twice, and still this reader is not sure he understands.

■ ■

אנו יודעים איך ומתי התחילו היקום, מערכת השמש, כדור הארץ, החיים על כדור הארץ והאדם. מה שמעניין אותנו בעצם הוא מה יהיה הסוף שלנו - לא כפרט אלא כמין וסוף זה עלול להתרחש כתוצאה מאירועים רבים שהפיזיקה יודעת להצביע עליהם.

אלא שאירועים אלה הינם כה רחוקים במושגי סקלות הזמן שלנו, שאין הדבר צריך להדאיג אותנו או את צאצאנו בדורות הקרובים, אך בכל זאת...

וכדי שנדע באלו סקלות זמן אנו עוסקים, נציין שהיקום התחיל לפני כ-15 מיליארד שנה, השמש נוצרה לפני כ-5 מיליארד שנה, כדור הארץ התגבש לפני כ-4.5 מיליארד שנה, תחילת החיים (ברמה של וירוסים, חיידקים, אצות חד-תאיות וכו') לפני כ-4 מיליארד שנה, תחילת בעלי החיים הרב תאיים והמורכבים יותר - לפני כ-600 מיליון שנה, הכחדת הדינוזאורים לפני כ-65 מיליון שנה, האב הקדמון המשותף לנו ולשימפנזים חי לפני כ-6 מיליון שנה, גזעי האדם הקדמון התקיימו לפני כמיליון שנה ותחילת האדם הנבון לפני כ-200 אלף שנה. האדם הניאנדרטלי התקיים בצד האדם הנבון, עד לפני כ-40 אלף שנה.

חישובים שונים מראים שבעוד כ-120 שנה, עשוי לפגוע בכדור הארץ אסטרואיד גדול למדי שעלול לגרום לקטסטרופה די רצינית. אין אנו יודעים אם הוא יפגע בנו או רק יעבור קרוב אלינו, אך אם נגלה שהוא עומד לפגוע בנו, נוכל עד אז להיערך ולפוצץ אותו בעודו רחוק. אפשר אם כך לנשום לרווחה בינתיים.

רשומות המאובנים מראות לנו ששום מין של יונק לא התקיים על פני כדור הארץ למעלה מ-10 מיליון שנה. אך אנו, בגלל התודעה העצמית המפותחת והטכנולוגיה, שונים משאר בעלי החיים, כך שנוכל אולי להינצל מגורל זה. מאידך, דווקא בגלל הטכנולוגיה, אנו עלולים להכחיד את עצמנו (השחתת הסביבה, מלחמות, שואה גרעינית...). אפשרות אחרת - התפתחות מין אחר שיירש את מקומנו. אם ומתי הדברים הנ"ל יקרו - לעתיד פתרוני.

בחקירת השכבות הגיאולוגיות הוברר שאחת ל-26 מיליון שנה פוקדת את כדור הארץ קטסטרופה שבעטיה מושמדים רבים מהחיים על כדור הארץ. לפרסום הרב ביותר זכתה השמדת הדינוזאורים שאירעה לפני 65 מיליון שנה. חישוב קל יראה לנו שאנו נמצאים כעת בדיוק באמצע המחזור, כלומר השואה הבאה תתרחש בעוד כ-13 מיליון שנה. היום ידוע ששואת הדינוזאורים התרחשה כתוצאה מפגיעת גוף מסיבי בכדור הארץ והשפעות הלואי של פגיעה זו. השערה די מקובלת, המסבירה את המחזוריות של פגיעות אלה, נקראת השערת נמסיס. נמסיס - אלת הנקם המיתולוגית, הינה בת לווייה משוערת לשמש שלנו המהווה יחד איתה מערכת של כוכב כפול (כמו רבות מהשמשות האחרות בגלקסיה וביקום). הואיל ונמסיס נמצאת היום במרחקה המירבי מאיתנו וכנראה היא קטנה ולא בהירה, אין אנו יכולים להבחין בה או בהשפעותיה. אך כאשר היא מתקרבת אלינו, כאמור, אחת ל-26 מיליון שנה, היא טורדת ממסילותיהם כוכבי שביט המקובצים בענן המצוי אי שם הרחק בשולי מערכת השמש ואולי גם אי אלו אסטרואידים. אחד שניים או שלושה מהם פוגעים בכדור הארץ בתקופה של מיליון עד שתי מיליון שנה. השפעתה המיידית של התנגשות כזו עולה בעוצמתה על כל אמצעי ההרס הידועים לנו וכתוצאה מכך מוסתרים גם פני השמש לתקופה ממושכת בכל העולם, עם כל התופעות הידועות של חורף גרעיני. אין ספק שהתרבות והטכנולוגיה - אם יהיו אז ואם ישארו על פני כדור הארץ - יושמדו.

השמש שלנו נמצאת היום במחצית חייה, אך בעוד 5 מיליארד שנה, בתהליך בו יאזל הדלק הגרעיני שלה, ליבתה תקרוס ותתכווץ, אך שוליה יתנפח. היא תהפוך אז למה שנקרא באסטרונמיה - ענק אדום. היא תתפשט, תבלע ותשרוף את כל כוכבי הלכת שבקרבתה, כולל כדור הארץ...

היקום נמצא כידוע בתהליך התפשטות. הגלקסיות מתרחקות אחת מהשנייה; השאלה היא עד מתי. הדבר תלוי בכמות המסה ביקום. רוב המסה ביקום היא בבחינת מסה אפלה המורכבת מענני גז, חורים שחורים ודברים נוספים שאין אנו יכולים להבחין בהם. אם סך כל כבידת המסה ביקום אינה מתגברת על פוטנציאל ההתפשטות - היקום ימשיך ויתפשט לעד; אם המסה גדולה במעט - התפשטות היקום מואטת ואז יום אחד היא תיפסק ותחל התכווצות. סיומה של התכווצות כזו הוא בנקודה סינגולרית שלפניה תהפוך כל מסת היקום לחלקיקים ולאנרגיה - ההיפך מהמפץ הגדול. גם האפשרות הראשונה - התפשטות לנצח, אינה מבשרת טובות לקיום חיים ביקום, אם יהיו עד אז כאלה. כל הכוכבים יהפכו בסוף לקרים ואפלים ולא תהיה ביקום אף שמש שתוכל לקיים חיים כפי שמוכרים לנו כיום. אין אנו יודעים מתי תקרה אחת משתי אפשרויות אלה, מאותה הסיבה שאין אנו יודעים איזו מהן תקרה...

אך דבר אחד בטוח - אם היקום שלנו ימשיך להתקיים במופע הנוכחי שלו, אז בעוד כ-<sup>31</sup>10 שנה, גרעיני כל האטומים ביקום יתפרקו ולא יהיה קיום לחומר. אבל לזה אנחנו באמת כבר לא צריכים לדאוג כי הזמן הזה גדול פי יותר מ-100 מיליארד מיליארדים מזמן קיום היקום עד כה.

מהו הלקח שאנו צריכים להפיק מכך? האם פירוש הדבר שאפשר להפסיק הכל כי ממילא הכל יגמר? נראה שלא. כל אחד מאיתנו צריך להמשיך במעשיו ובתוכניותיו, אך כל אחד מאיתנו צריך לעשות גם את המירב, כך שהמין שלנו ימשיך להתקיים לפחות במאה, באלף, או בעשרת אלפים השנה הקרובות.

Next SCIENCE FICTION CLUB Meeting:  
 Tuesday, March 26, 1996, 8:15 p.m. -- Lecture (in HEBREW)  
 Yivsam Azgad, writer, on his SF book - על ספרו "מערף הכלולות" - "Cuticula"

**WARNING !!** This month's meeting will be at the house of Aharon Sheer  
 13 Pinsker St., 1st floor, Rehovot, 08-947-1225  
 (next to side gate of Weizmann Institute, near HaNasi HaRishon St.)

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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### בקורת ספרותית מאת אהרן שיר:

**מערף כלולות** מאת יבשם עזגד (1995), 181 דפים, הוצאת כתר. הסופר הבריטי Kingsley Amis, בספרו **New Maps of Hell** (1960), כתב (תרגום שלי): "מדע בדיוני מראה לנו בני אדם ביחסיהם לא זה עם זה, אלא עם משהו, כגון מפלצת, חייזר, מגיפה, או עם צורת חברתית כלשהי, ולמרות שחברה היא דבר אנושי, סופרי מד"ב מטפלים כראוי בהבטים לא אישיים." Amis מצטט את Edmund Crispin שכתב שמד"ב צריך להיות כמו ציור נוף, ולא כמו פורטרט. **מערף כלולות** מנסה להיות קודם כל פורטרט של אהבה. הסופר, דובר מכון ויצמן, מכיר היטב את היחסים בין המדענים ובין והחברה בכללותה, והיחסים בין המדענים לבין עצמם. החצי הראשון של הספר הוא בחלקו סטירה על נושא זה, בעולם עתידי בו המדענים נתקו את עצמם מהחברה ההמונית, מתקצבים את עצמם בכספים שנלקחים מאחוז קטן של רבית הבנקאות הממוחשבת העולמית, ועוסקים רק במחקר טהור. כתוצאה מכך, לא היה קדום טכנולוגי במשך דורות -- כל המחקר הוא בסיסי -- ובחירת נושאי המחקר המתוקצבים היא על בסיס אישי, חברי, ולא ענייני. אם היה זה פיליטון של אפרים קישון, הוא היה ממלא דף אחד, והיה גם מצחיק. כדומן, זה צריך להיות מד"ב קלאסי (מעין ציור נוף): זוג יוצא דופן נלחם בחברה עתידית מוגזמת, חזקה ומפחידה. Amis קורא לסוג כזה של ספר "Comic Inferno" ("גהינום קומי"). בהתרכזותו על ההבטים הכלל-אנושיים של הזוג והסביבה, ולא על המאפיינים המיוחדים של החברה העתידית, הסופר החטיא את המטרה של ספר מד"ב, וחבל. במחצית השניה העלילה מתקדמת בקצב מהיר יותר, והסוף ממש מרגש.

*Reading recent Israeli SF novels reminded me of the following item published in CyberCozen some years ago:*

#### **Possible Unique Aspects of Israeli SF by Izzy Moto**

What are unique aspects of Israel that might affect Israeli SF?

1) **Israeli scenery.** This should be obvious yet much Israeli SF does not clearly take place in Israel. Just as American stories may be set in the suburbs of Los Angeles, in the bayous of Louisiana, or in a Chicago slum, Israeli stories might be set in Jerusalem, at the Weizmann Institute in Rehovot, or in an Army patrol on the West Bank.

2) **Jewish and Israeli background.** Pesach, Hanuka, Israel's Independence Day, and the Shabbat can be part of the background to a story, just as the Fourth of July, Christmas, and Thank God It's Friday may be part of the background in an American Story.

3) **Aliens.** We see them frequently but often only unconsciously react to:

a) War cripples: frightening and distressing, they have the power to affect us in ways we are only barely aware of.

b) Arab workers: as much a part of the background in Israeli cities as robots are in some stories by Isaac Asimov.

c) Ultra-Orthodox: a totally alien subsociety.

4) Non-technological. Israeli life is dominated by people.

Technology, as represented by the telephone system and the roads, does not function well enough to be seen as the model for some ideal (or nightmarish) future. Technology is a hindrance to human relationships, not an advantage. In this aspect, Israeli SF might represent a point of view radically different from that of American SF.

*If we accept the above, Reuven Danziger's SF novel The Purple Planet, and Gil Ilutowich's Tikkun, are clearly Israeli SF. Yivsam Azgad's novel Cuticula (מעורף כלולות) is mostly not: the first half takes place in an unidentified but definitely non-Israeli city, and the second half in Scotland and Iceland. On the other hand, Azgad's description of the future use of technology in every day life is very Israeli.* ■ ■

## Jack Cohen's Lecture: "How to Design Aliens"

Editor's note: Jack Cohen distinguished between "universal" characteristics, which we can expect to find in alien beings, and "parochial" characteristics which we probably won't find. "Universal" are those which developed independently on more than one separate evolutionary line. Some examples of "universals":

"the **eye** in cephalopod mollusks, such as the octopus, and in vertebrates; **wings** in insects, extinct flying reptiles, birds, and bats; and the **flipperlike appendages** of the sea turtle (reptile), penguin (bird), and walrus (mammal)."

"**Parochial**" are those that developed only once, and although there may be numerous examples, all of them are on the same evolutionary tree, descended from one common ancestor. **Bone**, is a "parochial", he said. By "bone" he meant the following:

"**Bone** ... has blood vessels running through it that replenish nutrients and oxygen.... Bone is a living material containing many active bone cells ... arranged in ... systems each of which contains a blood vessel running within a central canal. The bone material contains calcium salts (mainly calcium phosphate) and also a fibrous protein, collagen. These materials occur in cylindrical layers ... arranged ... around the central canal. The strength of a bone is imparted by the orientation of these ... systems parallel to the direction of greatest stress."

Large animals can occur without bone. For example, sharks do not have bone; they only have cartilage.

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## Comments on Jack Cohen's Lecture by Miriam Ben-Lulu (Part I)

If you missed the January meeting, then you missed a lecture that was both interesting and stimulating, but most of all FUN. Dr. Jack Cohen is a scientist with a sense of humor. It is a pity that he cannot speak Hebrew and talk to pupils here. I think it would change their idea of what science is really all about, and what scientists are like.

His lecture was primarily on how to design aliens. An alien should not be a human --- or any other Earth animal --- in makeup. It must have attributes that correspond to the conditions on the supposed planet of origin and not to those we are familiar with. He pointed out that even if the planet were similar to ours, evolution would not necessarily have taken the same path.

He divides characteristics into two basic groups. Those which are common solutions to general problems he calls "universal" solutions -- flight, for example. Those which "would be specific to one evolutionary line on one planet only" he calls "parochial". In discussing the design

of aliens, he also had some interesting things to say about how humans are designed.

He said that asking questions is important, and indeed some of what he had to tell us raised at least as many questions as it answered. In the meantime perhaps some of you have answers, or even additional questions.

For example, he considered **bone** to be a "parochial". I am still bothered by what kind of internal support system large land animals could have if bone is eliminated as a possibility.

As for re-designing humans, I have been thinking about the possibilities and have run into several problems (aside from lacking an adequate knowledge of anatomy!):

1) Jack said, "You can see how ridiculous it is to have an air pipe [the nasal passages] that crosses the food pipe [the throat]. People are always choking themselves to death." As anyone who suffers from sinus allergies can tell you, the mouth is a fail-safe device for the nose. If you leave the mouth connected to the lungs you get people choking when the food goes the wrong way, but if you eliminate the connection you will have even more people literally choking (smothering?) to death whenever the nose is stopped up. So what do you do --- have a third orifice to take over the job as fail-safe? Where do you put it?

2) Four legs would provide greater stability and speed, but would lack grace and present difficulties on a crowded dance floor and when getting into a car.

3) Teachers definitely need eyes in the back of their heads, and mothers (and some fathers) need additional hands. But what would the rest of the humans do with these features (even today, men who are "all hands" are not especially appreciated)?

4) Humans definitely need a way to give birth that would be easier on both mother and baby. A tight birth canal just makes things difficult for both. How about a shutter type arrangement? Changing the position of the exit would help, but would it have unfortunate side results? (I presume that the original position was developed so that gravity would help. Since most human women now give birth in a reclining, or semi-reclining position this is no longer an important factor.)

Dr. Cohen also mentioned the human tendency to give animals human characteristics, and the fact that different cultures view certain animals differently. Here are a few more examples:

1) In most places women get very upset about lizards of any kind and size, especially in their homes, but in Hawaii women love to have them because they keep the roach population down.

2) "Lewd women" (from a drawing he showed us) aren't the only ones who like snakes. Aside from being beautiful (color and pattern), they are pleasant to touch because they are so smooth. So why do most people consider them "slimy"?

3) As for the "wise old owl" of English prose and poetry, my Moroccan mother-in-law gets very upset if one flies over any of us. For her the owl is a sign of coming disease or even death. (I recently read a story called **Spirit Mirror** by Stephen Marley which is a fantasy taking place in ancient China. The sorceress hears an owl calling "who" and takes it as a question. Well, I have a question too. Is the word questioning identity the same in ancient Chinese as in modern English? Or does an owl hoot differently in Chinese so that its call resembles the Chinese word for the question of identity? This is barely possible as American dogs bark "bow-wow" and Israeli dogs bark "huv-huv".)

Elana Dror asked a question concerning the ability to move things of Anne McCaffrey's dragons being affected by their desire to do so, which also started me thinking. The ability to produce unusual events through mental control of the body and the environment appears in many fantasy, and some science fiction, books. Sometimes it is called magic, sometimes it is supposed to be genetic or a result of some sort of enhancement. Sometimes it is supposed to be natural, sometimes learned (as in Oriental style cultures).

But very few writers have given these attributes to animals (two other examples are Andre Norton's telepathic animals, and Alan Dean Foster's minidrags which are empathetic telepaths). Why? If training is needed, many animals can be trained. If it is a matter of genetics or enhancement, why not animals? If the stories of super-human strength caused by adrenalin are actually true, why couldn't other super-human attributes be connected to hormones? And if they could be, could animals be bred for these attributes? Then the only problem would be to make the hormone release dependent on conscious mental control. With this done ... PRESTO! ... we can have "magic" animals and the dragons really will be able to fly higher just by wanting to.

But what about aliens? Are hormones "universals" or "parochials"? What are the chances that aliens would have parapsychological talents which few (if any -- depending on your beliefs) humans have? Wouldn't such abilities increase the chances of survival?

Dr. Cohen also mentioned the subject of alien intelligence and morals. Because I have a lot to say on this subject, I will leave it for next month's **CyberCozen**. In the meantime, what do the rest of you think --- how will we be able to evaluate the intelligence of any aliens we happen to meet? By the way, there are some interesting aliens in Sheri S. Tepper's **Raising the Stones**. ■ ■

### REVIEW: by Sara Svetitsky

**APOLLO 13**, by James Lovell and Jeffrey Kluger (1994), 418 pages. One of the standard settings for "hard" science fiction is when accident or mechanical failure hits a sophisticated piece of technology -- a spacecraft, a nuclear reactor, whatever -- and brilliant, dedicated engineers work feverishly to fix it and save the people affected. It's not just standard, it a cliché, and modern writers often turn it around and write about lousy corrupt engineers who build defective equipment because they don't care. (The Challenger disaster boosted this second kind of writing). Well, **Apollo 13** is the best "brilliant and dedicated engineer" story I have ever read. That it was written in the cynical 1990's is remarkable, that it is set in NASA, which played such a big role in the fall from grace of high technology, is even more so. Everyone who enjoys "hard" science fiction will love this book, but I warn you that it will spoil you: there is no SF writer around who can compete with the suspense and tension of the historical record on the Apollo 13 mission. As the spacecraft lurches from disaster to disaster (a lot more things went wrong besides the famous oxygen tank) even the reader who knows perfectly well that the astronauts came back safely will be caught up in the story. This is a densely written book with a lot of personal and technical detail, but it moves better than most novels. It is definitely not just Lovell's story, which is enforced by the very wise decision to tell the story in third person, but embraces all the astronauts, Mission Control, and the earthbound families. If you enjoyed the movie, read this to get a fuller picture of those frantic days, and to correct the wrong impression of Jack Swigert's character that you may have received. ■ ■

## Next SCIENCE FICTION CLUB Meeting:

Tuesday, April 30, 1996, 8:15 p.m. -- Lecture (in HEBREW)

אחי כוכבי, מחלקה לגאופיסיקה ומדעים פלנטריים, אוניברסיטת תל אביב/...  
 Etty Kochavi, Dept. of Geophysics and Planetary Sciences, Tel Aviv U.  
 "התפתחות הקטליזטורים והשפעתם על התפתחות צורות חיים שונות"

"The Development of Catalyzers and their Influence on the Development  
 of Various Forms of Life"

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 at the home of Tova, Bill and Rami Silverman,  
 19 Eisenberg St., fourth floor, Rehovot, Tel. 08-947-6142.

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## Brian Aldiss is Coming!

British SF and fantasy author **Brian Aldiss** will be in Israel the week of May 12-17 as a guest of the British Consulate. He will appear at Beit HaSofer in Tel Aviv in a half-day conference open to the general public, probably on Tuesday, May 14. **CyberCozen** readers will receive a separate announcement giving details. If he has time to visit **Rehovot SF**, club members will be notified and invited to come and meet him.

Who is Brian Aldiss? He has published over 300 short stories and dozens of novels since 1954. Among more recent works: his prize-winning SF trilogy **Helliconia** (1982 - 1985), and **Dracula Unbound** (1991). According to "The Encyclopedia of Science Fiction", he "is a regular attender of sf conventions all over the world, and ... is an energetic and charismatic speaker and lecturer". Six of his books have been translated into Hebrew:

American Title	British Title (if different)	Year (first publication)	Hebrew Title
Starship (generation starship)	Non-Stop	1958	אל האינסוף
The Long Afternoon of Earth	Hothouse	1962	אחר הצהריים הארוך על פני האדמה
Starswarm (short stories in same future)		1964	נחיל כוכבים
The Dark Light Years		1964	שנים באפילה
Cryptozoic! (time travel to age of dinosaurs)	An Age	1967	עידן הסוד
The Enemies of the System (a dystopia, translated to Hebrew in "פנטזיה 2000")		1978	אויבי המשטר

*Thanks to Eli Eshed for providing the above information.*

Short Review of a Brian Aldiss book: by Aharon Sheer

**The Malacia Tapestry** by Brian Aldiss (1976), 402 pages. Recommended by Bill Silverman. This entertaining book could *almost* have been written in the 1700's. It is the diary of a young man who learns the facts of life the hard way, but does a lot of drinking, stage acting and lechering along the way. The story takes place in Malacia, evidently an Italian coastal city which reminds one of Renaissance Venice in its wealth and power. Like Venice, it is attacked from time to time by the Ottoman Turks, but for the last **ten thousand years** has always managed to beat them off. Ten thousand years? What happened here? It seems that Malacia has taken an oath to prevent change, and the world around it accordingly does not change either. Science advances, but only very very slowly (we find the zoetrope, silver iodide glass-plate photography, and hydrogen balloons, newly in use, all inventions of the 1800's in our world). There is another glaring difference: There are churches and cathedrals indeed, as expected, but some preach of the constant battle for control between *TWO* gods: the Lord God, and Satan (Light against Darkness). Churches also honor Minerva, the ancient Roman goddess of wisdom and the arts. Could it be there were never Jews in this world (and hence no Christianity and no Islam)? No, we are told explicitly that there are Jews (even the "Lost Tribes" are mentioned once), but not in Malacia, where the belief that there is only one god is a capital offense. Instead, the Jews (and Armenians, Arabs, Circassians, Serbs, Greeks) are hangers on of the Turkish armies. But then we find there is yet another difference: Dinosaurs were never wiped out! Remnants of them remain, of all sizes -- called "ancestral animals" -- kept as pets, or to keep down rats, or for good hunting, or just for their spectacular appearance. And then we learn ... but why spoil it for you; read the book yourselves! This is not conventional parallel history since it also contains a number of fantasy elements, such as astrologers whose detailed predictions are never wrong. It is, nevertheless, even for SF lovers, great fun to read. ■ ■

## Letters to the Editors:

Dear Earthling,

Hello! I am a creature from a galaxy far away, visiting your planet. I have transformed myself into this text file. As you are reading it, I am having sex with your eyeballs. I know you like it because you are smiling. Please pass me on to someone else because I'm really horny. ■ ■

Comments on Jack Cohen's Lecture by Miriam Ben-Lulu (Conclusion)

At the January meeting when I asked Dr. Jack Cohen how one could know whether aliens were intelligent, I wasn't asking a facetious question. The subject of intelligence (usually defined as capability, as opposed to performance) is a sore subject to anyone connected with education. In San Diego (home of Sea World, Scripps's Institute of Oceanography, the San Diego Zoo and Wild Animal Park) there was a big scandal because the city's special classes for the educable mentally retarded were full of black and brown children (a situation only slightly better than if the children had been found to be black and blue). The minority groups raised their voices and the classes were closed on the basis that the intelligence tests were culturally oriented.

Some tests have tried to eliminate cultural bias by basing the test on problem solving. This didn't solve the problem. In this sort of test the problem and possible solutions are shown in pictures and the

child chooses the best way to achieve the aim without worrying whether it is morally acceptable or not. For example, a boy wants to get to the other side of a high fence with a locked gate. The choices are: 1) try to kick the fence down 2) pull up a crate and climb over the fence 3) sit down and cry. But what is the intelligent answer? If a child fears climbing he will not choose 2). If he likes climbing, but he will have to jump down on the other side and fears jumping, he will also avoid 2). If he fears being called a "crybaby" he will avoid 3). If he is weak and spindly he will avoid 1) but if he is strong and violent he will choose 1). So not only does culture affect intelligence tests, but the individual's personality affects even problem solving processes. Therefore we can't really measure intelligence even among humans.

We now accept that dolphins are "highly intelligent". This is a relatively recent development. My great-grandparents would have considered them unintelligent fish --- if they even heard about them.

But what we really mean is that dolphins are more intelligent than fish and less than man. So we can compare even if we can't measure; or can we? If intelligence varies within a species as it does in man, do we have dolphins who are more intelligent than mentally retarded humans and others who are mentally retarded and have less intelligence than an average fish (which type of fish? what size?)??? Are there "under achievers" among dolphins? And if we can't test or really compare intelligence on our planet, how are we going to do so with aliens? (One wonders how aliens would test our intelligence!) Suppose that somehow we would compare our intelligence with theirs and that the "first contact" is made with a group of aliens that are moronic in comparison with us (as many of the early BEMs were) and that all subsequent policy decisions were based on this observed level of intelligence, presuming this to be representative of the species... and then it turns out to be a group isolated from the others of their species as being sub-standard (as we humans isolate the mentally retarded). So many possibilities, and so many more questions than answers when we talk about intelligence.

**POEM:** Point of View by Miriam Ben-Lulu

If I were looking down like G-d ...  
or Creatures from another sun ...  
I wonder what my thoughts would be  
on humankind's idea of fun.

I wonder if the wars make sense  
to Beings far above,  
Or do They find it hard to grasp  
our need for human love?

But then - what's "up" and what is "down"?  
Perhaps it's us, not Them  
That looking down, will find it hard  
to understand Its whim.

■ ■

**Apologies:** To Moshe Podolak, for writing that he is in the Department of Astrophysics at Tel Aviv University. He is actually in the Department of Geophysics and Planetary Sciences.

■ ■

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

Dear Sal,

Please tell me what to do. I come from a planet where all sentients have geometrical shapes. I was born a circle with a pleasing radius and a nice circumference. Life went so smoothly that I was bored and joined a wild circle of friends. One cycle we went off ringing around The Rosie. The Rosie is our sister planet whose inhabitants are all solid citizens. I fell in love with a handsome sphere with a lot of influence. But he thinks I am boring. He says I am too plane. Please help me!

**Circa**

Dear Circa:

A little silicon will give you the curves you desire and a good college can round out your education. But is this sphere worth it? If he doesn't appreciate you the way you are, perhaps he is too dense. I think you would be happier with someone of your own planet who can see things from other points of view, someone with many sides to his character. A pentagon might be too aggressive for you and a hexagon has a tendency to stop things before they get interesting. I suggest you look for a well-angled polygon.

**Sal**

■ ■

**World Science Fiction Convention  
in Southern California**

What: L.A.CON III/54th WORLDCON.

When: August 29 - September 2, 1996

Where: Anaheim, California, across the street from Disneyland.

GoHs: Guest of Honor (GoH): **James White**; Media GoH: **Roger Corman**;  
Fan GoHs: **Takumi and Sachiko Shibano**; Toast Master (TM):  
**Connie Willis**.

Rates: \$130 as of 01 Jan 1996, through 31 July 1996. \$150 at the door.

Exhibits, Art Show, Dealers' Room, ten tracks of panels going on simultaneously, lots of pros, free autograph sessions, Gaming, Films (old favorites and new releases), Videos, Japanimation, Filksongs ... plus the usual free hospitality suite, where you can stop and grab a soda and a snack anytime you've got the munchies! And the action doesn't stop at sundown! There are dances and parties, a costume contest (Masquerade), and you can vote for the Hugos (if you sign up early) and see them presented!

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■ ■

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**Rehovot SF** needs meeting topics and panel moderators. Want to contribute? Have some ideas? Please call Aharon Sheer, 08-947-1225.

■ ■

Next SCIENCE FICTION CLUB Meeting:  
Tuesday, May 28, 1996, 8:15 p.m. -- Lecture (in HEBREW)  
"פנטזיה 2000" אהרון האופטמן על  
Aharon Hauptmann on "Fantasia 2000"

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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מי הוא אהרון האופטמן?

"פנטזיה 2000" היה עתון מדע בדיוני בעברית שיצא לאור חודשית בשנים 1977 עד 1981 -- 44 גליונות זכורים לטוב. רוב החומר היה מתורגם מהעתון האמריקאי "The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction" אבל התפרסם גם חומר ישראלי מקורי. אהרון האופטמן היה אחד ממיסדי ועורכי העתון. ■ ■

## Of Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow

(Three stories of future Jewish History

-- In memory of Shmerke Kaczerginski, Partisan-poet of Vilna)  
by Leybl Botwinik\*

... My name was once known to you, Ask not now who I am. Ask not. I no longer have a name, I have only a number, My number is three-eight-five-six.... - from Sh. Kaczerginski's "Milyon"	... באקאנט איין געוועזן א מאל איז מיינ נאמען ניט פרעגט איצט ווער בין איך, ניט פרעגט. איך האב ניט קיין נאמען, איך האב נאר א נומער: מיינ נומער איז דראיי-אכט-פינף-זעכס (3856). - פון ש. קאטסערגינסקי'ס "מיליאן"
--	--

### Story 1 - Remembrance by Leybl Botwinik

It was a warm Spring day. The sun was shining, and the cool Spring breeze brought with it a freshness which drove away the winter-webs, which had kept people cooped up, indoors, during the cold months of snow. Children tore out of their houses like arrows shot from a bow.

Old Joseph went out to the balcony, looked around, and breathed the fresh air in deeply. It was great outside -- lively and joyful. Seeing his grandchildren playing on the grass, he went down and sprinted over to them with a fleetness that someone younger than him could not have matched. He caught up his youngest grandchild in his arms, and...

"Gran'pa! Gran'pa! Look at the transparent colored ball that Poppa bought for us!".

"Yes, I see, Saul. The ball is really nice. Look at that little robot running round and round in the inside".

"You know, Gran'pa, that's what makes the ball fly zig-zagish, and it's so hard to chase -- but I can catch it anyways", little Sarah said with pride.

It was getting warmer outside. The grandfather, Joseph, sat down on the porch steps, and started rolling up his shirt sleeves.

"What's that, Gran'pa?", said Saul, pointing at the old man's left arm. "Yes, Gran'pa, tell us. What do those four numbers mean?".

\* \* \*

"Remember, little Joseph. Remember what was done to us... And now, you must go".

Joseph's father Daniel gave him a kiss in the forehead, and added quietly, "May the One Above protect you".

A quiet sadness embraced them both. Joseph looked forlornly up at his father. His father's eyes were shut tight, as if he tried to keep the tears from showing. Who knows whether they will ever again see each other? Joseph did not want to leave, but he knew that he must. Thin and short of stature, he was able to slide out under the barbed-wire which surrounded the camp. His father dared not accompany him, because he would be missed, but who would care if a small boy, not yet eight years of age, disappeared? Accompanying him was only his father's spirit, and the words: "Remember! Remember!!".

He ran deep into the night. During the day he slept, at night --- on he ran. The days and the nights seemed to pour one into the other. He would beg for food from a stranger; sometimes he would steal. Little Joseph forgot everything but that he must live, and that he had the numbers burnt into the skin of his forearm. This was his sole comfort in the cool spring nights.

It was truly war time. Everywhere, ruins and refugees. It was a different sort of war, though. Here, the enemy came in with strength and was immediately off, elsewhere. The Front moved forward. The armor and artillery, the soldiers and their weaponry --- all was elsewhere. The trembling of the earth from bombs and artillery stopped, and the tumult of airplanes stilled, but the fear of killings dominated.

The government first surrendered, and then caved in under pressure from the antisemites. Harsh decrees were enforced against the Jews. Jews may not do this, Jews may not do that. Youth were sent to prisons, concentration and work camps. The intelligentsia, teachers, writers, doctors and engineers were shot. Pogroms broke out, and innocent, helpless women, children and old people were murdered. Jewish books and holy texts were burnt. And this was only the beginning.

Little Joseph witnessed all this through the eyes of a child, but he well understood the meaning of hunger and suffering... and death. He knew that they wanted to wipe out every memory of the Jewish people. And he thought of the numbers etched into his mind, burnt into the soft skin of his child's arm: 3856 --- Remember!

Eventually, he was captured. The soldiers treated him brutally: shoving, beating, torturing and starving him.

The new rulers used the newest technologies to carry out their dark deeds. All sorts of experiments were carried out on the prisoners. The lucky did not survive. The newest invention for "solving the Jewish problem" was "Forget-gas". Those who did not immediately perish, or go mad after breathing in the gas, became like zombies, and had no will of their own. Their minds were totally wiped clean. The memory and

identity --- totally erased.

"You little bastard! You will forget your corrupt Jewish nation. Be proud to be among the first to have the honor to try out our new experimental Forget-gas. If this doesn't kill you [ha, ha, ha...] then we'll remake you, and you will become one of us, of those who are worthy of ruling the world..."

When the war finally ended, many difficult years later, and the might of the dark enemies was shattered, there were millions of Jewish refugees, starved, weakened, sick, without a clear awareness, without a memory of who they were and where they came from. It would have seemed that the enemy of the Jews had won. There was not one Jew in the world who had not undergone the Forget-gas process. But not everyone had forgotten. Not everyone's memory had been wiped clean.

Little Joseph did not forget. The numbers burnt into his arm did not let him forget. The numbers cried out to him: "Remember Joseph, my son. Remember Ponar, remember Auschwitz, remember the Hamans and the Khmelnitzkis. Remember the Hitlers and Stalins and Arafats. Remember the executioners of Jews. Remember who you are and what is your Nation. These numbers which are burnt onto your skin are the same as those burnt onto my arm, when I was a small child. And so had been done to my grandfather, and to his grandfather before him, over the generations. And if ever one world is consumed: Remember! --- and you will be able to build a new one. Let this reminder of a previous age be passed on from generation to generation..."

\* \* \*

"Gran'pa, are you the only one with those numbers --- the only one who remembers?"

"No, Sarah. Throughout the generations, over all the planets where Jews live, the offspring of the first sufferer with the burnt in numbers 3856 spread. We did not forget, and we began teaching the others about their origin."

"Are there many with the number?"

"We are few, very few. But each is like a million ... like a million."

\* Story 1, which appears above, is a translation from the Yiddish (by the author) of the original short story "Yizkor", first in the trilogy "Fun Nekhtn, Haynt un Morgn", originally published in the Yiddish students' magazine *Yugntruf* (Aug - Dec 1985 issue, New York). Stories 2 and 3 will appear in future issues of *CyberCozen*.

## Mother and Daughter reviews: ■ ■

**FINDER** by Emma Bull (Tor 1994, 317 p.)

*The Mother:* Dr. Sara Svetitsky, Dept. of Astrophysics, Tel Aviv U.

*The Daughter:* Shuli Svetitsky, 7th Grade, Tzfira High School, Tzafaria

Reviewed by Sara Svetitsky:

**Finder** is part of the **Bordertown** shared-world fantasy series created by Terri Windling and built upon by several authors of the "Minnesota Mafia", most notably Will Shetterly who wrote the previous two novels set in the Borderlands (and invented some of the characters that appear here). I have always thought of shared-world series, including commercial versions such as the **Star Trek** books, as "mind candy": at their worst they're dreadful and even at their best they're a treat or a weakness, not real food. **Finder** shows me to be wrong. A novel can in fact come out of a shared world and be an excellent stand-alone book that can be read with great pleasure with no reference at all to the rest of the series. The Borderlands are an area where Faerie or the Elflands came back into contact with the World (the world we know), and

Bordertown was a normal Worldly town which is now somewhere between the realm of physics and the realm of magic; neither magic nor technology can be relied on to work at any given time or place. The town is populated by humans, elves who can cross over the Border from the Elflands (humans cannot cross the other way) and halfies who are the offspring of human-elf crosses. Bordertown does have an infrastructure of adults who work, trade with the World and Faerie, establish a Town Council and hire police, but in the novels that is only background for the culture of young people who ran away from either elf or human society. These kids variously abuse drugs, form gangs, live for rock music, try to make art, music and poetry, run stores, and perform basic services. Which brings us to Orient, the hero of **Finder**, who makes his living finding things. He is an apparently normal human with the gift of "psycho-location", meaning that he can find anything he is asked to even if he has never seen the object; an ability that ruined his life in the World but makes him a nice living in Bordertown -- until a dangerous new drug hits the streets and a policewoman gets the idea of enlisting Orient to "find" some clues. So we get the atmosphere of a hard-boiled police procedural, with fantasy trappings, set in a grungy but arty background. Imagine a low-rent Greenwich Village where the running gang wars are between elf and human motorcycle gangs.

So the setting has obvious charm, but what is most impressive in **Finder** is not the setting but the story and the development of the main character. The weakness of the Bordertown setting, in my opinion, is that it is a society of runaways. While each individual character may have had good reasons for running away from either the World or Faerie, they are still marked by being misfits, outcasts, people who couldn't or didn't want to face their native society. They come to Bordertown and as someone says in this book, they cut off the past like 4 inches of out-of-fashion hair. But Orient, who is an annoying little git at the start of the story, comes to face his past and accept responsibility. He also has to face mortality when a major and very likable character dies in a plague connected with the new drug. (That Bull actually kills off a major character, with no last-minute happy ending, is a sign of how much more meaty than the usual shared-world fare this book is). **Finder** manages to combine the glamour and youthful high spirits of the earlier Borderland books with some genuine emotional weight. Highly recommended, also for teenagers.

#### Reviewed by Shuli Svetitsky

I agree with practically everything my mother wrote above about **Finder**. (You must understand this hardly ever happens. It should make her happy.) I know she's written about the atmosphere of the Borderlands and Bordertown, so I'm not going to write about that. I'm going to write about what makes this book fantasy and not science fiction.

In my opinion, good science fiction has aliens that are alien, unlike many of the TV so-called "science fiction" shows that we have today. The aliens there are disappointingly human. An alien should really act alienly - not be humanoid all the time, not know about the technologies and customs of the human race, their slang, what they like to eat and drink, etc. They should not act human.

Which is not the case in the books in the Borderlands shared-world series I have read, and is not the case in **Finder**. The Elves are very like humans. They ride motor-cycles (even if they have spell-boxes for motors), they get drunk and drugged the way the humans do (though not necessarily on the same substances), they breed with humans (a thing aliens shouldn't be able to do). I think this makes it fantasy. And also very, very believable.

■ ■ ■

Next SCIENCE FICTION CLUB Meeting:  
Tuesday, July 30, 1996, 8:15 p.m. -- Lecture (in ENGLISH)  
Noam Shomron, Math Dept. University of Tel Aviv, on  
"Geometry and Space-Time"

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.

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## Israeli Society for Science Fiction and Fantasy

The first General Meeting will be in the first week of **September** (full info next month). If you have not yet joined, please try to do so before the meeting. The General Meeting will discuss plans for conferences, workshops, lectures, film screening and more.

**האגודה הישראלית למדע בדיוני ולפנטזיה**  
האסיפה הכללית הראשונה תתקיים בשבוע הראשון של ספטמבר. פרטים מדויקים יפורסמו בחודש הבא. אם עדיין לא הצטרפת, נסה להירשם לפני האסיפה. הנושאים שעל הפרק: תוכניות לכנסים, ימי עיון, הרצאות, הקרנות סרטים, ועוד.



## Hugo Award Nominee Writers

Some of this year's younger Hugo Award nominee authors have received attention in **CyberCozen** pages. A **Stephen Baxter** (born 1957) book was reviewed here by Dotan Dimet in September 1992. Two **Neal Stephenson** (born 1959) books were reviewed last month by Sara Svetitsky. This month we're bringing you Sara's review of a book by young Australian SF writer, **Greg Egan** (born 1961), who seems to me the best short story writer since John Varley. **TWO** of Egan's new short stories are Hugo nominees; one of them, "Luminous", appeared in the anthology **The Year's Best Science Fiction**, edited by Gardner Dozois.

Egans's Hugo nominee stories are NOT in the book reviewed below:

## AXIOMATIC, by Greg Egan -- Reviewed by Sara Svetitsky

When Bill Silverman recommended this book, the word he kept using was "brilliant". And it is brilliant: the 18 short stories in it contain almost that many unsettling, creepy, and very original concepts. What would happen if people could leave short messages to their past selves? If childless yuppies could buy little "almost-babies" that were guaranteed to die before they got to be troublesome? If lovers could trade bodies and minds? If you could buy personality implants to make you a saint or a killer? This is real "idea" SF; it reminded me of the great days of Clarke except that the concepts Egan is throwing off like sparks are based on the "soft" sciences (and the new fad of chaos theory) rather than on the "hard". The down side of the book is also reminiscent of Clarke: Egan doesn't really write all that well. Too many of the stories are first-person recitals along the lines of "what happened when I got my personality implant". He does too much "telling" and not enough "showing". He also

fails to develop characters as people rather than as convenient modes of illustrating his concepts. There are only 2 or 3 stories in the book where I remember the people as well as the ideas. When Egan learns to write a bit better he will really be spectacular; he is already well worth reading.

(Millennium, 1995 368 p.)

■ ■

### Editor's Request

On the other hand, nobody has reviewed such nominee authors as **Robert J. Sawyer** (born 1960), **Michael A. Burstein**, **Allen Steele** (born 1958), **Tony Daniel** (born 1963), **Maureen F. McHugh** (born 1959), etc. How about volunteers to review books/stories by any of these young authors?

■ ■

## Hebrew Science Fiction in Israel: A Brief History

by editor and translator **Emanuel Lotem**

There is hardly any original, Hebrew-language SF written in Israel. The total number of genre SF novels for adults published in this country up till now does not exceed half a dozen, and the number of short stories is probably less than one hundred. This curious fact will be discussed below, as a topic in its own right. For now, the obvious consequence is that whatever SF is published in Israel is translated -- from English, by and large, although there have been translations from other languages (e.g., Lem from Polish).

Until the late 1960s most SF came out as children's literature -- particularly Jules Verne and other early classics -- as well as mainstream SF by such as Poe, Orwell or Maurois. "Grownup" genre SF was all but nonexistent. A number of translations did show up (one remembers with special fondness Heinlein's **The Puppet Masters**), but those were sporadic, eclectic, and most importantly, printed by insignificant publishers, hence not widely distributed.

A turning point was reached in the early 1970s. For the first time, "respectable" publishers began to run SF series, most edited by experts in the field, and translated by professional, rather than occasional translators. At this time Asimov's **Foundation** and **Robot** series, Clarke's **Childhood's End** and many other classics were translated. Herbert's **Dune** was a landmark, proving as it did to the laymen that SF can have as much depth, complexity and literary craftsmanship as any other kind of literature.

The late 1970s/early 1980s were thus the "golden age" of Israeli SF. The number of titles in print proliferated, and readership increased -- especially, it seems, in the younger age groups, up to the mid-twenties. A magazine was started, **Fantasia 2000**, first as a joint effort by enthusiasts, later on as a strictly commercial venture. In its heyday, it sold some 5,000 copies per issue, which was a reasonable reflection of the extent of Israel's readership base.

Yet this was not to last for long. Much of the early excitement soon died out, for several reasons: curiosity value naturally diminished over time (you've seen one, you've seen them all); some of the latecomers were not as particular as the earlier publishers, in terms of title selection, quality of translation or printing quality, and many a famous author was cruelly butchered in this way; and finally, a surge in original Hebrew literature (mainstream or experimental, but not SF anyway) began to draw readers away from all translated literature, including SF.

In 1984 the aforementioned SF magazine, **Fantasia 2000**, the only one

of its kind, closed down for lack of funds. Soon afterwards nearly all publishers who had joined in when the going was good quit the field, leaving behind only the three or four original ones. Those who remained in this business decided to limit both the number of titles published annually and the number of copies per title. As a result, such classics as Niven's **Ringworld** have been out of print for more than 10 years.

At the same time, sword-and-sorcery fantasy began to make headway, in the wake of D&D and computer "quest" games. Soon **Dragon Lance** and other titles of that ilk mushroomed. During the early 1990s, the balance was heavily tilted in this way between the two kin genres. However, as the generation of fantasy readers began to grow up, many of them began turning to "harder" literature, namely SF. Thus the mid-1990s are witnessing a cautious revival of interest in SF.

Hopefully, the foundation of the **Israeli Society for Science Fiction and Fantasy** in May 1996 (with Brian Aldiss as inaugurator) will help make SF a permanent aspect of the Israeli literary scene. Among other things, this group hopes to restart magazine publishing, encourage original (Hebrew) writing, and create a larger Israeli fandom.

### **Why Is There No Original Israeli Science Fiction?**

It is rather strange that Hebrew literature, which is on the whole exceptionally prolific (bearing in mind the total size of the market), hardly includes any SF at all. Israel is a small country; native Hebrew speakers number perhaps three million, with perhaps another two million speaking Hebrew as a second language. Almost all Israelis speak English as a second or third language (a high school graduate is supposed to be able to read an English language novel without much difficulty -- at least in theory). Many Israelis have a good command of other languages, from Arabic and Russian to more exotic tongues.

Bearing all this in mind, it is rather remarkable that the number of Hebrew language books published in Israel now averages ten titles per day. While many of these are textbooks, cookbooks, Do-It-Yourself books, professional literature etc., there are still a great many fiction titles published each year. But among them, there is perhaps one SF title -- in a good year. Which forces us to ask the question "why".

Several theories have been advanced. According to one, the Israeli situation is so unique, with political, military and social developments moving so fast, that Israelis do not need the diversion (or escape) traditionally provided by SF. They can read daily newspapers instead, and be equally amazed. Yet one need only reflect on the US scene during the 1960s in order to realize that this explanation cannot be satisfactory. Americans at that time had political turmoil, war, social upheaval and dynamic cultural change -- and a proliferation of SF as well.

Another suggestion, which seems somewhat more plausible, holds that Israeli society tends to be rather parochial. Israelis are mainly interested in the here-and-now, which fact is reflected also by their literary tastes. And indeed, most current Israeli literature is exceptionally focused on local themes, on protagonists that one can meet at the nearby supermarket, and on plots which tend to connect with everyday experience. Even the more experimental, "post-modernistic" writing tends to conform to this norm. Obviously, SF cannot readily emerge from such a background.

But this writer tends to believe in yet another explanation, which has to do with the reputation SF has in Israel. Traditionally, of course, SF has been regarded world-wide as a childish, escapist,

outlandish, not-serious or otherwise freakish pursuit -- until the 1960s, at least, in the English-speaking world. The 1950s (when SF's reputation was at probably its lowest ebb in the West) were the time Israeli society began to open up to Western, English-language-centered culture.

Until then, the main cultural influences in Israel had been Eastern- or Central-European. During the 1950s a period began of importing culture from the West, including translated novels and short stories, plays and poetry, movies, and later on TV. Not surprisingly, therefore, one of the attitudes imported was this tendency to despise SF, which was so prevalent in the West at that time. This has become so ingrained that serious Israeli writers are simply reluctant to write SF. Even those who do so tend to deny, often vehemently, that what they have written should or could be regarded as SF ("since it is a good novel, it can't be SF", said one of them in an interview a few years ago).

Consequently, a young aspiring writer will commit literary suicide if he or she decides to write genre SF. They will be categorized, ostracized, condemned. Only writers coming out of fandom are willing to take this risk, and those are precious few.

Strangely enough, this theory, if indeed it is true, holds some hope for the future. Western, particularly American, cultural attitudes and fads, are quite readily absorbed and emulated in Israel -- some sooner, some later. Thus recognition of SF as a legitimate, "respectable" literary genre is long overdue in Israel. But hopefully, this too will come to pass.

■ ■

### Short Reviews: by Aharon Sheer

**The Robert Sheckley Omnibus** (1973), 392 pages. Recommended by Noam Shomron. Robert Sheckley must be the finest SF satirist that ever lived. His stories don't give you belly laughs, nor is he making fun of SF as such, the way Douglas Adams does. What Sheckley does is make fun of life, philosophy, science, history, you name it. I started reading this for the novelette **Immortality, Inc.** on which the movie **Freejack** (1992, with Mick Jagger and Anthony Hopkins) is supposedly based. What a difference! **Freejack** borrowed one idea out of Sheckley's hundred and made a whole movie from it. Or consider utopia. Has there ever been a more perfect utopia than that described in **A Ticket to Tranai**? It's a delicious takeoff on anarchism, equality of the sexes, elimination of almost all crime, .... If you've never read Sheckley, start now!

**Blue Champagne** by John Varley (1986), 290 pages. Recommended by Nikolay Borschevsky and Bill Silverman. John Varley is one of the best SF short story writers. He creates a very persuasive future, in which events of strong human interest happen which are vitally connected with that future environment. One of his special interests is the problems of crippled people (he was even married for a time to a crippled woman). In this book the title story is about a quadriplegic woman who has a remarkable (and extremely expensive) prosthetic covering her body, which enables her to do almost everything normal people can do. Her feelings as a crippled person almost totally dependent on her prosthesis are a central part of the story. Varley often overdoes his emotional scenes, but many of his stories deal with the deep feelings and new human interactions caused by new technology, and that's unusual in SF.

■ ■

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3500 used SF Fantasy Star-Trek etc. books in English. **Beverly's Books**, 18 Herzl St., Haifa 33121, 04-866-4810. Takes mail orders.

■ ■

## NO MEETING OF REHOVOT SF THIS MONTH

**NO Meeting** at the home of Tova and Bill Silverman, **NO Meeting** 19 Eisenberg St., fourth floor, Rehovot, Tel. 08-947-6142.

**The Israeli Society for Science Fiction and Fantasy** (members only) will meet

**Wednesday September 4, 8:00 p.m.** -- General Meeting (in **HEBREW**)  
In Beit HaSofer, 6 Kaplan St., Tel Aviv

CyberCozen SF Newsletter, Vol. VIII, Num. 8, August 1996. 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) 1996, All rights reserved to specified authors and artists.

**האגודה הישראלית למדע בדיוני ולפנטזיה**  
**האסיפה הכללית הראשונה** (לחברי האגודה בלבד) תתקיים ביום רביעי 4.9.96, בשעה 20:00, בבית הסופר, רח' קפלן 6, תל-אביב. אם עדיין לא הצטרפת, אפשר יהיה להירשם בבית הסופר מיד לפני תחילת האסיפה (80 ש"ח). הנושאים שעל הפרק: תוכניות לכנסים, ימי עיון, סדנאות, הרצאות, הקרנות סרטים, ועוד.

## Israeli Society for Science Fiction and Fantasy

The first **General Meeting** (members only) will be on **Wednesday, September 4, 8:00 p.m.**, at Beit HaSofer, 6 Kaplan St., Tel Aviv. If you have not yet joined, you may do so at Beit HaSofer before the start of meeting (80 shekels). The meeting will discuss plans for **conferences, workshops, lectures, film screening** and more (all in Hebrew).



**Ed. Note:** Last month I asked for volunteers to review books/stories by various young Hugo-nominee authors. For the youngest of them I couldn't give a birth date: Michael Burstein (born 1970) is not listed in my SF Encyclopedia. Lucy Scheidler promptly provided a review:

### MICHAEL BURSTEIN: A RISING STAR by Lucy Cohen Schneidler

At twenty-six, Michael Burstein must be the youngest of the 1996 Hugo nominees, as well as the newest (in length of career). The fact that his first published story, "**TeleAbsence**" (ANALOG, July 1995), only saw print last year makes him eligible for a spot on the ballot for the Campbell Award for best new author, in addition to the Hugo nomination.

So what does Burstein write? First of all, as a trained physicist, it is natural for him to write mostly hard SF, in which the plot is dependent on a future development in science or technology. It is certainly within his capability to imagine impossible scenarios, but he is too much a scientist to devise such, generally. An exception, by intention, is his second published story, "**Sentimental Value**," which was a "Probability Zero" short short in the October issue of ANALOG.

"TeleAbsence" is what I think of as a feel-good story, in which the SF setting is used as background for a human interest plot which reinforces values that any right-minded reader already identifies with. In this story, it's the idea that a good education, in a supportive

environment, should be available to every child, regardless of race or economic level; in Barry Longyear's "**Enemy Mine**" it was the idea that understanding leads to appreciation and friendship, even between people who have been taught to hate each other. While this is a category that always does well in reader polls, I tend to prefer stories that offer a new perspective, which I might never have considered on my own.

However, it takes considerable talent to take a plausible development (Virtual Reality used to simulate an ideal classroom environment for a group of children who are physically located in cities spread across the country) and work a well-structured story around it, even if it has some knee-jerk sentimentality. And the sentimentality may be a better starting point for reader identification in less easily recognized scenarios than Greg Egan's much colder approach.

Before he was a Hugo-nominee, before he had even had a story accepted for publication, Michael attended the well-known Clarion workshop on a Wollheim Memorial scholarship, awarded by the New York Science Fiction Society (Lunarians), making him the protege of a whole bunch of New York fans, many of us old enough to be his parents. Whatever it was like to have us hovering over him as his stories took their first steps out in the world, he never seemed daunted by it.

While Michael Burstein has some stories scheduled for upcoming issues of ANALOG, it would probably be premature to look for his name on the bookshelves of your favorite store's SF section. But wait a few years: space is huge, and he's just gotten started. ■ ■

## Hebrew Science Fiction by Eli Eshed

The first literary works resembling what we today call science fiction are the Jewish apocryphal books of **Enoch** from the third century B.C. which present a biblical figure journeying in time and space till he learns the innermost secrets of the creation of the universe. These opened a genre in Hebrew about journeys by biblical figures, which have similarities to "cosmological" SF of the kind written by Olaf Stapledon.

Besides those there were stories of what is still the most important contribution of Hebrew literature to world SF, the artificial man, the "**Golem**", which deeply influenced various writers on the subject of artificial life such as Mary Shelley in her novel **Frankenstein**.

In the late 1800's Hebrew begun to exist again as a living literary tongue side by side with the Zionist movement which wished to achieve the utopian dream of returning the Jews to Israel. It was inevitable that there also appear the first modern works of SF, all of which were utopias which presented tours of ideal future societies built by Jews in a future Palestine. Theodor Herzl, the founder of Zionism, himself wrote such a utopia in German, **Altneuland** (1902). The Hebrew translation of its title, **Tel Aviv**, provided the name of the first modern Hebrew city, today the largest city in Israel. However the genre remained marginal and most of the few works which were produced were for children.

In Palestine of the 1930's and 40's, SF appeared in the poetic works of two of the most important Hebrew poets of that era, Zalman Shneor and Jacob Cohen. Shneor wrote several deeply pessimistic poems about futuristic wars and the end of mankind and the world. Cohen wrote

optimistic poems about a future in which mankind becomes immortal and conquers the whole of time and space. Cohen also wrote a play, **BeLuz** [In Luz] (1939), which is one of the few modern Hebrew works of some literary significance. It is about a hidden city of immortals facing an ideological crisis because of the debate to reveal itself to the rest of mankind and give them the secret of immortality, or to keep its isolation, peace and stagnation.

This tradition of poetic science fiction was continued by one of the most important Israeli poets of the 60's and 70's, David Avidan, a futurist prophet like Cohen. He wrote many poems with SF subjects and even wrote and directed an SF movie **Message from the Future** (1981) which despite an interesting subject was poorly made.

Probably the most famous creation of SF in Israel is a series for young children, **Dani-Din HaYeled HaRoe VeEino Nireh** [Dani-Din the Invisible Boy] (1963 - present), by On Sarig (a pseudonym of a well known children's author). Its many volumes are a part of the collective memory of most Israelis the way "Superman" is for Americans, and resulted in many parodies.

The best space opera for children is a quite pleasant series **The Adventures of Captain Yuno** (started 1964) by Eli Sagie. Here we follow the continuing adventures of a boy astronaut on various planets. Unfortunately the series stopped in mid plot after the author became one of Israel's most successful authors of comedies.

A team of writers under the pseudonym "A. Bانش" wrote the interesting **Ral Dark Series** in which each book had "Ral Dark" as hero but took place in a completely different universe. The best was the first, **Keisar HaCochav HaSagol** [The Emperor of the Purple Planet] (1968), which is a very funny space adventure resembling works by Robert Sheckley and Fredric Brown.

The most important children's SF book (there is quite a lot of that) was **HaMasa HaShelishi shel Aldeberan** [The Third Voyage of the Aldeberan] (1979), written by major Hebrew writer Dan Zalka, about a boy who travels in time and makes contact with an alien robot in the Byzantine age.

A very successful SF book was **HaDerech L'Eini Harod** [The Road to Ein Harod] by Amos Kenan (1984) about a future Israel ruled by a military regime. This book was made into a movie (1989) mainly known for the appearance -- playing an Israeli soldier! -- of Alessandra Mussolini, Mussolini's granddaughter and today a leader of the Italian fascists. Like the movie directed by Avidan it was a flop.

Two SF books provoked interest by the critics because of the eminence of their authors and their provocative political subject matter: **Pundako shel Yirmiyahu** [Jeremiah's Inn] by Binyamin Tammuz (1984), and **HaMalachim Baim** [The Angels are Coming] by Yitzhak ben Ner (1987), both dystopias about a future in which Ultra-Orthodox Jewish fanatics have taken complete control (a common fear in Israel).

### Uniquely Israeli SF?

Can it be said there is original Israeli SF in the sense that it could have been written only in Israel and nowhere else? Unfortunately there is very little such. Most works of Israeli SF are slavish imitations of American models with nothing particularly Israeli about

them.

Two sub-genres are exceptions:

1) Political SF books such as those mentioned above (by Kenan and by Tammuz) which present unpleasant scenarios about the future of Israel (and are almost the only SF books noticed by the media as the result), and

2) Novels which take their inspiration from the Jewish past (mostly biblical) and present it in SF terms resembling those of Erich von Deniken. Most of these books (many of them are for children) are very bad, but there are a few, such as **Tikun** [Correction] by Gil Ilutovich (1994), and **HaKof HaPatp'tan** [The Babbler Monkey] by Ami Dvir (1995), which present human and Jewish history as a result of alien experiments. These are at least passable and sometimes even more than that, and in a sense close the circle begun by the Enoch apocryphal books by presenting the secrets of the universe and the history of the earth and of mankind as the work of a slowly revealed alien intelligence. ■ ■

### Short Reviews: by Aharon Sheer

**The Man Who Knew Infinity -- A Life of the Genius Ramanujan** by Robert Kanigel, 373 pages. Recommended by Tova Silverman. One of the reasons I like reading science fiction is that I enjoy those novels that portray alien societies, and the interaction between such a society and the outsider; or alternatively, the reactions of aliens to a society like ours. This book, which is not fiction, portrays two fascinating alien societies, the interactions between them, and the tragic fate of an alien from one of them in the other. In this sense, it is in many ways deeper and more interesting than the best SF novels which deal with such situations. The two alien societies are India, and England, in the late 19th and early twentieth centuries.

The two alien heros are the great self-taught Indian mathematician Ramanujan ("pronounced Rah-MAH-na-jun, with only light stress on the second syllable"), and the great English mathematician G. H. Hardy, who recognized Ramanujan's remarkable talents, brought him to Cambridge, England, and worked with him for several years.

For me the book was a page-turner. I was absolutely fascinated. Strongly recommended to those interested in extraordinarily intelligent aliens.

**Moving Mars** by Greg Bear (1993), 500 pages. It's hard to read a novel about humans living on Mars after reading **Red Mars** by Kim Stanley Robinson. The comparison can only be negative. This book provides some interesting speculations about what Mars society might be like a hundred years after its settlement. As in **Red Mars**, the settlers' interactions with Earth, and conflicting objectives both on Mars and on Earth as to the purpose of living on Mars, are a central part of the story. The characters are wooden, the story is boring, and the ending is more like a pseudo-science-based fantasy than a science-based SF novel.

**Araminta Station** by Jack Vance (1988), 554 pages. Given to me by Gina Alfandari. This is the first in the **Cadwal Chronicles** trilogy. Typical Vance, with complex characters living in a complex world, facing conflicts not only with strange and exotic alien societies (and what an imagination Vance has in creating them!), but also with each other. This is not one of Vance's great books, since it does not introduce many really satirical social ideas, and it is much too long for what it contains, but for Jack Vance fans like me, it is enjoyable to read. ■ ■

## Next SCIENCE FICTION CLUB Meeting:

Tuesday, October 1, 1996, 8:15 p.m. -- Lecture (in HEBREW)

**WARNING:** This is **Hol HaMoed Succoth** אזהרה: חול המועד סוכות  
 אהרן שיר, מדע בדיוני רחובות -- Aharon Sheer, Rehovot SF  
 "מה עושים בכנס מדע בדיוני עולמי - The 1996 World SF Convention"

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).

CyberCozen SF Newsletter, Vol. VIII, Num. 9, September 1996. Editor:  
 Aharon Sheer. Ed.Assist: Elana Dror. For mail delivery of CyberCozen,  
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 Sheer can hand-deliver it, 10 shekels. Meeting notices only, 13  
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## שנה טובה ומבורכת !! Happy New Year

חיים ביקום ערב עיון לכבוד מלאת 25 שנה למצפה הכוכבים ע"ש וייז  
 מרצים באסטרונומיה, ביולוגיה, קולנוע ופילוסופיה יהרהרו על כוכבי לכת,  
 חיים, עב"מים, וכיבוש הגלקסיה. יוקרן סרט קצר "המזח". אוניברסיטת תל אביב  
 אודיטוריום בר-שירה, 10.10.96, יום ה', מ-18:00 ועד 22:00. כניסה חופשית.

### Letters to the Editor:

Dear Aharon,

Thank you for a copy of your newsletter, **CyberCozen**. I have  
 enjoyed it and am sorry that my health and finances prevent me from  
 attending your meetings.

I have just had TWO, yes two, sf novels accepted by Thunder  
 Mountain Press of Billings, Montana, USA. They are **NEVAHE** and its  
 sequel **DINURUS**. They are now on the Internet: they can be accessed  
 through the website: [alpinet.net/bookstore](http://alpinet.net/bookstore).

I have decided to sell my 50 year collection of sf pocket books.  
 There are about 2,000, including many out-of-print, first editions, etc.

I am only interested in selling to a serious collector and will  
 negotiate a fair price to serious. (Dealers will pay 20 IS per book on  
 average.) Please let your people know.

With best personal wishes.

Bob Smallman

36 HaAvoda St., Neve Remez, Zichron Yaakov 30900, Israel  
 Tel: 06-399603 (no modem yet); Neighbor's FAX: 06-390035.

Dear Bob,

How many people will pay to download a book via the Internet? Will  
 this method become a profitable way in the future for people to publish  
 books? We'll be interested in hearing what kind of responses you get.

Aharon

■ ■

### A Nice New Year's Present from Alon Itzkowitz

The next pages are the second issue of **KokoCozen**, by Alon Itzkowitz,  
 after a three year silence. **CyberCozen** and the previous **KokoCozen** were  
 displayed at the World SF Convention in Anaheim California last month.  
 Somebody there who saw it asked me if **KokoCozen** came out regularly, or  
 if it was a one-off satire. I said it was a one-off. Well, now it is a  
 two-off! Thanks, Alon, for the nice New Year's present.

■ ■

למשל את ליבכם:  
המזור גדול על אמרי'תכם בלעז!  
אם קהלים כהו נעזק לכם נזק,  
לימכם הסליחה! באצרכם

ה'רבע סגור מסתלק מפה!

עציות אחזה ביצה במילואה השחורה כפניה מאכנת. לזכור

הצלת. רמי מיצן, בעזרת חסם את צרכה בכות.

"אני יכול לפרוק הכל!" הוא לא רצה שצברין האישים יזרקו החוצה.

"שאתה אטאטיס מעזר, חוצף נשים וסקרן?" עציות ניסתה לעקוף

אלוהי ימן עי לעבור, מלאכי!

רמי תבס המותנה בכוח אשר אותה לחצר השינה "אני מאכן להוצאת בטעמי ולשנות עק את התכנות".

"תבנות? איזה תבנות? אני נבאית עק סאת מהתכנות מחשב שאתה מעקק כל האם?"

"אני אסבירי הוא הצליח להציל אותה טל המיטה

"אני אצרחי איימה עציות סעחתי עק על הרבה צבריוס אבל המצביות האלה עם

המצאיות הקצלות שאתה מתייחס עימן כל פעם

רמי אחז ביצו הימנית את הפלט שהיה

כיוון אלוהי לעבר אטל ולחץ עזי.

עציות כבתה בקול חלק וכאסה נמט עק

רמי מיצן הפעיל את מחשב

על שבת מחשב במחץ.

"הדיסקט החפש כבר מאכן

הפעל לכפל שיצא מתוך

איטל המסופצת.

"ציינתות" אמר לעצמו "שאל מילת המפתח".

רמי נעמד מול המיטה וכיוון את הפלט אל איטל המנטרלת. הוא סילם סכום כסף רב

על מנת להבוק את איטל לפעולה. דק חמוף המלאכות עזב לו בוק. שולח העגובה

והגרסאות השולח שתבעת לזכרה. מי צריך אשה אמיתית כשיש תחליף שאתה יכול לשפר

עפי טעמך ובסך הכל מר מיצן היה שיפוס עק קל בכול לחיות עימי. הוא היה כל

מה שציות אמרה עזי. אז מה? אפשר לעתק בל בלחיצה כפתור.

והוא לחץ...

עציות צינקה מן המיטה בעזיזת שהפתעה אלוהי מאוז.

הוא הצמיצה לעיניו את הפלט שהוביז מחקים לא בור לעלך כל יצה ולחצה עזי.

רמי מיצן קרס על הייצרה בקול חבטה.

"הייתי מוכנה להשאיר עק את חייך והיות מתוך נציבות" אמרה לו אך במאכן שהוא

כבר היה מבלבב. שברת מיצן ניגשה אל העלפון וחייזה בקולות.

"טי.איי.אל?" שאלה

"לשחק" צדה שבר מהצב השני.

"אני מקשה שתעלה עי מוצל בכרי חפש. הקוצם לא צמצ בצריסות. אני לא מתעסקת

עם תכנות ומתכנתים"

"התלגת לא הסתתת?"

"לא, ותצאני בקשה שהפעל עק ויעגוז הכרס כמו שצריך, לצמחים הגרם עולה

לנשים מולימיות לראש יותר מצ, והם מושבים שהם המצאו להם אשה גרמנית!"



סייבר

פאנק +

סייבר פאנק פוזס

מצור אטכנולוגיה קולטות  
עציות ומסכנות גרמניות

מסוף סיברקאון  
לפנטזיה ומחקרים

# פנטזיה \* פאלם

עורק  
ומשפחה  
אזכור איזקל

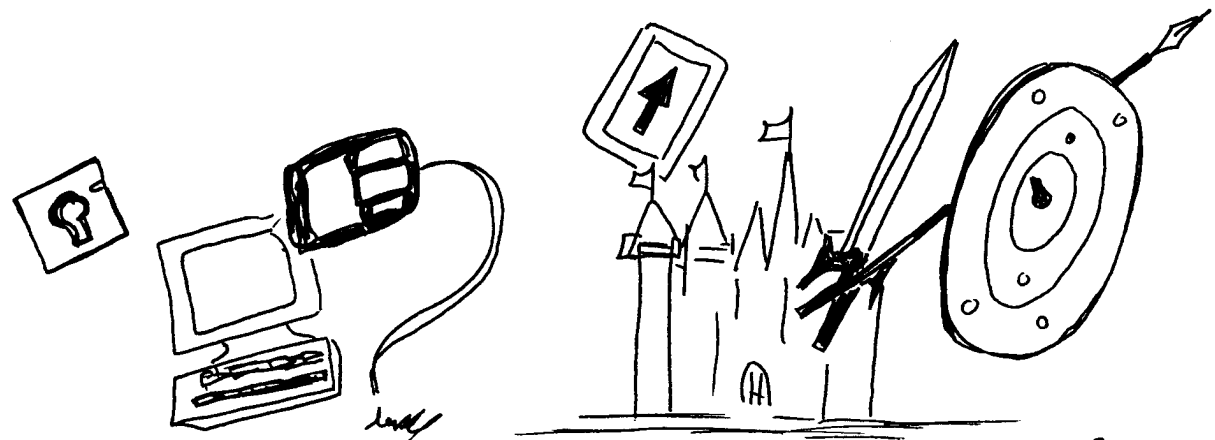
מסוף לפנטזיה ומחקרים

צבר העורק:

אני שמח לפגוש באתר מילר נסיון חדש בטא פנטזיה. בחורתי לפרגם את "ELF"  
היצור המיתולוגי בלתי רגילות על אטלס והטלה לאבילות שזלתי. עמלתי לנס  
תרגם אולי: "עלף" ביצירה האחרונה של טולקין (שפורסמה ע"י היל) ואני לא אהבתי זאת.  
מי שלא מוצא מסע זה רצוי שיכתוב לנו ויביע דעתו בטא.  
אני מקוה לפרסם חומר על ספרים (צירופים ומבוכים) סוף מישהו ירצה לתת לי חומר בטא.  
ואבקש להתייחס לצברים שאני בעבר אהבתי שיר, שפנטזיה היא צדק קלה ולפשיט  
להתחמק מבולות מצדל, במטריצות סופי מצב. טחולים, מכשפות וקוסמים  
יכולים בקלות להתחמק מכל בעיה ע"י כישוף.  
אולי נסה להכניס שהיו טבע ושהצדק בכלל לא פגש.

## מחקרים

הפרגם אולי: על מחקר מחשב (סקיבלתי מתנה מנאן) ומה "אולטימה - הצדק לתהום"  
בסיון "מיטל" מחקרים. צריכת מצרכי: P 386 תאם, זכרון 2MB RAM לפחות, רצוי  
עכבר, 8MB מקום בזיכרון קשיח (והרבה זמן חופשי למחקר).  
עזיזת המחקר: נסיכה נחשבת ע"י כוחה האופל (הציגור) (אמה) ע"י למדנה זכ. בלתי  
שלימים מאמינים אוליך באהבה למדנה (כדי להכניס את חולתן עליך לחצור  
לתהום, עולם תה קוקי מלא סבלה ולהציל את הנסיכה.  
אמה צד עק צמח (דגדגא אישה) ויכול להחליף מנאם בלתי אופי (יותר לחימה או  
כישוף). צדק חזון צביה אמה מסלוקה בעולם תלת מימדי, נלחם במפלצות, צנחאים,  
ויצורים מיתולוגיים. יש יצורים שינהלו איתך שיחה. תצטרך לישן וללכת ולהסלוק  
במחלק הרבה זמן. הצדק תאסוף סוגי רעה שישונו עק לקסם קסמים שונים, להרכיב,  
להפוך לבלתי נראה וכו'.  
(יש חלוקה הצרכה מצנרת למחקר. בלעדיה אמה אולי עולה במחקר זכ).  
לא אאמין עוד במאמרים. מי שמעלה שישיג את המחקר ויתחיל לעבוד.  
בהצלחה.



יש לכם מחקר מחשב מצנינים? שמעתי על כאלה? כתבו לנו!

חייבם מרען:  
החבור מלוגס גרמ  
סרע - לא קאפין  
עלאז גלי בלוצ'ק -  
רע זעלי בליה מאמין!

משיב ובתג זהא מתמרים: אלו, איצקובל

נתגלה מאובן  
 שלוידיה דעיר  
 מאחדים מלפני  
 מיליוני שנים  
 דובר נאסא: "אין כל הוכחה  
 שקיום חיים בעבר על המאדים  
 אפילו פרימטיבים לא הו  
 מסתכלים במאזר עלוב שכזה!"

חציה מרעיה:  
 בעילין הבא של "סיבירקאן" עשירים ופנים ביקורות סבירות של אהרן שיר  
 על ספרים. לא צריך לקטל ספרים, לא צריך לקרוא - חסד זמן וספר, אהרן שיר  
 צוה זאת בצדו בעצק!  
 בקרב יוצאי אהרן שיר ספר לקט אבן מביקורות ספרים ב"סיבירקאן" מן העתים.  
 הצמיח אותך כבר עכשיו!

צבתי בריאן אולציס מביקורו במחצית המזרחית של רחובות:  
"לא יאמרו - גתה צ'צ' חובבי מנצח סבורים ביטול של צביון ג'רחת אביב ג'ר  
באת פאחור זכר לביקור נוסף, שהרי בארצי נעלמו חובבי מנצח פטולה!"

תאבות באוצר: תיירות ברכות בשמים, והצגות לא מפלמים מיסים - יום להצלות מיסים מיצ!  
העוף הראשון: תחנות של העוף השטן לעוצצו את הצפייה ב"תיקום בארץ" היום שלישי.  
מערב הבטחון: לא נכנע להבטחה טראומטולוג מוצצו חיצונים נאסכים.

החזור בזה אל אחריותכם בעצמכם!  
אם קראתם **כבר** נאדם לכם נאדם,  
איתכם החליטה!

התאחדות

0120 12"0 24"0 36"0

מזרח אטלנטיקה קלוב  
עתי' צ'י' / מסוכנת גרמני

"הרעם אנה מסתלק מפה!"  
 עיצית אחנה ביצה במילואה השחורה כסכניה מאכנת לעבר  
 הצלת. רמי מ"צן, בעזרה, חסם את צרכה בכות.  
 "אני יכול לפרט הכל!" הלא לא רצה שצברין האישים יזרקו  
 "שאתה אלא איסט מנצח, מוצף נשים וסקרן?" עיצית ניסתה לעקו  
 אולתו "תן לי לעבור, מולד!"

דמי תבס' במתנה בכה וזר אורה לחצר הינה "אני מאכן להאזות במעלות ולענות עק  
את התכנות".

“תבנות? איזה תבנות? אני רגלית לך סלחת מהפוכות מחסה שאתה מלקק כל האם?”

= כאנא אסאביר? האן ברציאן אהצונג אונזער אונזער האט אונזער

זאנען אריינגעקומען אין דעם צענטער און זיי האבן געזען אז דאס איז דאס צענטער פאר דעם גאנצן שטאט.

החצאית הקצרה שאתה מחימה עמך כל פעם  
רמי אחת ביצו הימית את הפסל  
כילון אולם לעצור אולם ולחץ עזר.

עיצוב כיתה בקול חזק ואססה מאט עץ

מנחם מנחם

הנהגתו נכונה

י'הצ'וסק' החצ'ס כב'ר מ'בן

புலவர் கி.வ.சு. இராமன் (1907-1980)

3. 30 Jahre Leben

"צ"ת ג'ת"ת "אלהי צדק" אל מלך המלכות.

רמי נחמץ מור המיטה אביון את הפסל אל אימה המלט רחל. הוא פילם סבא כסף זה

על מנת להבין את אלה לבעיה רק חסד המלאכה את כל הן. עלה העובד

והנהאלה השואות שנתנו לזכור את אלה אמיתות כמים תחילת שאלה יכול לשפר

עפ' שטאמק ובסק הכז מר מיצן הוה טיטוס לא קא בכלל אחיות ציאל. האו הוה כל

מה שציבור האמירה צ"ל. אז מ'ה? איסר אמתן בל' גלחית כפחלר.  
והטל אמת...

עיצוב צינור מן המילר בצמצם שהתפרסם אלוטו מאלו.

הוא הצמיחה לעולם את הפלט שהביץ מחיקם לא בלור עמק כל יצה ולחצה עזא.

רמ' מויזן קרס על הייצבה בקנה חבטה.

י"ה י"ת מלכא דאין ח"ק אהבית מלך נצילת' אמה דא אן במלך שחול

כבר היה מלאכה. גברת מיצן נישאה אל האלמן אחיה בקולות.

“6. 10. 16. 17. 18. 19. 20. 21. 22. 23. 24. 25. 26. 27. 28. 29. 30. 31. 32. 33. 34. 35. 36. 37. 38. 39. 40. 41. 42. 43. 44. 45. 46. 47. 48. 49. 50. 51. 52. 53. 54. 55. 56. 57. 58. 59. 60. 61. 62. 63. 64. 65. 66. 67. 68. 69. 70. 71. 72. 73. 74. 75. 76. 77. 78. 79. 80. 81. 82. 83. 84. 85. 86. 87. 88. 89. 90. 91. 92. 93. 94. 95. 96. 97. 98. 99. 100. 101. 102. 103. 104. 105. 106. 107. 108. 109. 110. 111. 112. 113. 114. 115. 116. 117. 118. 119. 120. 121. 122. 123. 124. 125. 126. 127. 128. 129. 130. 131. 132. 133. 134. 135. 136. 137. 138. 139. 140. 141. 142. 143. 144. 145. 146. 147. 148. 149. 150. 151. 152. 153. 154. 155. 156. 157. 158. 159. 160. 161. 162. 163. 164. 165. 166. 167. 168. 169. 170. 171. 172. 173. 174. 175. 176. 177. 178. 179. 180. 181. 182. 183. 184. 185. 186. 187. 188. 189. 190. 191. 192. 193. 194. 195. 196. 197. 198. 199. 200. 201. 202. 203. 204. 205. 206. 207. 208. 209. 210. 211. 212. 213. 214. 215. 216. 217. 218. 219. 220. 221. 222. 223. 224. 225. 226. 227. 228. 229. 230. 231. 232. 233. 234. 235. 236. 237. 238. 239. 240. 241. 242. 243. 244. 245. 246. 247. 248. 249. 250. 251. 252. 253. 254. 255. 256. 257. 258. 259. 260. 261. 262. 263. 264. 265. 266. 267. 268. 269. 270. 271. 272. 273. 274. 275. 276. 277. 278. 279. 280. 281. 282. 283. 284. 285. 286. 287. 288. 289. 290. 291. 292. 293. 294. 295. 296. 297. 298. 299. 300. 301. 302. 303. 304. 305. 306. 307. 308. 309. 310. 311. 312. 313. 314. 315. 316. 317. 318. 319. 320. 321. 322. 323. 324. 325. 326. 327. 328. 329. 330. 331. 332. 333. 334. 335. 336. 337. 338. 339. 340. 341. 342. 343. 344. 345. 346. 347. 348. 349. 350. 351. 352. 353. 354. 355. 356. 357. 358. 359. 360. 361. 362. 363. 364. 365. 366. 367. 368. 369. 370. 371. 372. 373. 374. 375. 376. 377. 378. 379. 380. 381. 382. 383. 384. 385. 386. 387. 388. 389. 390. 391. 392. 393. 394. 395. 396. 397. 398. 399. 400. 401. 402. 403. 404. 405. 406. 407. 408. 409. 410. 411. 412. 413. 414. 415. 416. 417. 418. 419. 420. 421. 422. 423. 424. 425. 426. 427. 428. 429. 430. 431. 432. 433. 434. 435. 436. 437. 438. 439. 440. 441. 442. 443. 444. 445. 446. 447. 448. 449. 450. 451. 452. 453. 454. 455. 456. 457. 458. 459. 460. 461. 462. 463. 464. 465. 466. 467. 468. 469. 470. 471. 472. 473. 474. 475. 476. 477. 478. 479. 480. 481. 482. 483. 484. 485. 486. 487. 488. 489. 490. 491. 492. 493. 494. 495. 496. 497. 498. 499. 500. 501. 502. 503. 504. 505. 506. 507. 508. 509. 510. 511. 512. 513. 514. 515. 516. 517. 518. 519. 520. 521. 522. 523. 524. 525. 526. 527. 528. 529. 530. 531. 532. 533. 534. 535. 536. 537. 538. 539. 540. 541. 542. 543. 544. 545. 546. 547. 548. 549. 550. 551. 552. 553. 554. 555. 556. 557. 558. 559. 560. 561. 562. 563. 564. 565. 566. 567. 568. 569. 570. 571. 572. 573. 574. 575. 576. 577. 578. 579. 580. 581. 582. 583. 584. 585. 586. 587. 588. 589. 590. 591. 592. 593. 594. 595. 596. 597. 598. 599. 600. 601. 602. 603. 604. 605. 606. 607. 608. 609. 610. 611. 612. 613. 614. 615. 616. 617. 618. 619. 620. 621. 622. 623. 624. 625. 626. 627. 628. 629. 630. 631. 632. 633. 634. 635. 636. 637. 638. 639. 640. 641. 642. 643. 644. 645. 646. 647. 648. 649. 650. 651. 652. 653. 654. 655. 656. 657. 658. 659. 660. 661. 662. 663. 664. 665. 666. 667. 668. 669. 670. 671. 672. 673. 674. 675. 676. 677. 678. 679. 680. 681. 682. 683. 684. 685. 686. 687. 688. 689. 690. 691. 692. 693. 694. 695. 696. 697. 698. 699. 700. 701. 702. 703. 704. 705. 706. 707. 708. 709. 710. 711. 712. 713. 714. 715. 716. 717. 718. 719. 720. 721. 722. 723. 724. 725. 726. 727. 728. 729. 730. 731. 732. 733. 734. 735. 736. 737. 738. 739. 740. 741. 742. 743. 744. 745. 746. 747. 748. 749. 750. 751. 752. 753. 754. 755. 756. 757. 758. 759. 760. 761. 762. 763. 764. 765. 766. 767. 768. 769. 770. 771. 772. 773. 774. 775. 776. 777. 778. 779. 780. 781. 782. 783. 784. 785. 786. 787. 788. 789. 790. 791. 792. 793. 794. 795. 796. 797. 798. 799. 800. 801. 802. 803. 804. 805. 806. 807. 808. 809. 810. 811. 812. 813. 814. 815. 816. 817. 818. 819. 820. 821. 822. 823. 824. 825. 826. 827. 828. 829. 830. 831. 832. 833. 834. 835. 836. 837. 838. 839. 840. 841. 842. 843. 844. 845. 846. 847. 848. 849.

המחלקה הכלכלית

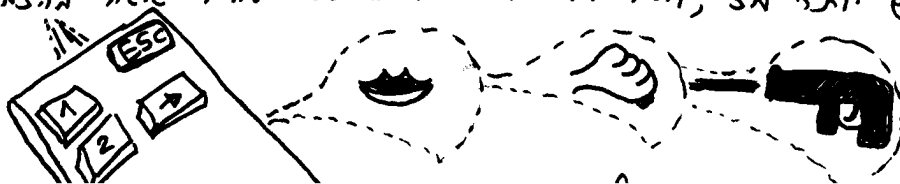
י"א מנחם שנת ה'תשנ"ח. מנחם שנת ה'תשנ"ח. מנחם שנת ה'תשנ"ח.

עם תבואת / מתנות

ה'הכלאה לא השתתה?"

ישראל, ותצא אל גבקה שהשלט עלו ורגלז הכרם כחל שצ'יק, לבחמים הכרם עולה

על אשכנזי מלכות יתיר מצי, והם חלשים שהם המצאו להם אלה בהצמחה!



מוסף סיברקאון  
לפנטזיה ומחקרים

# פנטזיה \* פלפ

עורק  
ומעט  
אזון איזקל

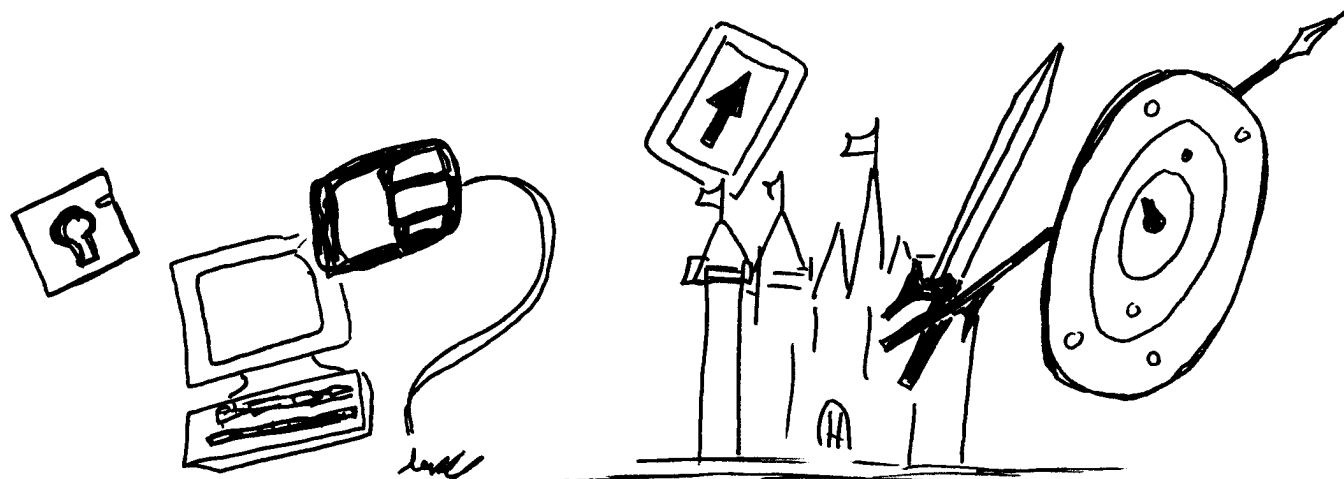
מוסף לפנטזיה ומחקרים

צבר העורק:

אני שמח לפרסם כגון מצור ניסיון חדש בטא פנטזיה. בחורתי לפרסם את "ELF"  
היצור המיתולוגי בעל תכונות של אלגיות והנאה לאבולוציה שלטנית. עמלתי לפרסם  
תרגם אותו "עלף" ביצירתו באמנות של טולקין (ספריסטאף ע' בנא) ואני לא אהבתי זאת.  
מי שלא מרוצב מספיק זה רצוי שיכחל עלו ויהי צעמא בטאטא.  
אני מקרה לפרסם חומר על ספרים (צירקטים ומבוכים) סוף מיסא ירצה לפרסם חומר בטאטא.  
ואבקש להתייחס לצבריות שאמר בעבר אהרון שיר, שפנטזיה היא צדק קלה ולפשיט  
להתחמק מבגלות מצדל, המטריצות סופרי מצ'ה. טולקין, מכספול וקוסמים  
יכולים בקלות להתחמק מכל בעיני ע' כישוף.  
אם נטה להוכיח שהיא טועה ושהצדק בכלל לא פסול.

## מחקרים

הפרס אמלר על מחקר מחשב (פקיבלתי מתנה מצאן) ושל "אולטימה -הצדק לתקום"  
בשיווק "מיטאז" מחקרים. צריאת מצרכי: 386 PC תואם, זכרון 2MB RAM לפחות, רצוי  
עכבר, 8MB מקום בזיסק קשים (והרבה זמן חופשי למחקר).  
עצילת המחקר: נסיכה נחשבת ע' כחולת האולף והציגור (אמה) ע' למחשה זכ. כשאתים  
שמוערים מאמרים אונק באמנות למחשה (כ'י זכוכה את חולתן ע' לחרור  
לתואם, ע'לם תר קיקי מלא סנטל ולהציג את כעסיה.  
אמה צר ע' צמל (זכר או אישה) ויכול לפרסם מנאם תכונות אופי (יותר לחימה או  
כישוף). צדק חזון צפיה אמה מסלוגה בעולם תלת מימדי, נלחם במכונות, צרכהושים,  
ויצורים מיתולוגיים. יש יצורים שינהלו אונק שיחה. תצטירק לישן וללמוד ולהסלוגה  
במחוק הרבה זמן. הצדק תאסוף סוגי חנה שיעצו ע' לקסום קסמים שונים, להרכיב,  
להפוך לבלתי נראה וכו'.  
(יש חלוקה הצרכה מצרכי למחקר. הלעציה אמה אונק עצלה במחקר זכ).  
ללא סאונד ע'ל במחשבים. מי שמעלהן שיש את המחקר ויתחיל לעבוד.  
בהצלחה.



יש לכם מחקר מחשב מצטיינים? שמעתי על כאלה? כתבו לנו!

Next SCIENCE FICTION CLUB Meeting:  
Tuesday, October 29, 1996, 8:15 p.m. -- Discussion (in HEBREW)  
Discussion led by Amnon Stupp:

"Is Science Fiction Dead? --?מתי מת?"

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).

CyberCozen SF Newsletter, Vol. VIII, Num. 10, October 1996. Editor:  
Aharon Sheer. Ed.Assist: Elana Dror. For mail delivery, donation 25  
shekels per YEAR. Air Mail to U.S., \$15. If Aharon Sheer can hand  
deliver it, 10 shekels. Address: POB 9443, Tel Aviv 61093. Copyright  
(C) 1996, All rights reserved to specified authors and artists.

#### CyberCozen Donation Going Up

Next month, the donation to help cover the cost of publication will go  
up to 30 shekels per year for mail, 15 shekels for hand-delivery.

1) A student subscribed. After a year I asked her to pay to  
renew. She replied that after reading the first two issues, she threw  
each copy in the waste basket without opening it.

2) A professor who gave a lecture expressed interest in getting  
CyberCozen. After a year I wrote him to pay, but got no answer. It  
turned out that he had left Israel; CyberCozen was discarded unread.

For a time an English-language group sent me their monthly  
publication free. I read it from cover to cover. But when they asked  
me to pay for it, I refused, so they stopped sending it. Had their main  
interest been in having readers, they would have done well to continue  
to send it to me free. I want people to read CyberCozen, so I sometimes  
give it free to people who won't -- or can't -- pay for it.

In short, the best way I have to know that you've lost interest in  
reading CyberCozen is to ask you to help cover expenses! ■ ■

## Letters to the Editor:

Dear Aharon,

I just received the September issue of CyberCozen, decided,  
regretfully, that the KokoKozen pages are beyond my limited Hebrew, and  
looked up Bob Smallman's online books. Unfortunately, only the NEVAHE  
excerpt was viewable from my server. I don't see why any writer would  
choose to sell books through this service. If a book is acceptable to  
professional publishers, then professional publication has lots of  
advantages: some money up front; some (minimal) proofreading by copy  
editors, wider distribution and publicity, etc. And if it is almost,  
but not quite, up to professional standards, then it would be better to  
get some constructive feedback, from an editor, agent, or critique  
group, and work to bring it up to standards, rather than submit it to  
retail sale, without even a minimal binding, through a service that  
employs little or no critical standards. I wish Bob Smallman a happy  
and healthy New Year, and all the best.

In response to your questions, I suspect that this kind of  
publication will increase in the future, with hard-copy bookstores that  
let you download copies in a bindable format and provide different  
classes of bindings (at varying costs, of course). And some  
professional publishers may choose to offer books this way as well (Look  
ma, no remainders!), thus providing the same kind of customized formats  
with contents that have been selected by an editor, and paid for in

advance, pretty much as books are now bought from most authors.

Regards, Lucy Schmeidler

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Dear Aharon,

I recently saw this summer's sf magnum opus **Independence Day**. Technically it was so bad that I enjoyed it as a comedy and chuckled throughout. It did have some redeeming features. The idea that humanity can come together to fight an alien force bent on destroying the environment, while maudlin, was sentimentally appealing. The anti-ET tenor had a certain satisfying quality. Best of all was Jeff Goldblum, who as David the cynical Jewish dropout from MIT (?), rises to the occasion and through a combination of extreme brilliance and bravery saves the world from certain destruction. Did I personally identify with the character??

L'Shana Tovah! David Brust

P.S. I thought the most uproarious part of the film was where the president of the United States gets into a jet fighter and personally attacks the alien spaceships.

Dear David,

Ted Henderson tells me that "Independence Day" is not meant to be a science fiction film at all. Rather it is an example of a relatively new genre called **Explosion Films**. Judged as an *explosion film*, it's not bad at all. Any ten year old should love it. Aharon. ■ ■

CD-ROM Review by Aharon Sheer:

### **Grolier Science Fiction The Multimedia Encyclopedia of Science Fiction**

This delightful but frustrating product is based on the Hugo award-winning **Encyclopedia of Science Fiction** edited by Peter Nicholls and John Clute.

The Encyclopedia contains articles about nearly every sf and fantasy author that ever lived, with a discussion of the author's uniqueness in the field, brief descriptions of major works, and lists of practically all publications. Many author articles are illustrated by a photo of the author, or by a book cover of one of the author's books. For some authors there is also a sound byte of the author speaking.

There are articles about publishers, editors, and critics, magazines, comics and illustrators.

There are numerous articles about general topics (themes) in sf: utopia, dystopia, evolution, devolution, hollow earth, space flight, perception, sex, oulipo, new wave, etc.

There are articles about films, with detailed descriptions of over 500 of them, and articles about film makers too. TV is also covered.

Why is it frustrating? The version I bought is Version 1.0, a fact which is not mentioned on the cover of the CD-ROM, but is announced proudly on the opening screen. Remember Microsoft DOS 6.0, which was so filled with bugs that people ended up using DOS 6.2? Or Windows 3.0, replaced eventually by 3.1? When you see ".0" in a version number, watch out! If you have the print version, you might do well to wait for Version 1.1 (or 1.2?) of the CD-ROM. On the other hand, if people don't buy Version 1.0, there will never be Version 1.1.

The first problem I found was that it was very slow. The problem improved somewhat when I reinstalled the CD-ROM and requested the faster running version (which requires ten megabytes on the disk). It still takes 15 to 20 seconds to load a long article (on my admittedly ancient 486 DX 66). That's so much time that one may get the impression that the computer has hung up, and start punching buttons frantically.

The second problem is the "Word Search" (under "Navigation"). For example, I looked up "Altered States" in "All Articles", which gave me a list of articles in which the requested name appears. One was a long

article about "Cinema". Unfortunately the start of the article was displayed, and not the reference to "Altered States". I could find no way to get it to search the ARTICLE for the requested text. In other CD-ROM encyclopedias they display references to the requested text, **highlighted**. The **Grolier Multimedia Encyclopedia** (made by the same publisher!) does this. Paging through by eye was unsuccessful; I never found the reference. I have had this experience repeatedly.

Another problem with the "Word Search" is that it can miss *everything* you are looking for. For example, when I looked up the word "Stephenson", requesting a search in "All Articles", it did not produce a single article about *any* author named "Stephenson"! (There are at least four such articles.) The only item with the name "Stephenson" was a sound byte by Neal Stephenson. When I requested the sound byte, I also got a "Link to Article" offer. So from the sound byte I could link immediately to the previously unlisted article on Neal Stephenson. And then from the article I could link to ("View") a picture of him! You might call this an adventure in *Discovery*, but it doesn't qualify as a convenient Multimedia encyclopedia! If I had been looking for one of the other Stephensons, I wouldn't have found him *at all* via "Word Search". To do that I had to do an "Archive" search, on "Authors".

The help screens are no help. The human interface is pretty confusing, even after you gain experience with it. There is only an extremely limited printed explanation. The cross-referencing is clearer in the book, and the book at least has a list of the many abbreviations used (on page xxxv) which I haven't found yet in the CD-ROM.

However, you can get help from the publisher. In the U.S. there is a toll-free 800 number you can call. This service is not available in Israel. I had serious problems after initial installation. I sent them a letter with my registration card, requesting help, and received an answer which helped! Also their support service has a FAX number.

Why buy this in preference to the book?

For one thing, it is more up to date. For example, author Neal Stephenson appears even though he is not in my 1995 print edition.

Secondly, it has lists ("Archives"), which the book doesn't have. Lists of authors. Lists of books. Lists of films. If you are not sure of the exact name of something, you have a better chance of stumbling on it by looking through a list than by looking through the entire print encyclopedia. For example, someone gave me an author's name as "McCauly". I didn't find it in the book. But on the computer's "Author" list I immediately saw a similar name, "McAuley"; that turned out to be the correct one.

Third, you can print any article out -- a lot easier than photocopying. Unfortunately, the print quality is unbelievably bad: it looks like an ancient 9-pin dot matrix printer. (Once again, the much older Grolier Multimedia Encyclopedia is vastly better.) However, you *can* save the article to disk as a **text** file, and then use it any way you want, provided you preserve the copyright notice that comes with it.

The CD-ROM also has video clips (which require a CD-ROM speed of 300 KB per sec - double speed). They are of remarkably good quality. ■ ■

## Film Review by Aharon Sheer: Jack

The best sf film so far this year is **Jack**. Starring Robin Williams, this film is being sold as a comedy. It is not a comedy at all (although there are some funny parts), but rather a very moving story of the problems a child and his family face when the child is different from other children. The idea comes from the rare congenital disease *progeria*, in which the child ages very rapidly, so that at age ten he may have grey hair, heart disease, arthritis, etc., yet have the size and body shape of a ten year old. In this movie, Jack's cells

divide four times as fast as that of a normal child, so that at age ten Jack has the size and appearance of a forty-year old. At this point the parents, who have kept Jack at home and out of contact with other children, are persuaded to send him to school, to a regular classroom. Robin Williams plays Jack as behaving, thinking and acting like a ten year old would (and Williams is wonderful at it). The problem for Jack is that he appears age forty, and speaks with the voice quality of a forty year old. That makes for a fascinating movie.

Assuming that such a disease were possible, from a psychological point of view there is a difficulty. The film seems to make the assumption that the strange and wonderful behavior of children is a result of lack of life experience: children are immature because they haven't lived. In fact, studies of brain wave activity show that children have brain wave patterns which in a adult would be signs of brain damage. When children grow up, their brain wave patterns become normal. Jack, having a forty year old's brain, would presumably have normal adult brain wave patterns, so perhaps he would not exhibit the unpredictable behavior (from the adult point of view) of the typical ten year old. This is a thought provoking film, and well worth seeing. ■ ■

### מדע בדיוני יכול לגוון את חי המין שלך -- מאת אריה סתר

לפני מספר חודשים, אהרון פרסם בדיחה על חיזור המופיע בדמות קובץ טכסט והמקיים מגע מיני עם הקורא את אותו הטכסט. אהרון קיבל את הבדיחה הזאת בדואר אלקטרוני, ופרסם אותה. גם אני קיבלתי אותה הבדיחה בדואר אלקטרוני, אך מהר מאוד הסתבר לי שצחוק צחוק, אבל יש כאן משהו הרבה יותר רציני. לפני שנמשיך, להלן תדפיס הדואר האלקטרוני כפי שקיבלתי אותו (בהשמטת השמות והתאריכים).

To: Arie Setter

Subject: Want to Make Love ?

Dear Earthling,

Hello! I am a creature from a galaxy far away, visiting your planet. I have transformed myself into this text file. As you are reading it, I am having sex with your eyeballs. I know you like it because you are smiling. Please pass me on to someone else because I'm really horny.

כמו כל בדיחה, טובה יותר או טובה פחות, שמקבלים בדואר אלקטרוני, מעבירים אותה הלאה לחברים, גם כן בדואר אלקטרוני, כדי שגם הם יהנו. דבר ראשון העברתי זאת לחברתי לעבודה היושבת בסמוך אלי. מייד כשהתקבל הדואר במחשב שלה, ראיתי אותה מחייכת, מתנפלת בקדחתנות על המקלדת ושולחת לי הודעה קצרה כתגובה. הצצתי וראיתי, עוד לפני שזה הגיע אלי, שהיא כותבת מלה אחת: "NO". שלחתי זאת לעוד אחת שנמצאת לא ממש צמוד אלי, אבל בסביבה ואיך שזה הגיע אליה היא ניגשה אלי ואמרה לי, ספק בחיוד ספק במבוכה - "אריה, תפסיק עם השטויות האלה".

מה מסתבר - במחשבים אצלנו, כשמישהו מקבל דואר אלקטרוני, מופיעה אצלו הודעה מתפרצת על המסך ובה שם השולח והנושא. תסתכלו למעלה על הנושא -

"Want to Make Love ?"

מה שקרה שהבנות הנחמדות שאליהן שלחתי את הבדיחה בדואר האלקטרוני - אפילו לא פתחו את הדואר. הן התייחסו לנושא - Want to Make Love? כאילו הוא המסר שאני שולח להן.

לאור שני הנסיונות, החלטתי לשלוח את הדואר הזה לעוד כמה בנות שאני מכיר; תמיד הרי אוכל לטעון שרק שלחתי להן בדיחה...

טוב, לא אגלה לכם את התוצאות, אבל אם אתה זורק כדור לסל עשר פעמים - אפילו בלי לכוון באופן מיוחד, פעם אחת לפחות אתה תקלע...

■ ■

### SF on Television

מדע בדיוני בטלוויזיה (באדיבותו של אלון איצקוביץ)

הסדרה "גולשים בזמן" משודרת מחדש (ובקרוב גם פרקים חדשים) בערוץ

הילדים, יום א' בשעה 19:00.

ברוסית בימי א' בסביבות השעה 16:00 סדרת אנימציה ממוחשבת לילדים

"REBOOT" (בדיבוב רוסי) המתארת את עולם המחשב, כעולם עצמאי (ערוץ 24). ■ ■

Next SCIENCE FICTION CLUB Meeting:  
 Tuesday, November 26, 1996, 8:15 p.m. -- Lecture (in ENGLISH)  
 Sara Svetitsky, Dept of Astrophysics, Tel Aviv University  
**"Extra-Solar Planets"**

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).

CyberCozen SF Newsletter, Vol. VIII, Num. 11, November 1996. Editor:  
 Aharon Sheer. Ed.Assist: Elana Dror. For mail delivery of CyberCozen,  
 please donate 30 shekels per YEAR; air mail to US \$15; if Aharon Sheer  
 can hand-deliver it, 15 shekels. Address: POB 9443, Tel Aviv 61093.  
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**SF Film Festival** פסטיבל סרטי מדע בדיוני בסנימטק ת"א 12-14 בדצמבר  
 פסטיבל זה יכלול שלושה ערבים של סרטי מדע בדיוני מכל קשת הסגנונות והזמנים,  
 אשר יהיו מלווים בהרצאות ובדיונים. חברי האגודה הישראלית למדע בדיוני  
 ולפנטזיה יקבלו הנחה של 50% על כל סרט עם הצגת תעודת חבר. כדי לא להעמיס  
 יותר מדי מד"ב על חברינו, לא תהיה פגישה של מד"ב לחובות בסוף חודש דצמבר.

**Science Fiction Film Festival -- Cinematheque Tel Aviv December 12-14**  
 The festival will include three evenings of films of a variety of styles  
 and periods, accompanied by lectures and discussions. Members of the  
Israeli Society for Science Fiction and Fantasy will receive a 50%  
 discount on each film by presenting the Society Membership Card. In  
 order not to burden our members with too much sf in December, *there will  
 be NO meeting of Rehovot Science Fiction at the end of December.*

## Letters to the Editor:

**Dear Aharon,**

In reply to Lucy Schmeidler's letter: Thank you for looking up my  
 books. I think you have a misconception about electronic publishing.  
 First, **Thunder Mountain Press (TMP)** is a regular publisher who is also  
 using this medium. I personally know at least five people who have  
 published at least one book, who have been rejected. TMP's standards  
 are quite high.

The advantage to a reader is that for \$5.00 each, my books can be  
 downloaded to a computer to be printed out, or read on the screen  
 whenever wanted. Obviously the low cost comes from TMP's not having to  
 print and distribute.

To a writer there are other advantages. First, to get your  
 material read and approved by a regular publisher (one of the hardest  
 first steps), involves sending out hundreds of pages to various  
 publishers and agents, and then waiting for them to answer, plus the  
 high costs of shipping both ways, as much as \$50, each time. All this  
 sometimes takes years.

Second, TMP also acts as an agent for closing deals, made  
 arrangements for my books to be copyrighted, and through their BBS and  
 the Internet makes my books available all over the world to publishers  
 and agents who are looking for new books and authors. The cost to me  
 was \$25 for the copyright, and \$50 for a one-time set-up fee. They will  
 take 10% if a contract is signed for regular publishing, movie rights,  
 etc. I will get a 25% commission on any books sold through the  
 Internet. Finally, the books will only be kept on the Internet for one  
 year, unless enough interest is shown.

The only other TMP author in Israel is Joe Gilad, who lives in

Netanya.

Hope you enjoy. I would appreciate any comments.

Bob Smallman, 06-639-9603

## ספור: במכונות הזמן מאת דותן דימט

ביומולדת של הנכד גררו אותנו ללונה-פארק. בת שלי מאוד מאמינה בגיבוש המשפחתי, כדי להעשיר את החוויות של הילד, אבל לנו כבר קשה להתרוצץ איתם לכל מקום, אפילו עם כל השיפוצים הביוניים, אז כשהם רצו עם הנכד לרכבת השדים הטרנס-גלקטית המתנגשת, נשארנו בחוץ. הסבתא רצתה לחכות להם ביציאה, אבל היה שם רעש וילדים צועקים ולא היתה לי סבלנות, אז השארתי אותה לחכות וניגשתי לעשות סיבוב קטן על מכונות הזמן.

במכונות הזמן התור היה דליל יחסית וראו בו לא מעט מבוגרים. נכון, גם פה היו החבורות של הילדים הצוחקים והצורחים, אבל מה יש להם יש לעשות במכונות הזמן? נכנסו לרבע שעה - עשרים דקות, רצחו את המורה למתמטיקה בעריסתה או נטרפו על-ידי אריה בקולוסיאום ברומא ופרצו החוצה בהמולה, רצים כבר לתור לרכבת השדים הטרנס-גלקטית המתנגשת. המבוגרים לעומתם התמהמהו יותר במתקן. אני נשארתי בפנים שלוש שנים.

העיניין עם מכונות הזמן הוא שבעצם אין דבר כזה, זמן. רגע לא רודף רגע, סיבה לא מקדימה את התוצאה, גורם לא משפיע על ניגרם. הכל זו סתם אשלייה שנבנית במוח שלנו, דרך להסדיר את הדברים שקורים באיזה רצף הגיוני. כמובן שברגע שגילו את זה, כל הנחות היסוד האקסיומטיות שעליהן התבסס המדע כולו הפכו בבת אחת מופרכות יותר ממצעה של מפלגה קומוניסטית. נכון, המדע איכשהו קרטע הלאה, והמדענים המשיכו לגלות תגליות מופלאות ולהמציא המצאות אדירות, אבל רואים בפנים שלהם שהלך להם מזה כל הפאן.

קניתי כרטיס ונכנסתי לחדר קטן ואפלולי, שריצפתו היתה מלוכלכת באבק, גרגרי פופקורן מעוכים ומקלות של צמר-גפן מסוכר. תיכוניסט עם מכנס קרוע קם מעל כיסא חורק בפניה, הוריד ממדף עמוס קופסת פלסטיק שחוקת-פינות שהבהבו בה כמה אורות, וסידר לי אותה על רצועה, תוך שהוא מדקלם לי איך העסק עובד. "בחוגות האלה אתה מכוון לך את השנה והמקום, בשני הכפתורים האלה אתה מריץ קדימה ואחורה, כדי לכוון לך את הזמן בדיוק, תשחק איתם חופשי. אם קורה משהו לך או למכשיר, או מנסים לקחת לך אותו, אתה מוקפץ אוטומטית ישר חזרה לכאן. זהו. מה עוד? טוב, אין נסיעות לעתיד, ואין למה שאתה עושה או רואה שום השלכות היסטוריות. יללה, תעשה חיים סבא".

זה כמובן היה בגלל חוסר הסיביות שביקום. בתור לפני היו שני בחורים מגודלים שתכננו לחזור לברלין 23' ולהכניס להיטלר מכות רצח. "אני יודע שזה לא ישנה כלום," אמר אחד מהם, דור רביעי לשואה שהודח השבוע מקורס טייס, "אבל זה יעשה לי הרגשה טובה יותר". הבטתי בהם לוחצים על הכפתורים במכשירים שלהם ונעלמים עם מחבטי הבייסבול שלהם בהבזק של אור סגול. האצבע שלי ריחפה מעל החוגה, ועברתי ברגע בראשי על ששת אלפים שנות היסטוריה מתועדת. חשבתי על רומי וביזנטיון, חצר המלכה אליזבת ופריז של פיקאסו וגרטרוד סטיין. עכשיו שהכל היה במרחק לחיצת כפתור, כבר לא בער לי כל-כך לבקר שם. כל המקומות האלה, שקראתי עליהם בספרים, הם לא אומרים לי כלום. חוץ מזה, אנחנו הזקנים מעדיפים את הבית.

"תגיד", שאלתי את האחראי בעודי מכוון את החוגה, "אין הגבלת זמן?"

הצעיר רק גיחך לעצמו, כאילו אמרתי איזו שטות סנילית. לחצתי על הכפתור. חזרתי לבית-הספר היסודי שלי. היום כבר אין דברים כאלה, חוץ משנים-שלושה אתרים היסטוריים. עשיתי סיבוב. במגרש בין שני המיקלטים היתה חצר המשחקים, עם הבורות של הגוגואים חפורים באדמה החולית. עברתי מאחורי המיבנה הנמוך והארוד שבו שוכנו הכיתות, רגלי כושלות על תולדות עפר במבוך החפירות שהוקרב על מזבח שיעורי החקלאות. פה זרענו פעם צנוניות ופה בכיתה ב' הראיתי את התחת שלי למי שביקש. אפילו הצעתי לערוך את המופע בשיעור קבלת-שבת, אבל המורה הטילה וטו. בחורה מיסכנה, רק יצאה מהסמינר ועם מה

היתה צריכה להתמודד. הצצתי בכיתות לזהות פנים מוכרות. הנה הבחורה הזאת עם העיניים היפות שהתחתנה עם קבלן, והנה הטמבל מכיתה ז' שהיה ניטפל אלי בשאלות, מגנח לשמע הגדרות רבות - המעוף למושגים כמו "ויברטור" ו-"דגדגן".

נעצרתי ליד עץ החרוב, תלשתי פרי ורחרחתי את המתיקות היבשה שדבקה בידים. עדיין אין לי מושג איך בר-יוחאי חי מהדברים האלה חמש שנים. נזכרתי איך נפלתי מהעץ הזה, את מכת הפחד שהלמה בי, את ההקלה כשענפים נמוכים עצרו את הנפילה, והיד שלי שיחקה קצת עם הקדימה\אחורה. התמונה נטשטשה, אבל ראיתי מספיק כדי לעצור כשהופיע הילד עם העלים בשיער והשריטות על הרגליים שהוריד את עצמו בזהירות לקרקע. ניגשתי אליו וחיבקתי אותו. "אל תפחד ילד", לחשתי וליטפתי את ראשו, "אם הייתי יכול, הייתי מביא לך שקית גוגואים".

והאמת היא שהייתי יכול. הייתי יכול הכל, כמו איזה חומר ניקוי פלאי המנקה את כל כתמי העבר, מסיר ליכלוך עיקש גם מהפינות האפלות ומרפא פצעים וחבורות. וכשהראש שלו היה בידים שלי, החלטתי שלמה לא, הרי אין פה עניין של הגבלת זמן. כל-כך הרבה פאקים היו לילד הזה בחיים, תאמינו לי שזה לא היה קל. האינסידנט הוא עם התחת. הילד ההוא שהרג לו את העכביש. התקל עם המורה למלאכה. נכון, היו טובות הנאה, כמו לשתות מיץ תפוזים "גולדסאן" מבקבוקי זכוכית, לראות את אירון קפלן בתוכניות ללימוד אנגלית ולאכול עוף מטוגן בשקית נייר מ"מיסטר צ'יפס" בכיכר מלכי ישראל כאילו זו אמריקה. אבל תאמינו לי, זה היה ממש מפעל חיים, כי אז בא תיכון. עבודת עריכה ושיפוח קשה מאוד. לקצץ את השיממון שם בכיתות י'-י"א, לבדוק שלא יטעה כשהוא מזייף רישום שעות בהתנדבות למען הזולת, להאריך את י"ב בשנתיים. לשים לב שהפעם כן יתן לגלי להעתיק ממנו בגרות במתמטיקה כדי שתראה לו את תמונת העירוס של שלי מהטיול השנתי, לדאוג שלא ישפוך פופקורן על הבחורה פעם ראשונה שהוא לוקח מישהי לסרט, לשמור שלא יחזור להשמין אחרי הדיאטה, להוריד אותו משתיים-שלוש בחורות שרק ירמסו לו את הלב אם בכלל יזרקו לו מבט, לארגן לו כמה יציאות עם בחורות שלא היה לו אומץ לגשת אליהן או עיניים להבחין שהן מעוניינות, לוודא שלא יתחתן איתן רק בגלל שהיו חביבות אליו, לסדר לו את הצבא, לדאוג שהמילואים לא ידפקו לו את המיבחן בכימיה אורגנית בשנה ב' ויזדרדו לו את כל הממוצע של התואר, לתרגל אותו לקראת הראיון במכון ויצמן, לסדר לו שנה חופש אחרי התואר כדי שירגע ופוסט-דוק בשיקאגו, ואז להחזיר אותו לארץ בזמן כדי לארגן לו את הפגישה עם אישתי. משם, היא כבר תדאג לו, חשבתי.

אבל אז זה לא יצא. לא הבנתי מה קרה, אני מביא לה בחור בון-בוו, והעניינים עומדים במקום. בסוף היא התחתנה עם איזה מהנדס בניין והוא מצא גרפיקאית. אישה נחמדה, שלא תבינו לא נכון, אבל לא אישתי. שלוש שנים קרעתי את התחת לבנות לבן-אדם חיים ובסוף הלך הפאנץ', כי בתהליך השיפוח הזה שעשיתי לחיים שלי, החלקתי את כל הנכויות הנפשיות הגמלוניות שכה תאמו את אלו שבנפשה של אישתי. הסתכלתי עליה והמהנדס שלה עם האוזניים הגדולות ולחצתי על כפתור החזרה. היא חיכתה עדיין בפתח היציאה של רכבת השדים הטרנס-גלקטית המתנגשת. "יצאת משם נורא מהר," היא אמרה לי, ואני נגעתי בלחי שלה והרגשתי איך היא מלטפת לי את האצבעות ונזכרתי איך פעם בימים תמימים יותר היא אמרה לי שהגורל הפגיש אותנו. בפעם הבאה שאלך למכונות הזמן, אסע לרומי או ביזנטיון, או פריז של פיקאסו. הדבר היחיד שאני עוד מתגעגע אליו הוא הרגע ההוא שבו הבטתי בעיניה ויכולתי להאמין שאולי כן, יש לחיים משמעות. ולרגע ההוא, שום מכונת זמן כבר לא תחזור.

## Quote of the Month:

"Scientists have been asking the wrong question.

"They have focused upon complexity as the thing that requires explanation, and they have taken simplicity for granted. The answer to complexity turns out to be fairly obvious and not, in itself, especially interesting: If you have a lot of simple interactors, and let them interact, then the result can be rather complicated.

"The interesting question is precisely the opposite, the question that most scientists never thought to ask because they didn't see that there was a question to ask. Where does the *simplicity* come from?"

From *The Collapse of Chaos*, by Jack Cohen and Ian Stewart, p. 222 ■ ■

Poem: Robot Day by Elliot Lazerowitz

The information superhighway  
is lined and sealed with riches

but my nervous system  
is marooned on RESET.

Once the green forests reigned  
canoes split the river foam  
views and vistas crowned God's sweet creation.

But now I am riveted to my SVGA screen  
multimedia my only reality.

My room is my universe.

Linking online, Internet surfing  
I neglect the very people who once nourished me.

Eyes bathed in screen radiation  
muscles atrophied from lack of use  
I am a relic of an earlier age  
when people reached out for people  
my PC my unnatural fate.

I no longer know  
what I feel  
I am virtually real.

■ ■

Letters to the Editor:

*Would you like to get critical comments on your stories?*

Dear Aharon,

The **Critters Workshop** is run by e-mail (critters@cs.du.edu), but is best first viewed by looking up their website (www.cs.du.edu/users/critters). While a large number of manuscripts (mss.) are available each week, it is possible to request that a smaller number be sent, and the only requirement to remain active is to critique at least one manuscripts (ms.) 3 weeks out of 4. Thus, an active member must critique at least 3 mss. during a period in which there are some 40 available. Members have no obligation to submit anything, but they may submit every few weeks, basically in whatever interval it takes for a submitted story to move up in the "queue" and get distributed. (Each writer is permitted at most one story in the queue at any time.) The idea is that any story submitted is guaranteed a fair number of critiques.

I have developed a system of critiquing that makes it fast and easy. First I save each ms. into a local file. Then I use the emacs text editor, which allows viewing 2 files at once, and I bring up a ms., then open half the screen to a new file, into which I write my critique. I normally read through once, noting my "quibbles" (typos, grammatical errors, etc.) as I go, and then give my general impressions, which I write to the beginning of the critique file. Since most of the stories are fun to read, I find it a rather pleasant way to spend a half hour or hour at a stretch, doing 2-4 mss. per day.

The membership seems to grow mostly by word-of-mouth, and reached 200 sometime mid-(Northern)summer.

Regards, Lucy Schmeidler

■ ■

## NO MEETING OF REHOVOT SF THIS MONTH

**NO Meeting** at the home of Tova and Bill Silverman, **NO Meeting**

Rehovot Science Fiction (*usually*) meets the last Tuesday of each month at the home of Tova and Bill 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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*Editor's Note: Since there were only five people present at the November club meeting when Sara started her talk (not counting Bill, Tova and me), I asked Sara if she could write it up. "Extra Solar Planets" are planets outside our solar system, circling other suns.*

## Science Fiction and EXTRA-SOLAR PLANETS by Sara Svetitsky

*Notes of a talk given at the Science Fiction Club 29 November*

Most educated people, and probably all science fiction fans, have believed for at least the last century that many other stars have planetary systems. This belief reflected the Copernican world view that there is nothing special about the Earth and the best theories of planet formation which predicted that stars are likely to form with planetary systems. (For science fiction fans there is an extra urgency to this idea; how much of science fiction would be lost if there are no other planetary systems?) But until a very few years ago there was absolutely no evidence that any star but the Sun had planets, and it was possible in pessimistic moments to feel that belief in extra-solar planets was wishful thinking.

All this has changed radically. The last two years have seen announcement after announcement of reliable, confirmed, observational detections of planetary companions to nearby stars. There are, as of 8 December 96, 19 planets or brown dwarfs known to orbit main-sequence stars, two pulsars with planetary systems, and seven systems where planets have been reported by one group but not yet confirmed. New planets are announced on the average once in seven weeks, and since detections become easier the longer data is collected, the rate of detections should increase even over that.

The stars studied are mostly type G, like the Sun, with some F and K stars which are respectively slightly hotter and cooler than the Sun. These numbers make it possible to think that every star roughly like the Sun has at least one planet. The planetary systems already found are enough to throw our theories of planet and star formation into disarray. It had been thought that there would be a gap between true planets, with mass less than 13 times Jupiter's, and brown dwarfs with mass more than 40 Jupiter's, but nine planets have been so far found between 13 and 60 Jupiter masses. It had been thought that planets would be in nearly circular orbits and only binary stars would have very elliptical orbits, but several planets with very non-circular orbits have been found. Planet and star formation theorists are naturally having a wonderful time with these results, but in this essay I will not

describe the new models (which are changing too fast to keep up with anyway); I will concentrate on the points which may be of more interest to the science fiction fan.

How are these remarkable discoveries made? Not by direct photographs of the stellar systems; a Jupiter-like planet will be only about one-billionth as bright as its star and therefore impossible to see directly. (There has been one companion seen in direct images, but it is not a true planet. The companion to Gleise 229 is a brown dwarf, an object too small and cool to be a true star but hot enough to produce some heat and light by its own nuclear reactions. It is only 100,000 times fainter than Gleise 229 and could be seen on direct images. It is the first confirmed brown dwarf known.)

The planets confirmed to exist have all been detected by measuring the radial velocity of the stars they are orbiting. A star does not sit motionless while a planet orbits it; the planet pulls on the star just as the star pulls on the planet and in fact both planet and star orbit their joint center of mass. (It may help to imagine a system of two stars of equal mass spinning around each other and mentally to reduce the mass of one star to planet size; how will the larger star move?) The velocity of a star can be measured to an accuracy of 10 meters/sec, which is about the velocity that Jupiter imparts to the Sun. The orbital velocity of the star gives the mass of the planet, the period of the variation gives the period of the planet's orbit, in other words its year, and from the year it is easy to find the distance between the planet and the star. The more massive the planet and the closer to the star, the greater the star's velocity and the easier to measure, so this technique will first detect massive planets very close to their stars. As stars are observed for longer times, more periods may be seen, and planets further out can be found as well.

Everything said above about the ease of detecting massive planets close to stars would do no good if all stellar systems were like ours, with the small rocky planets close to the star and the massive Jupiter-like planets further out. But to everyone's surprise, very massive planets have been found extremely close to their stars: in four systems there are planets from half to four times the mass of Jupiter much closer to the star than Mercury is to the Sun. They obviously cannot be gas giants like Jupiter because the gases would evaporate in the heat; they must be rocky, but how can such large rocky planets form?

One theory is that these planets are the cores of gas giants that formed further from the star and then spiralled in to their present orbits, losing their gas on the way. This kind of planet is known as "51 Peg" type, after the most extreme example, the companion to the Sun-type star 51 Peg. 51 Peg B has half a Jupiter mass and is seven million km from its star, and it makes Mercury, usually considered to be the worst place in the Solar System, look like a garden spot. Not only will the heat and radiation of the star be terrible (and will make it impossible for the planet to hold onto an atmosphere of any kind), but the internal stresses caused by the gravitational field will make the planet very unstable; it probably has constant volcanoes and earthquakes. The other planets in this class are slightly further from their stars and may be able to hold onto some atmosphere; they may in fact produce their own atmospheres by their constant volcanic activity, just as the giant volcanoes of Jupiter's moon Io have given it a thin sulfurous atmosphere. In short, the 51 Peg class planets are not nice places to visit or live, and they would make good extra-difficult bonus

problems for a terraforming class! Even their moons, if they have any, are unlikely places for any kind of life.

There are more hopeful environments among the new planets found. Many of the them are in the "habitable zone" where life as we know it may exist. Science fiction writers looking for a challenge can now create alien habitats matching known astronomical facts. Seven of the current list have orbits roughly between the orbits of Venus and of Mars, so they may have liquid water at least part of the time. The planets themselves are more massive than Jupiter, are probably gas giants, and are not likely homes for life as we know it, but if they have moons -- which they should, if the giant planets in the Solar System are an example -- the moons may be much more hospitable. The moons of 47 Uma B, whose orbit is outside that of Mars, are probably covered with ice; if the stresses induced by the planet's gravity cause sufficient internal heat the moons may have liquid water oceans under a thin ice crust. This would be a very interesting environment to explore both in fiction and in reality.

Three of the new planets have very high orbital eccentricities, which means that their orbits are strongly elliptical and not almost circular like the planets of the Solar System. The most eccentric is the companion of 16 Cyg B (a star very like our Sun in every detail); its orbit takes it from inside the orbit of Venus to just outside the orbit of Mars in 2.2 Earth years. The temperature changes on that planet or its moons would be drastic, but even so, it would not exceed the range of temperatures where life on Earth is known to survive. Creating an ecology for such a planet would be a rewarding exercise for our hypothetical terraforming class.

To summarize the recently discovered planets around Sun-like stars: the science fiction writer who wants to be up to date and astronomically accurate will want to think about life on moons orbiting gas giants, will want to consider the possible effects of planets much larger than Jupiter on other members of the planetary system (Jupiter after all dominates the comets; what will a 50-Jupiter planet do?), and will think about planets with very eccentric, non-circular orbits.

All the above has been devoted to the many planets found orbiting Sun-type stars, which are naturally interesting and are the most common in the sky as well as in science fiction. Much weirder are the planetary systems discovered around pulsars. Pulsars are the neutron stars left after the original star explodes as a supernova, so it was extremely surprising when planets were found around them; how did the planets survive the explosion? The current theory is that the small, Earth size planets seen around pulsars are the cores of much larger planets that were mostly destroyed by the supernova blast. Pulsars do not provide heat or light but do send out blasts of high-energy radiation that sweep across space like a rotating search-light beam (the "pulse"), so their planets will be cold and dark, except for the possible periodic flash of killing radiation. Very little is impossible in astronomy, but I will dare to say that it would be impossible for life to survive a supernova and then persist in the pulsar system. But it would not be impossible for life to come to the pulsar system from outside; it would have to bring its own power and heat sources and probably live underground to escape the radiation, and it would have no sun, but it would be easier than terraforming 51 Peg B.

What do the new planets mean to us? My feelings are mixed. It is

fantastic that we have a list of extra-solar planetary systems and that the leaps of imagination that lead us to believe in them before they were detected have been justified. But as extra-solar planets have become fact and not fiction, I have started to think of them more practically. And I have found that for me at least it is now impossible to dream about visiting these planets. Imagining faster than light travel and warp drives is fun, but let's face it, imagination is all they are or can be. And that doesn't mix with actual, detected, measured planets. The closest of the planet systems is about 50 light years away. We're not going to pop in for a visit. Maybe after much more work that will find a planet which can definitely support human life, a probe can be launched; more likely we will only try to broadcast messages to these systems and look for signals from them. It's the price to pay for leaving fiction and becoming fact. ■ ■

## בקורת ספרותית מאת אהרן שיר

הקוף הפטפטון מאת עמי דביר (ספרית מעריב, 1995), 264 דפים. ספר זה נמכר כספורה, ולא דווקא כמדע בדיוני, למרות שעל העטיפה מאחור בתאור המפורט של הספר כתוב "ספר מדע בדיוני מבריק". מבוסס על התאוריות של אריק פון דניקן, הספר מספר את ההסטוריה האנושית כמושפעת מאוד מהתערבותם של חייזרים בפתוח הגנטי והתרבותי של בני אדם. למשל, אדם וחווה נוצרו בגן עדן בתור כלאים של "קופים פטפטונים" קיימים, עם הגנים של המוח החיזרי המפותח. הנה צטוט מהספר: "ארבעים יום וארבעים לילה הורדנו גשמים עזים על ארץ שנער ועל ראשי ההרים המספקים את מימיהם לפרת ולחידקל. את מוצא הנהרות סכרנו בקרחונים." פשוט כך יצרו את המבול.

הגבור החיזרי של הספר, המלאך גבראל, שייך לגזע של צפרדעים בגובה בני אדם, עם עיניים, פה, אף, ואוזניים מסודרים בראש כמו אצל הצפרדעים שלנו -- כמו כן גם איברי מין. הם דו-חיים, כלומר, יש להם גם ריאות וגם זימים. זה משעשע כשצפרדעים אינטליגנטים מדברים על חוסר שליטה עצמית בתקופת היחום הקצר שלהם, ועל קשייהם להבין את בני אדם שהם מיוחסים למעשה כמעט כל הזמן. אבל זה בכלל לא "מבריק" (רק מצחיק) שחיזרים יהיו כה דומים לצפרדעים שלנו. החיזרים מסוגלים להעביר את תוכן האישיות שלהם למוח אינטליגנטי אחר, וגם לייצר על ידי הנדסה גנטית כלאים של יצורים שונים עם מוח חיזרי. כך נוצרו לפי הספר כל מיני דמויות מיתולוגיות על פני כדור הארץ.

בני אדם, רבוי סוגי חיזרים, ויצורים שהם כלאים, מאפשרים לסופר לספר בפרוטרוט על יחסי מין. למעשה, זה ספר פורנוגרפי. כמה דוגמאות: יש יחסי מין בין בן-אדם (עם מוח של חיזר-צפרדע) וסטיר (חצי אדם, חצי כבש). בין בן אדם-חיזר ובין סירנה (חצי אישה, חצי דולפין). בין שני סוגי חיזרים (אחד צפרדע, השניה לא). בין אשה (עם מוח של חיזר) ובין הגבור האנושי של הספר (נער בן 16). בין אותה חיזרית בגוף החיזרי הרגיל שלה ובין אותו נער בן 16. בין אותו נער בן 16 ובין נערה בת 16.

בעטיפת הספר כתוב "ספר פרוזה ישראלית מעולה". אם זה נכון, באמת כדאי להתרחק מפרוזה ישראלית. ■ ■

**Quote of the Month:** "Current cosmology provides some general rules for the behavior of universes, but various arbitrary choices must be made before the rules can be applied. These include the values of fundamental constants, such as the speed of light or Planck's constant. No existing physical theory explains why these constants take the values they do; instead the constants are built in. The same rules that cosmologists believe govern our own universe can be applied, unchanged, to a hypothetical universe in which the speed of light is [960 kilometers] per hour." [p. 389] "See Terry Pratchett's Discworld series, of which the most recent (as we write!) is *Witches Abroad*." [p. 470] *From The Collapse of Chaos, by Jack Cohen and Ian Stewart (1994)* ■ ■

Save the date: Jack Cohen will talk in our club on February 4.