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חדשות האגודה – פברואר 2017 The Israeli Society for Science Fiction and Fantasy

מועדון הקריאה בת"א יתקיים בהתחלת חודש מרץ: יעסוק בזוכה פרס גפן "חולצות אדומות" מאת ג'ון סקאלזי ביום ה', 2.3.17, ב-20:00, ב-"קפה גרג", ויצמן 2. מנחה: [דפנה קירש](#)

מועדון הקריאה בירושלים יעסוק באסופת הסיפורים "היה יהיה" השמינית במספר (אגודה ישראלית למדע בדיוני ולפנטסיה,

2016) ויתקיים ביום ג', 28.2.17, בבית הקפה "נגילה", משיח ברוכוף 5, ירושלים. מנחה: [גלי אחיטוב](#)

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 לרשימת התפוצה או לדף האגודה בפייסבוק.

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

This month's roundup:

- 5 Sci-Fi Movies Set in 2017: What They Got Wrong and Eerily Right
- Four novels on the Hugo 2015 ballot reviewed by Cathy Lister-Palmer (Montreal SF and Fantasy Association)

And, of course, the Sheer Science section by Dr. Doron Calo *about interesting advances in 3D Bio-Printing*

– Your editor, Leybl Botwinik

Real Reader Remarks:

Wow -- another riveting CC edition! I admire your ability to describe shows from back in the 60's & 70's -- from an era when life was simpler and sci-fi-becoming-reality was just beginning, one could say. While I don't agree with a few of your points, I certainly appreciate the food for thought!

Gary

UPDATE:**Self-Driving Cars Mostly Behaving Themselves on Calif. Roads**

- BY [TOM BRANT](#) FEBRUARY 2, 2017 01:51PM EST

An annual report details how often the cars' autopilot systems disengaged.



Self-driving cars roaming the public roads of California behaved themselves remarkably well last year, according to the state's annual autonomous car disengagement report.

Released this week, the [report](#) includes submissions from all companies holding permits to test self-driving cars on public roads.

They're required to record the number of times their cars' autonomous mode disengaged, the location and cause of each disengagement, and how long it took for the driver to assume manual control of the vehicle in each case.

To read more, see: <http://www.pcmag.com/news/351513/self-driving-cars-mostly-behaving-themselves-on-calif-roads>

FUTURE (un)Shock???

What They Thought Then – and Where We Are Now

- By Leybl Botwinik

Here's something that always fascinated me: People write SF and set their stories at a particular date in the future. The 'smarter ones' will set the date hundreds (if not thousands) of years ahead. The more daring set their stories 20-50 years ahead. What happens, when that date comes up – how close were they to reality?

A case in point was the book "1984" by George Orwell, written in 1948. I can still remember, that when the year 1984 came up – all sorts of articles were written about the book and how it stepped up and matched (or was far from) reality, and about the speculations or 'predictions' of the original story and the current political and socio-economic state of the real world in 1984.

Following is a fascinating look by Evan Dashevsky at some SF films 'taking place' in 2017, and how they did or did not hit the mark. The movies described: *The Running Man* (1987), *Barb Wire* (1996), *Cherry 2000* (1987), *Fortress* (1993), and *Terminator Genisys* (2015).

Other than the Terminator one, I've never heard or seen any of these (guess I need to, now). Interestingly enough, Arnold is in two of them ☺. At the end, Dashevsky offers a 'bonus' comment concerning the non-SF "*Parks and Recreation, Season 7* (2015)".

Following, is an excerpt.

NOTE: This article includes links to trailers/clips of the reviewed movies + to related points he makes

5 Sci-Fi Movies Set in 2017: What They Got Wrong and Eerily Right

BY EVAN DASHEVSKY, JANUARY 26, 2017

It's insane what *The Running Man*, *Barb Wire*, and others got right and wrong about this year...so far.

The best science-fiction films visualize the technologies of the future to reveal something about the human condition of today. But 95 percent of sci-fi flicks simply take stale clichés and dress them up with some robots and lasers and stuff.



Keeping this ratio of good-to-bad sci-fi in mind, we are now entering a very interesting time. Following the success of the original *Star Wars* in 1977, big budget science fiction of varying quality became a Hollywood mainstay. In the subsequent decades, there were countless cinematic conjectures about what the world would be like 20, 30, and 40 years in the future. And now that we have finally arrived at the once-unimaginable twenty-teens, we're beginning to run up against some of these big budget predictions.

Here we are in 2017, which is the setting for its fair share of sci-fi prognostication. As you might expect, many of these predictions—not only about the technology, but about the world in general—are totally off the mark. But it's also super interesting to see all the things these films got right.

To read the rest of the article, see:

<http://www.pcmag.com/article/351265/5-sci-fi-movies-set-in-2017-what-they-got-wrong-and-eerily>

Editor's remark on the above: 2017 isn't over yet. In fact it's just starting, and it looks to be a very interesting year to tell our grandkids about, so don't forget to take your own notes...

From Cathy Palmer-Lister's Library*

Book lovers never go to bed alone. ~Author Unknown

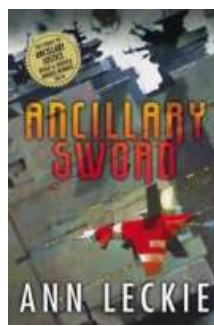
[From the editor:

*Cathy Palmer-Lister is the current president of the Montreal Science Fiction and Fantasy Association (MonSSFA). The following book reviews are about the 2015 Hugo awards. In the interests of a collaborative effort to share SF-related articles, reviews, etc., Cathy has agreed to share this piece from WARP-92 (Summer 2015) – the quarterly MonSSFA publication – and we are sending some CyberCozen contents to WARP as well. The actual/final Hugo results are listed at the end.]

Four of the five novels on the Hugo ballot are in my library. I enjoyed them, but I liked some more than others. I had a hard time deciding between **Ancillary Sword** and **The Goblin Emperor** for first place. In the end, I decided on **The Goblin Emperor** because **Ancillary Sword** is a sequel to *Ancillary Justice*, which won last year.

I voted **The Three Body Problem** in third; though I know it has many supporters, it just didn't grab me the way the first two did. In fourth place, I put **Skin Game**, though I nearly left it off the ballot. I didn't read **Darkness Between the Stars** by Kevin J. Anderson, not because of it being a puppy nomination, but because it's just not "my thing".

Ancillary Sword, by Ann Leckie



This is the sequel to **Ancillary Justice**, winner of the Hugo, Nebula, and every other award, and it seems likely Leckie will be a winner again. In the first novel, we come to learn that Breq was once the mind of a warship, controlling every aspect of it, and all the other ancillaries on the ship. She is now an individual, and a very angry one at that, determined to revenge the betrayal of her ship. In **Ancillary Sword**, Breq enters a complicated relationship with the emperor, Anaander Mianaai.

The emperor is also a sort of ancillary, though all the bodies are clones, apparently, since she is always recognized wherever she appears. Unfortunately, Anaander Mianaai is quite possibly insane. She is at war with herself, and the Radch empire is being shredded. Breq, taking a leap of faith on which Mianaai is to follow, accepts command of a Sword class ship, but she is not jumping into this mess

blindly. She is going to Atheok Station, the better to protect the family of a lieutenant she once knew and respected, and had to kill on the order of the emperor.

However, Breq grows increasingly suspicious of the secretive behaviour of those on the Station and the ships that supposedly guard it. Ironically, Breq has a human crew that pretends to be ancillaries, although the use of ancillaries is no longer morally acceptable, and this chaffs her. Ancillaries were human once, mostly prisoners of war whose souls were ripped out, and their brains rewired to meld with the AIs of stations and ships.

This is a fascinating universe. Except for growing larger, the Radch empire hasn't changed much in centuries. The speech of a person who'd been in suspended animation for a millennium or so, is described by ordinary humans as "archaic", but she's easily understood. Breq recognizes her as one of the officers she once served, and of course the emperor has been around longer than that. This stagnation does not bode well for the future; the Radch are not the only race in town.

An interesting feature of the Radch, and one much discussed by reviewers, is that gender is of no importance whatsoever, pronouns are gender neutral. Leckie chose to use "she" for the Radch word. I wonder if there would have

been any controversy if she had used "he" instead.

I owe thanks to Danny Sichel for recommending this series to me, and I'm looking forward to the third and concluding novel, ***Ancillary Mercy***.

The Three-Body Problem, by Cixin Liu



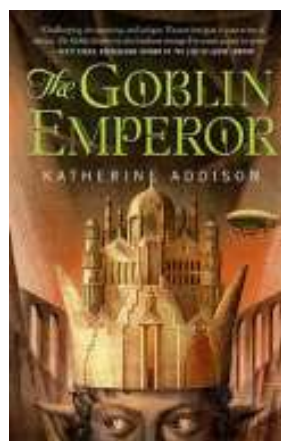
Translated by Ken Liu, this is the first volume of Cixin Liu's very popular Chinese trilogy ***Remembrance of Earth's Past***. It has its start in the horrors of the Cultural Revolution. A young woman witnesses the death of her physicist father, tortured to death in public, and is herself banished to the edge of nowhere: a physicist like her father, working as a lumberjack! Flash forward to the present, we learn there is an international team of investigators studying the mysterious suicides of scientists the world over. Tossed into the mix, a computer game – source unknown – but seemingly related somehow to the suicides.

Through the game, humans learn about the 3-body problem (3BP), a study in orbital mechanics. Imagine a planet orbiting a triple star system: sometimes a sun torches the civilization, and sometimes the civilisation freezes over. Sometimes inhabitants survive in hibernation, sometimes all life is wiped out and has to start over again. It doesn't take a genius to figure out that the game describes a real crisis faced by an alien civilization desperate to solve the 3BP in order to predict stable and chaotic eras. Obviously, there is another solution to their dilemma, and I know what star system lies closest to a certain triple star system.

This is the sort of book one loves or hates, depending on what you seek from a "good book". Personally, I appreciate strong

character development and prose more than plot, so for me, ***The Three-Body Problem*** didn't work. The characters were stereotypes made of cardboard, the prose just functional. Maybe it's the fault of the translation. Maybe the upcoming movie will be better, even dubbed or subtitled.

The Goblin Emperor, by Katherine Addison (Sarah Monette)



Winner of the Locus best novel award, and nominated for a Hugo, a Nebula, and the World Fantasy Award, it's about a half-Goblin who becomes emperor of the Elflands. Honestly, I only bought it because it was nominated for a Hugo, but I loved it!!

The novel is complete in itself, but I really hope there will be more books about Maia, who is a most complex and sympathetic character. An airship accident takes the lives of Maia's father and his sons by previous marriages, leaving Maia as heir to the throne. Events move quickly, almost too quickly for Maia, who's been living exiled to a small estate in a backwater village. His cousin, guardian and mentor also in exile, hates him, and constantly belittles him, even beating him to the point of leaving scars.

Maia seems rather weak at first, but as he learns to navigate the very hostile court politics, he shows unsuspected strengths. In some ways, Maia reminds me of CJ Cherryh's Bren Cameron in the ***Foreigner*** series.

Believable characters, superior word-crafting, a mystery to solve, people trying to kill the protagonist, labyrinthine court politics, what's not to love?

Skin Game, by Jim Butcher



Hilarious! I love Harry Dresden books, and *Skin Game* has some surprising twists and turns, not to mention a lot of very devious people,

one of whom is, of course, Harry Dresden. Mab settles a debt by hiring out Harry to assist Nicodemus Archleone in a heist. Archleone, much hated by Harry and with good reason, has taken it into his head to steal the Holy Grail from Hades.

It's fun and well-written in a straightforward sort of way, but it pales somewhat in comparison with the other three Hugo contenders I have read. It was also on the Puppy slate, which won't do the novel any favours.

Actual/final Hugo results for 2015:

Best Novel (5653 final ballots, 1827 nominating ballots, 587 entries, range 212-387)

The Three Body Problem, by Cixin Liu, Ken Liu translator (Tor Books)

See: <http://www.thehugoawards.org/hugo-history/2015-hugo-awards/>

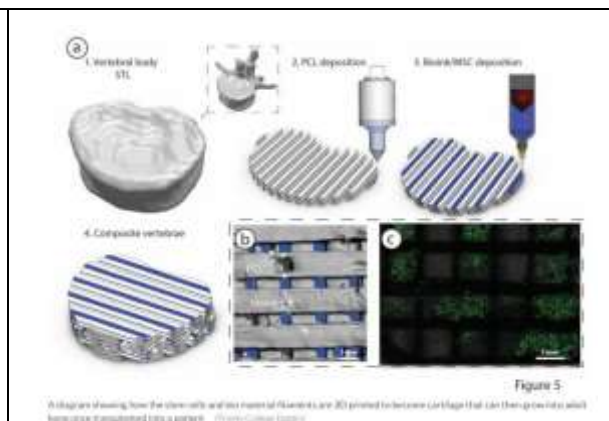
Sheer* Science: All the Sinews That's Fit to Print

(* In memory of Aharon Sheer (7"ט) – Founding Editor)

– Prepared by: Doron Calo**, PhD (**our CC Sheer Science editor ☺)

3D Bioprinting

I think that the broader impact of **3D printing** was made clearer to me, thanks to SF author **Cory Doctorow**. Before I read his masterpiece *Makers*, in which this technology takes center stage, I vaguely knew that it has something to do with creating **models** and **prototypes** at home – something that could only interest modeling geeks or maybe designers. Doctorow's book painted a very convincing picture of the broader impact of this technology on human society in the near future, and made me wait for the first **affordable, mass-produced 3D printer**. This is yet to come (I think such a gizmo still costs a few thousand US\$), but in the meantime, a new and exciting application of this technology has sprung up, which even the brilliant Doctorow hadn't yet manage to dream up: **3D bioprinting**.



3D bioprinting works under the same principles as traditional 3D printing. That is, using an automated process to lay numerous

layers of "ink" one on top of the other to ultimately create a **three-dimensional object**. The difference here is the use of **bioink** –

usually, **stem cells** and a mix of biological components that help the cells grow – and the resulting printout is a **biological structure**. And while 3D printing (by the way, I think it's high time for someone to come up with a **one-word term** for this tech! **) is already used to create medical devices such as **prosthetics**, 3D bioprinting aims to create **actual living tissue**. Although it certainly sounds crazy, a few recent attempts proved to be successful.

Some of these proofs-of-concept actually mixed 3D bioprinting of stem cells and 3D printing of non-living structures. The first of these success stories involves the creation of **cartilage** on top of a **scaffold** made of **biomaterials**, in order to re-create missing bones.

Since the structure of mature bone is extremely complex, it appears to be better to first create a cartilage **template**, and then feed it with the right growth factors for several weeks in order for it to gradually calcify and transform into **functional bone**.

The ultimate goal of bioprinting is to create **whole organs** for transplants – but taking the current state of the technology, this seems **a very long way off**.

As for me, I have something sooner to look forward to: Cory Doctorow's new novel *Walkaway* (in which 3D printing will make another appearance!) is due to come out in April 2017.

I will make an effort – no promises – to review it for CyberCozen when it finally arrives...

Links:

<http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/3d-printing-medical-breakthrough-could-help-bones-regenerate-without-use-grafts-1579946>

<http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/3d-printed-blood-vessels-monkeys-marks-medical-breakthrough-towards-artificial-organs-1600563>

<http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/epic-dermis-scientists-develop-3d-printer-capable-producing-living-human-skin-1602817>

<http://craphound.com/category/makers/>

**** A single word term for 3D printing? How about **Plinting** or **Plinthing**? A “plinth” is a base platform on which a structure is built. 3D printing is “grounded on” creating multiple ‘bases’ one layer at a time, with one layer or ‘base’ printed/plinted on top of the other. You heard it here first ... [Leybl]**

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

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