



SCIENCE-Fiction Fanzine

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חדשות האגודה – פברואר 2015 The Israeli Society for Science Fiction and Fantasy

מועדון הקריאה של חודש פברואר יעסוק בספר זוכה פרס גפן "מהומה רבה על לא דוור", מאת טרי פראצ'ט. המועדון יתקיים במוצאי שבת, 28 בפברואר, ב-19:30 ב"קפה גרג" בגן העיר, אבן גבירול 71, קניון גן העיר, קומת הכניסה, תל-אביב. מנחים: **איתמר אולפין** ו**דפנה קירש**. לצורך היערכות למספר המשתתפים, יש להירשם מראש דרך הדוא"ל של אחד המנחים. רצוי להביא למפגש עותק של הספר. הכניסה חופשית ואינה כרוכה בתשלום, בחברות באגודה, או בהגעה למפגשים נוספים. מועדון הקריאה של חודש מרץ יעסוק, לרגל יום הפאי, בספר "חיי פאי".

כל האירועים של האגודה מופיעים ב**לוח האירועים** (שפע אירועים מעניינים, הרצאות, סדנאות, מפגשים ועוד) לקבלת עדכונים שוטפים על מפגשי מועדון הקריאה ברחבי הארץ ניתן להצטרף ל**רשימת התפוצה** או ל**דף האגודה בפייסבוק**.

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

In this issue:

- 1) CyberCozen is getting more exposure (and more readers) both in Israel and across the Universe (or at least in the SF-reading Universe). Read all about it below and help us spread the good word to your friends!
 - 2) Readers (at least one ☺) are sharing their thoughts and comments – make your voice heard too.
 - 3) "Sheer Science" with more food for thought.
 - 4) As promised, a special summary/overview of my recent lecture "War, Extra-terrestrials (ETs), and Yiddish – What's the Connection?"
 - 5) Zombies series wrap up – sorry, for technical reasons, next time (and no, we're not going to mummify them and bury them for a few thousand years...)
- Leybl Botwinik (CyberCozen assistant editor).

CyberCozen – Feedback from Near and Far

In an attempt to increase our exposure, we've sent out notices of our existence and a call for subscribers to receive the fanzine free of cost. Though our message hasn't yet reached Alpha Centauri (as far as we know it's still being beamed and only partway there) we've already gotten excellent responses with requests to join the mailing list and even – blush, blush, ear-to-ear smile... – a review of our last issue.

- 1) The note in the **Israeli Society for Science Fiction and Fantasy** ran as follows (published just a few days ago):

CyberCozen: ירחון מד"ב ישראלי – באנגלית!

CyberCozen הוא ירחון מדע בדיוני היוצא לאור בישראל ברציפות מאז 1988 – והיחיד באנגלית. הירחון נוסד כקולו של מועדון רחובות למד"ב והוא ממשיך להתפרסם מדי חודש הודות למתנדבים, ומופץ בחינם דרך הדואר האלקטרוני. את העלון ייסד אהרון שיר, שעדיין עורך אותו, וביוני 2014 הצטרף אליו לייבל באטוויניק, מסופרי המד"ב הבוודיים הכותבים ביידיש, בתור סגן העורך והאחראי על הכנת והפצת העלון.

תוכן הירחון משתנה מעת לעת, ובדרך כלל תמצאו בו רשימה קצרה של פעילויות האגודה, ביקורות ספרים וסרטים, פינת מדע וטכנולוגיה העוסקת בהשפעתם האפשרית על עתידנו ולעתים גם סיפור קצר. כיום הירחון כתוב כולו באנגלית (מלבד הרשימה העוסקת בפעילות האגודה), אך בעבר הופיעו בירחון גם חומרים בעברית.

אנו מזמינים אתכם להירשם עוד היום בדוא"ל ולקבל את הירחון חינם, ואף לשתף איתנו פעולה, להגיב ולהגיש תוכן. ניתן למצוא את מאגר העלונים באינטרנט: העלונים שיצאו עד אמצע 2014 מופיעים כאן, והעלונים שיצאו מאמצע 2014 ואילך מופיעים כאן.

- 2) We were at once tickled and thrilled to have been noticed by **R. Graeme Cameron** who wrote us up on the "**Club House**" fanzine review column in **Amazing Stories Magazine online** (see here: <http://amazingstoriesmag.com/2015/01/clubhouse-fanzine-reviews-born-feud/>). I wrote him a response that can be seen at the bottom of the blog (I'll try to collect both in a special bonus issue of CyberCozen and release it in the next short while)

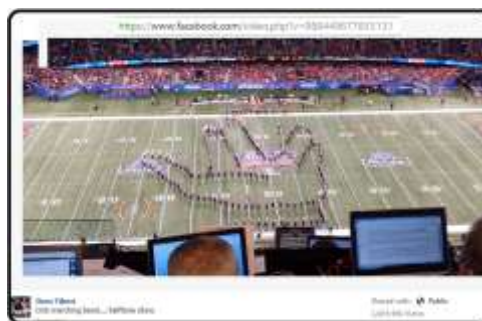
From our reader(s):

As seen from Space (or at least the top stand in the stadium) – as sent in by Gary Roth

Subject: Sci Fi on the Football Field

Here's a link to my alma mater's (Ohio State University) marching band's halftime show, dedicated to **2001: A Space Odyssey** and **Star Trek**.

<https://www.facebook.com/video.php?v=988449677835131>



Sheer Science

- Aharon Sheer's corner >> dedicated to expanding our mental horizons

Picked up on the Internet. Robert Fulford writes the following:

Cognitive scientist Jim Davies dissects why movies move us (and the Star Wars prequels didn't)

Someone mentioned to me once that he occasionally finds himself moved to tears while watching a movie but almost never sheds a tear in response to the real events in his life, however sad. Did that mean there was something wrong with him? If so, I share his affliction. Few things in life bring tears to my eyes, but certain movies, plays, operas and novels have proven they can do it.

Why? An interest in that sort of question will open many readers to the work of Jim Davies, an American-born associate professor at Carleton University in Ottawa. He discusses them in his recent book, *Riveted: The Science of Why Jokes Make Us Laugh, Movies Make Us Cry, and Religion Makes Us Feel One with the Universe* (Palgrave Macmillan). ...

To read more: <http://arts.nationalpost.com/2014/12/03/robert-fulford-cognitive-scientist-jim-davies-dissects-why-movies-move-us/>

As promised in the previous issue, a very brief look at Yiddish in Fantasy and Science Fiction:

War, Extra-terrestrials (ETs), and Yiddish – What's the Connection?

A Hebrew Lecture at the Dec 2014 "Meorot" Conference in Jerusalem

– By Leybl Botwinik

Every year the **Israeli Society for Science Fiction and Fantasy** runs a winter workshop/conference day in Jerusalem and each time on a unique theme. This year's was: **"WAR"**!

Being a long-time fan of Science-Fiction (SF), and one of the very few Yiddish SF writers (more on that later), I thought it would be interesting for the Israeli audience at the full day event to get some exposure on what was available in Yiddish in this non-conventional and mostly unexplored area – basically to go where no Man has gone before ☺

It wasn't easy, throwing together a lecture and finding plausible connections between the 3 topics – but then I do like a good challenge, and had some material handy:
1) For ETs and SF, I relied on a lecture on Yiddish Fantasy and SF that I had presented many years ago in Rehovot, when Aharon's

SF club was still active (and some stuff I added concerning Yiddish speaking ETs).
2) As far as WAR is concerned, Jews and Yiddish speakers are, unfortunately, only too aware of this ugly aspect of human existence – so I had plenty of material here too!
And 3) The Yiddish connection(s) with the first two.

After having gathered and sorted through the material, I saw that not only did I have more than enough – **I had too much** for the limited 45-50 minute presentation. In the end, due to some technical difficulties, the total lecture time was even reduced to about 30 minutes and I needed to drop some of

my material – and even (almost) forgot the opening joke I prepared...

I won't go through the entire lecture now (in fact someone from the among the organizing group filmed it and I'm still trying to track that down), but I'm sure you'd like to know some of the highlights.

Yiddish: PEACE vs. WAR!

Rather than present my audience with the negative aspect of WAR (and intolerance), I instead presented Yiddish as a counter-force to it. Basically: the voice of PEACE (and tolerance) — underscoring the various positive aspects of Yiddish, and then tying these together with various SF-related themes and Yiddish writers (and their stories), and comparing them with (or referring to) some better known English SF writers and literature.

The topics were projected onto a screen in a PowerPoint presentation. The first slide was of the world famous Yiddish humourist Sholem Rabinowitz known best by his pen-name "Sholem Aleichem" surrounded by white doves of peace.



"Sholem aleykhem" (according to YIVO spelling rules) literally means "peace unto you", and is the traditional greeting between two Jews (similar to the Arabic), in particular between Yiddish speakers.

My main premise was the uniqueness and universality of Yiddish in the past and present, and the singular importance of what it had to offer for the future. To support this, I covered Yiddish as the language of:

- ▶ Culture
- ▶ Love
- ▶ Peace and Social Justice
- ▶ Resistance and Self-defense
- ▶ Patience and Tolerance
- ▶ Memory
- ▶ Renewal
- ▶ Education (to Peace and Social Justice)

One key example I took from the world of SF was Alfred Bester's short story "Disappearing Act", where a war was being waged to preserve the 'American Dream',



even though those waging the war itself were in fact destroying the art and culture they were purporting to save. Yiddish, in contrast, was and is thoroughly a language of culture (and later I showed it also as a language of love and anti-war, quoting Isaac Bashevis Singer).

Is Klingon a Yiddish (Jewish) Language?

Another fascinating connection I discussed was the interesting link between the two languages. This requires an entirely separate discussion, but just for fun, try an Internet search of "Yiddish and Klingon". You'll even find a simple Yiddish-Klingon dictionary.

NO! Klingon is not a Yiddish/Jewish language, though there are some vague similarities and actual influences. In fact, Klingon – being a Warrior Language – is the exact antithesis of Yiddish, the Language of Peace. Still, it would be fun to see Worf in a 'Shtetl' (traditional Hasidic hat):



BONUS: Yiddish and SF in Hollywood

As a bonus, I presented my audience pictures of 3 famous Hollywood SF-related Yiddish speakers. Then I remembered one more. Can you name these, and any others?



Yiddish, Memory, and Time Travel

Another of the topics I covered was the fact that Time and Memory are very crucial factors in Yiddish culture. I tied this in with several Yiddish Fantasy and SF stories. One was by the famous writer and playwright H. Leivick, and several of my own Holocaust-related stories (translated into English and published in CyberCozen), and my own SF time-travel novel "di geheyne shlihes".

Yiddish and ETs

The only ET-Yiddish connections I can think of are Isaac Bashevis Singer's short story of an alien who converted to Judaism who is needed as a 10th Jew to complete a Minyen (10 person group needed for collective prayer) on some far-away planet – and one of mine.

Singer wrote all of his works in Yiddish, and they were then translated into English and other languages and subsequently published. I can't, however, remember the name of the story or whether the ET specifically spoke Yiddish.

In my story, the ETs speak their own language, but in order to communicate with the person they need to contact, they use a language translation device inside an android they are controlling.

In this story, "kamf nign" [battle melody/song] I write of a devastating space war between two planets somewhere in the cosmos, and of one planet's search for the ultimate weapon to defeat the other. The long and the short of it is that they discover Earth, and that there is more than one possibility to 'win' a war – and that is to make peace. Of course, Yiddish plays the key role of peacemaker (whoda thunk it ...?).

The story is still unpublished, and I hope to translate it as soon as it is.

New Yiddish SF book + Translations

Until about 2 months ago I thought I was the only living Yiddish SF writer (and also the youngest). Well, it seems I was (happily) mistaken. 12-year old Etele Niborski-Trinh beats me by a mile/1.66Km – she has just published a 77 page (illustrated?) Yiddish children's book about a trip to the Moon. (I'm still trying to track it down and only have an article in the online Yiddish Forverts, and this link as proof: http://www.rachelnet.net/F?func=find-b&request=000227510&find_code=SYS&local_base=REB01).

In any case, here are the covers of several fantasy and SF books recently translated into Yiddish (Fellowship of the Ring, The Hobbit, Frankenstein, Little Prince):



Apparently more of the Ring books are being prepared.

In conclusion:

Who knows what else is out there in the vast Universe regarding Yiddish and SF?

Yiddish has got to be one of the most surprising and resilient languages/cultures on this planet, and I'm sure there are more amazing things yet to be discovered.

As for the premise of my presentation?

– I concluded that Yiddish still has a lot to offer to solve the many problems in this world, and I'm happy to be part of the solution ☺

Until next time, zay gezunt [be well/healthy – another traditional Yiddish saying].

We'd love to hear your thoughts on any of the above subjects and we may publish some of them!

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