



SCIENCE-Fiction Fanzine

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חדשות האגודה – ספטמבר 2016 The Israeli Society for Science Fiction and Fantasy

מועדון הקריאה של חודש ספטמבר – ספיישל מאדים

ירושלים: "גר בארץ נוכריה" (רוברט הייגלן), יום ה', 29/9, ב-20:00 בנגילה, משיח ברוכף 5. מנחה: יהושע ברנהרט
 ת"א: "לבד על מאדים" (אנרי וייר), יום ה', 29/9, ב-19:30, בקפה גרג, ויצמן 2. מנחה: דפנה קירש
 לצורך היערכות למספר המשתתפים, יש להירשם מראש דרך הדוא"ל של המנחה. רצוי להביא למפגש עותק של הספר.
 הכניסה חופשית ואינה כרוכה בתשלום או בחברות באגודה, וכן אינה מותנית בהגעה למפגשים קודמים או עתידיים.
 ** מועדון חודש אוקטובר יתקיים במסגרת פסטיבל אייקון, ולכבוד נושא הפסטיבל "משחקים" יעסוק בספר "המהלכים בקצוות" מאת דיאנה ווין ג'ונס. יתקיים ב-18/10 ב-16:00 במתחם פסטיבל אייקון (עירוני א' ואשכול פיס), רחוב הארבעה, ת"א.

כל האירועים של האגודה מופיעים בלוח האירועים (שפע אירועים מעניינים, הרצאות, סדנאות, מפגשים ועוד)

לקבלת עדכונים שוטפים על מפגשי מועדון הקריאה ברחבי הארץ ניתן להצטרף לרשימת התפוצה או לדה האגודה

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

NOTE FROM THE EDITOR:

WOW! Am I in the wrong business...?

(Actually, it's all volunteer, and it doesn't really matter, since I have fun putting out the monthly issue, even though it 'costs' me in time that I could otherwise use for my other projects...) – but what I really want to say is, that this issue contains not one, but two 'problematic' presentations that I want to share with you. Sometimes, I feel like I no longer understand SF (then again, there are so many genres out there that you can't love 'em all).

Let me put it this way:

A while back, I received some stuff from an outside source, to write up something about his/her 'SF'. After going over the material, I immediately rejected it for both the [lack of] 'SF' in it, and the content that would be unsuitable for our readership. Then, in conjunction with the series I'm currently running, I wanted to write up about the "Jupiter Ascending" film that I had seen, and I was disappointed in the reviews I read (see below).

And then, I got this info pack from Robert Eggleton about his book "*Rarity from the Hollow*" that, at first glance, looked very interesting (it still is, in its way) – but when I delved into the material and looked for other reviews on the Internet, I became quite disappointed/disillusioned.

That notwithstanding, I'm giving him a break and will let you – our readers – decide its worth.

NON-review – *Rarity from the Hollow* - by Robert Eggleton

FROM THE EDITOR: We received a request by the author to review his book.

Since we're generally swamped with all sorts of tasks and responsibilities, and our time is at a premium, we asked him – as we do others – to send in some blurbs, relevant excerpts, etc., so we can throw together a 'guest author presentation'. – We've done this in the past and hope to continue, though there have been rejections as well. This one is a rejection, but worth mentioning anyhow. Therefore:

Here's what I wrote him:

Hi Robert,
 I'm in a bit of a dilemma.

After reading up on the book (e.g. reviews on Goodreads'
<http://www.goodreads.com/book/show/13603677-rarity-from-the-hollow>, etc.

particularly those of "Glenn Conley", "Dianne", and "Huriyah"), I find it hard to place this book as a viable read for my CyberCozen readers.

For example, the Ch10 excerpt you sent - although very well written and shockingly interesting - is not about anything SF I can use.

In fact, from the various reviews that present an overall picture of the storyline, there doesn't seem to be much SF in the book, and those SF parts are more like ploys than anything central to the storyline or message.

Although I haven't actually read the book, it seems that your main message of child and family abuse somehow gets lost in the "saving the Universe" fantasy part of the Shopping Mall with the intelligent cockroaches - almost as if you were writing two different books: one an adult fantasy and one a child fantasy.

I'm actually impressed by those who wrote positively - including the quoted reviewers you sent (Evelyn Somers, Williams, and Piers Anthony, etc.) - **and so, I've decided to publish this letter to you, and let the readers decide for themselves.**

Good luck. I'm impressed that you are donating sales proceeds to "... ORGANIZATIONS THAT DIRECTLY DEAL WITH IMPOVERISHED OR ABUSED CHILDREN IN CRISIS.",

Good luck
Leybl

And, to give him the benefit of the doubt, here's his response:

Hi Leybl,

Did you happen to notice these reviews?

"a hillbilly version of Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy, only instead of the earth being destroyed to make way for a hyperspace bypass, Lacy Dawn must... The author has managed to do what I would have thought impossible; taken serious subjects like poverty, ignorance, abuse, and written about them with tongue-in-cheek humor without trivializing them... Eggleton sucks you into the Hollow, dunks you in the creek, rolls you in the mud, and splays you in the sun to dry off. Tucked between the folds of humor are some profound observations on human nature and modern society that you have to read to appreciate... it's a funny book that most sci-fi fans will thoroughly enjoy." <http://awesomeindies.net/ai-approved-review-of-rarity-from-the-holly-by-robert-eggleton/>

"...soon I found myself immersed in the bizarre world... weeping for the victim and standing up to the oppressor... solace and healing in the power of love, laughing at the often comical thoughts... marveling at ancient alien encounters... As a rape survivor... found myself relating easily to Lacy Dawn... style of writing which I would describe as beautifully honest. *Rarity from the Hollow* is different from anything I have ever read, and in today's world of cookie-cutter cloned books, that's pretty refreshing... whimsical and endearing world of Appalachian Science Fiction, taking you on a wild ride you won't soon forget...." <http://kyliejude.com/2015/11/book-review-rarity-from-the-hollow/>

Thanks,
Robert

FOR THE RECORD:

Robert Eggleton has served as a children's advocate in an impoverished state for over forty years. He is best known for his investigative reports about children's programs... which also included publication of models of serving disadvantaged and homeless children ..., and statistical reports on the occurrence and correlates of child abuse and delinquency.

Today, he is a recently retired children's psychotherapist from the mental health center in Charleston, West Virginia,

Rarity from the Hollow is his debut novel and its release followed publication of three short Lacy Dawn Adventures in magazines: Wingspan Quarterly, Beyond Centauri, and Atomjack Science Fiction. Author proceeds have been donated to a child abuse prevention program operated by Children's Home Society of West Virginia. <http://www.childhswv.org/>

This month's roundup:

- Non-review under "NOTE FROM THE EDITOR" (see above) about Eggleton's book "Rarity from the Hollow"
- (*Report on 20th Anniversary celebration of the **Israeli Society for Science Fiction and Fantasy** – next month – Sorry...)
- Part II of our new series of articles (let's give it a title: "The More the Merrier" – how's that?) on the topic of Duplicates / Clones/ Twins/ etc. – with a review of the movie "Jupiter Ascending"
- And, of course, the Sheer Science section by Dr. Doron Calo: Putting a hot spin on spills

- Your editor, Leybl Botwinik

(... and still on the backburner [but getting closer to realization] ... a promised Terry Pratchett write-up and completion of the Zombie series in a special all-encompassing issue ...)



We interrupt this program for ... more Robot&A/I programming

YouTube has a lot of good stuff previewing the current and upcoming generations of robotics. For example:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qh1dNSu9ZSE&spfreload=10>

[Beginnings of Skynet: The Best Robots in the World Meets in DARPA Robotics Challenge Finals 2015](#)



Or see the following, about military robots:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PVT5TfFL4Os>

Sorry – the write up about the very enjoyable and memorable 20th anniversary celebration of the **Israeli Society for Science Fiction and Fantasy**, will appear in the October issue.

The More, the Merrier (Part II) "Jupiter Ascending" – Film Review

By Leybl Botwinik

Am I wrong?

It seems that this movie hasn't received very many good reviews... In fact, looking at the awards it's won, most are actually what I would call 'backlash' (or "stab-in-the-back") awards (or "nominations for..."), such as "Worst directors" or "Campy Movie"

(see http://www.imdb.com/title/tt1617661/awards?ref=tt_awd)



So ... I watched it again ... and my conclusions are... that not only did I enjoy the movie the first time, but I enjoyed it even more the 2nd time, because this time, I caught even more of the tremendous amounts of – I'll call them – "fun SF" and other quirks in the movie.

Generally speaking, I can understand why people were put off by some of the parts of the plot in the film, but overall I thought it had a good flow.

Those who may consider it "campy"^(*) are probably right. The movie is a mix of a fairy tale and 'hard' SF (hard in the sense of full of Science or at least 'Scientific' fiction), with a mixture of satire or tongue-in-cheek. Also, there are some high caliber actors that were not developed to their full potential, although I liked Mila Kunis as the young girl Jupiter Jones in the main role.

(*) - **campy** [from <http://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=campy>]

Camp (n.) and Campy (adj.): Being so extreme that it has an amusing and sometimes perversely sophisticated appeal. Over the top and farcical, intentionally exaggerated so as not to be taken seriously. Found primarily in television, theatre and motion pictures, camp endeavors for satire and, for those who fully understand and appreciate the risible nature of its material, it's not surprising when it develops a cult following.

Scene after scene – and for the most part they sometimes happen in very quick and non-stop succession – the viewer is exposed to a lot of SF and some Fantasy clichés. However, I felt that it was all done with tact, and in good taste. That includes all the futuristic scientific hardware ('electronics') and 'software' (aliens, half-human beasts) that can be packed into one film without over-exaggerating that this is a spoof of some other story (though it maybe is: at least of the genre).

A great deal of effort (and obviously money) was invested in a tremendous number of special-effects scenes, elaborate costumes and backdrops, sophisticated spaceships and castles, etc. – including lots of scenes of the heroine falling to her death...



Some examples:

- The co-hero actor Channing Tatum, as Caine Wise, is an ex-super soldier who is now a mercenary (with a good heart). He is actually a gene-spliced being of a dog-like race and humans. He wears flight boots (think "Iron Man") which are a combination hover-thrusters and flying skateboard. ... and has Spock-like pointy ears.

- Abductions by short skinny Aliens that look like the infamous one in "Area 51" bunch



- Other mercenaries have enhanced vision, weapons that expand when taken out of their pockets, a flying super-sled, etc.
- Wounds can be healed by a spray
- There is a beam-up tube that slowly lifts you up to a spaceship hovering in the sky
- Great special effects (FX) shooting scenes and high-speed dog-fights of fantastically designed flying attack ships
- After the fight scene where half the city [Chicago?] is damaged or destroyed (including innocent bystanders and automobiles) – all is restored overnight.
- Spaceships of all sizes
- Flying/talking lizards, Owl-like 'men', Mouse-like women, etc.
- Dress-cloth that has built-in A/I and can talk to you, float you in your sleep, etc. (Sounds scary, right?)

The long-and-the-short of the story, without going into all the subtle plot-intricacies includes:

- 1) The whole history of the world, origin of the species – the Bible and other religions' stories of the birth of mankind – are all turned on their head: Humans originate from a planet "Aurus(?)" of around 1 billion years ago. Humans living on Earth were originally 'seeded' there about 100,000 years ago, after the "Aurans (?)" killed off all the dinosaurs, in order that mankind can develop and one day be ready to be "harvested" for their DNA
- 2) A power struggle between the heirs of one of the most powerful dynasties in the universe (the deceased mother, the Queen owned the Earth and other real-estate in the universe) – reminds me a bit of "DUNE"
- 3) The harvesting of DNA from humans (that don't survive the process) to produce an elixir to prolong Life (The Queen lived 91 millennia before she was murdered).
- 4) Etc. (see the movie!...)

Notwithstanding the critics or my own likes or dislikes in the plotline, one SF item stands out above all – something I haven't seen or heard about in the past, albeit it sounds plausible and related to our topic this month and for the next few issues:

duplicates/clones/etc.

Our heroine is the exact DNA-duplicate of the Queen. In a vast universe with billions upon billions of inhabited planets (though not all contain humanoids) – eventually, there will be born an exact DNA-duplicate of someone else, and Jupiter just so happens to be that of the murdered Queen. The Queen had long ago prepared a will for the eventuality of her death, according to which, if a perfect DNA-duplicate, like Jupiter is found, then she will inherit the Earth and a good chunk of the universe.

Is this at all possible? Let's look at what is normally said about snowflakes: The number of different combinations is tremendously high, such that it's nearly impossible to have two flakes to be exactly the same. Some scientists regard the possibility of two flakes to be alike as nearly improbable. See here, for example:

<https://www.its.caltech.edu/~atomic/snowcrystals/alike/alike.htm>,

"... Larger, complex snowflakes are all different. The number of possible ways of making a complex snowflake is staggeringly large. To see just how much so, consider a simpler question -- how many ways can you arrange 15 books on your bookshelf? Well, there [are] 15 choices for the first book, 14 for the second, 13 for the third, etc. Multiply it out and there are over a trillion ways to arrange just 15 books. With a hundred books, the number of possible arrangements goes up to just under 10^{158} (that's a 1 followed by 158 zeros). That number is about 10^{70} times larger than the total number of atoms in the entire universe!"

Now when you look at a complex snow crystal, you can often pick out a hundred separate features if you look closely. Since all those features could have grown differently, or ended up in slightly different places, the math is similar to that with the books. Thus the number of ways to make a complex snow crystal is absolutely huge.

And thus it's unlikely that any two complex snow crystals, out of all those made over the entire history of the planet, have ever looked completely alike."

[If you do a google search, you'll find many similar articles/statements].

That having been said – if the Universe is truly infinite, then the probability nevertheless exists.

A human being is, however, infinitely more complex (physically and physiologically) than the common snowflake. And yet, it is not beyond all probability that an 'absolute' look-alike exists somewhere out there in the far, far reaches of space... and this is the premise of the movie: The Queen of that far, far inter-galactic realm has died (with all the far-reaching political consequences that entails), and an Earth girl whose name is "Jupiter Jones" is her exact (100 proof) match – and then the fun begins... and everyone and his attack dog wants a piece of her.

That's all for now. If you like stories of the 'underdog' (pun intended), with some humour and satire – and a strange love story – I recommend you see the movie. And if not, then at least see it for the special effects and highly imaginative SF tech.

- **Enjoy!**

Talking about entertainment... the next kind of 'duplicate' (recently screened) that we'll discuss and offer up, will be reviewed next time... Stay tuned...

[* AND feel free to write us about your favorite book, or comic, or movie duplicate(s)/clone(s), etc.]



... Any relation to the 'Pillar of Fire' in the Bible...? ...

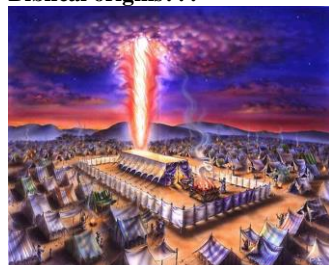
Sheer* Science: From Spill to Spin

(* In memory of Aharon Sheer (נ"ט) – Founding Editor)

– Prepared by: **Doron Calo***, PhD

(*our CC Sheer Science editor ☺)

Biblical origins???



The Blue Whirl vs. Oil Spills

Oil spills are a nasty business, and unfortunately, they happen far too often. The **Exxon Valdez** spill in 1989 automatically springs up, of course, but there were many others, including a severe spill of our own (pipe leak in **Evrona, Israel**, in 2014). The spilled oil must be cleaned up, and quickly – and this proves to be quite a challenge. But a recent scientific discovery may offer a solution for this kind of crisis. This solution, however, takes its inspiration from a different kind of environmental disaster: **wildfires**.

And we're not talking about any wildfire – this is about the scariest of them all, the **fire whirl** (commonly known as **fire tornado**). This apocalyptic pillar of fire is a particularly nasty type of fire that gets **twisted up** when appropriate conditions such as geography and wind come together. This phenomenon is typically seen on land, but it can also occur over bodies of water that become covered in inflammable liquids such as **crude oil** from a busted tanker.

One bizarre case of fire whirl was observed in 2003 after a lightning struck a **whiskey warehouse** in Kentucky and burning booze spilled into a nearby lake. This incident actually caught the attention of a group of scientists from the University of Maryland, who decided to look deeper into this phenomenon. They

discovered that when an oil spot over water is ignited, and the flames are fanned in a particular way so that they are spun into a **vortex**, the resulting fire tornado actually "**calms down**" after a while and settles into a funny-looking, mushroom-shaped "**blue whirl**", which burns cleanly – that is, with a **minimal amount of soot**. This may be the long sought-after solution for oil spills: you just **burn them off**, but using this method, the burning oil will disappear without leaving any **air pollution** behind it.

The next problem that faces the scientists lies in the way to make this "blue whirl" over large spills, and, ultimately, how on Earth can you **control** this thing, and make it go from a yellow, hellish pillar of fire, into a sustained clean flame that will burn long enough to finish off the spill.

Our conclusion: If people were inventive enough to dream up this crazy idea in the first place, making it work is just a question of hammering out the technical details...

Yet Another KIC 8462852 Follow-Up:

Remember the story from a few months back, about this **odd star** in the Cygnus constellation whose brilliance seem to **dip and rise** in a pattern previously unknown to science (and the crazy theories it evoked regarding **alien megastructures**, which were happily embraced by SF lovers the world over)? ...

Well, a new study finds that that KIC 8462852, nicknamed **Tabby's Star**, showed gradual yet steady **dimming** over the last four years. This sits quite nicely with the concept of aliens building a huge megastructure (such as a **Dyson's sphere**) around it and gradually **closing off its outgoing light** – probably in order to capture its **solar energy**. A huge amount of energy and super-advanced technology in the hands of mysterious aliens right in our back yard ???
– personally, I'm getting a little worried! ☺

Links:

From fire whirls to blue whirls and combustion with reduced pollution

<http://www.pnas.org/content/early/2016/08/03/1605860113.full>

KIC 8462852 Faded Throughout the Kepler Mission

<http://arxiv.org/abs/1608.01316>

NEXT MONTH: More Duplicates and Clones

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

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