



SCIENCE-Fiction Fanzine

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DON'T MISS: ICON 2017 – OCTOBER 8-10 Tel Aviv: <http://2017.iconfestival.org.il/about/en/>

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

מועדון חודש אוקטובר בירושלים שהיה אמור לעסוק בספר "דרך המלכים" נדחה לחודש נובמבר. מועד חדש יפורסם. המועדון בת"א יעסוק בספר "המשכוכית" מאת קוני ויליס (כנרת זמורה ביתן, 1998). ביום חמישי, 19.10, בשעה 19:30 בבית פרטי בת"א, באיזור הטיילת וקניון "מגדל האופרה". כתובת מדויקת תינתן לנרשמות/ים למועדון. מנחה: **איילת גרשוביץ** בנוסף: במסגרת כנס אייקון על "הנסיכה הקסומה" מאת ויליאם גולדמן (כתר, 2002). לרגל 30 שנה לסרט. מנחה: **דפנה קירש** 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 לדף האגודה בפייסבוק.

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

### To One And All: HAPPY SUKKOT/SUKES

### חג סוכות שמח – א פריילעכן יום-טוב סוכות

#### This month's roundup:

Hopefully back in the game for running/publishing on time (beginning of the month, plus/minus a day or 3 ☺).

- My review of the SF movie "Seven Sisters (aka: What Happened to Monday?)"
- Dr. Doron Calo muscles his way in with: Artificial Muscles

And, Part II of my recent trip to Montreal – in an upcoming issue.

– Your editor, Leybl Botwinik

#### But first the bad news...

My good friend, Shlomo Schwartzberg (movie/book/entertainment critic and lecturer on film topics) – lover of SF, as you've probably seen in previous pieces that he's written that have appeared in CyberCozen – just informed me that the great Brian W. Aldiss has passed away.

#### He writes:

Brian Aldiss just passed away. I remember he came to Israel once.

See here for an obituary/write-up about Aldiss:

<https://www.theguardian.com/books/2017/aug/21/science-fiction-author-brian-aldiss-dies-aged-92>

Science fiction author Brian Aldiss dies aged 92 | Books ...

www.theguardian.com

Brian Aldiss, the "grand old man" of science fiction whose writing has shaped the genre since he was first published in the 1950s, has died at the age of 92 ...

And here's an interesting write-up from a year earlier (Aug. 2016, when he was 91):

<http://bestsciencefictionbooks.com/blog/5-brian-aldiss-novels-you-must-read/>

## Seven Sisters (aka: What Happened to Monday?)

Movie REVIEWED by Leybl Botwinik



I just recently mentioned to someone that among the various doomsday scenarios for apocalypses / global crisis of sorts (such as alien invasions, zombie plagues, atomic war, asteroid collisions, sun flares, AI, – and the like), the topic of **overpopulation** has somehow fallen to the wayside. In fact, I may have mentioned it in CyberCozen, just can't remember when/where – was it possibly in the review about Antonio Banderas in "Automata"? In any case, the issue of overpopulation in the movie "Seven Sisters" (aka: "What Happened to Monday?") is combined with a second motivation – global crop/food failure. The two issues force Government countermeasures to contain and/or solve the problems – ultimately backfiring into a frightening totalitarian dystopian society.

Like one of my favorite stories in the genre – Harry Harrison's "Make Room Make Room" (1966 novel) / "Soylent Green" (1973 movie) – Scientists manage to concoct artificial means of nourishing the population and keeping people alive. So far so good. Food crisis solved, but the worldwide population is still slowly increasing to epic proportions (see: <https://www.amazon.com/Make-Room-Classic-Overpopulated-Future/dp/0765318857> )



Here comes the new twist: the apparent solution – doctored/genetically enhanced crops – has its own consequence: the fertility rate increases, and women giving birth suddenly have twins, triplets, etc., further exacerbating the numbers of mouths that need to be fed (not to mention finding room for all these additional people). Scientists, in conjunction with big government globally introduce an EDICT allowing only one child per couple. This is like the law in Communist/mainland China – a 35 year, "**voluntary**" policy from 1980 to contain the population (see: <http://all-that-is-interesting.com/china-one-child-policy>).

[**NOTE:** I purposely put “(The) EDICT” in all Caps, because it’s the name of Max Simon Ehrlich’s disturbing 1971 novel on the same subject: overpopulation – with a similar, if not more extreme government solution: for the next 30 years no one will be permitted to have (any) children] – see the tie to his movie “Z.P.G.” (Zero Population Growth) [http://www.sf-encyclopedia.com/entry/z\\_p\\_g](http://www.sf-encyclopedia.com/entry/z_p_g) ]

Chinese single child propaganda poster: The EDICT was also made into the film ZPG:



In the “Seven Sisters”, however, something else is added to the ‘spice’: all existing siblings must be placed into suspended animation. Not only must parents choose which of their newborn will be allowed to live a ‘free’ life (and which freeze-dried), but existing families are torn apart, and only one child is allowed to “breathe”, while all other siblings are put into cold storage – for a better day. Propaganda videos show a child voluntarily placing herself into a coffin-like canister and being cryogenically frozen – ala Walt Disney (see:

<https://www.thesun.co.uk/living/2231895/was-walt-disneys-body-really-cryogenically-frozen-after-he-died-in-1966-heres-what-we-know/>).

In our story, a fairly well off grandfather pays off some doctor-technicians to keep silent about the fact that his daughter – who died giving birth – had identical septuplets. Girls. He decides to name them after each day of the week (Monday, Tuesday, etc.) and secretly bring them up. This, and the background of overpopulation, failed crops and the scientists back-firing solution, all takes place in roughly the first 5 minutes of the

movie, with various flashbacks later, throughout the film, of the girls as children.

We jump now to 30 years later. Scenes of police dragging away illegal siblings and punishing their ‘criminal’ parents and splitting apart families are reminiscent of scenes where German soldiers are dragging away people and dividing up families (males on one side, females on the other), etc. – that took place during the Holocaust years. Obviously one cannot compare – only that the shadow of fear is there and one can feel it in the movie.

The girls, of course, are all living together. In order for them to get out in the open air, and also get an education, each girl – according to the day she is named after – can go out, assuming the common name of Karen Setmann (their mother’s actual maiden name).

Grandpa requires strict obedience to a set of procedures. Each girl, when she is out, must memorize each moment of activity: who she meets, what she learns, etc. so that at the end of the day, there is a family gathering and that girl recounts in maximum detail everything, so the other sisters will know how to act/react in the



following days. They all dress the same and 'act' the same when they are outside (wigs, same style clothes and makeup, etc.), but inside their relatively large apartment (which includes a secret room in case of visitors) they are free to be themselves. One other rule is strictly adhered to: what happens to one must happen to all. When one girl has an accident and her finger is cut off at the joint, Grandpa cuts off the same joint from each of the other sisters...

The story develops in various interesting ways. Monday disappears and no one knows why. Apparently captured by the police that are continuously monitoring the population with spot ID and/or DNA checks at specific entry points to 'Sectors' for commerce or business. Without going too deeply into the plot, the other sisters are trying to locate Monday, but are themselves being secretly targeted and so must act together to solve the mystery of the disappearance, while trying to survive

the crackdown on them. Some live. Some die...

The movie is entertaining in and of itself, but nothing SF-ish 'WOW' in my opinion. Nor does it make too big a statement about government control over the population, etc.

The acting is OK, but cannot, obviously, get to the point of character development of each of the 7 sisters, all played by one actress – Noomi Rapace – as compared with Tatiana Maslany who plays at least as many roles as the clone(s) in the highly recommended excellent TV series "Orphan Black".

The story has its moments, particularly towards the end, with various well carried out action scenes. The supporting actors could have been more interesting – such as the main 'bad guy' hit man/officer played by Christian Rubeck, or Glenn Close – the Chief Scientist. "Grandpa" Willem Dafoe played his role adequately – but he wasn't in any role that demanded more from him, acting-wise.

Some of the holes in the story stuck with me, though, even if it's obvious that in a 2 hour movie you can't develop or explain everything. For example, although the global crisis seems to have united the world, there doesn't seem to be too much resistance to the otherwise extreme policies and dictatorial enforcement of such. It would be interesting to know how specific cultures and particularly religions reacted to the edict. Overall, though, it's a movie to pass the time with, if you're so inclined.

## Sheer\* Science: Farewell 2 Arms – A New Approach to Robot Muscles

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

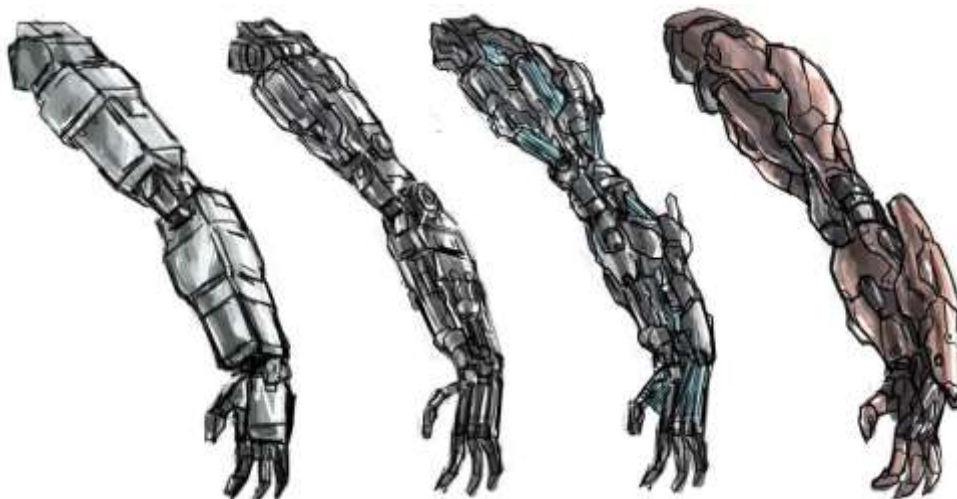
– Prepared by: Doron Calo\*\*, PhD (\*\*our CC Sheer Science editor ☺)

Shake on that bro': – some sample concepts, planned and in SF:



Artificial intelligence is all the rage these days. Machine learning, algorithms, pattern recognition.... all of that and more is advancing in leaps and bounds. But something seems to be missing. These cybernetic brains are

definitely impressive, but they need an actual body in order to make a real dent in our reality. And that seems somehow lacking, with limited physical capabilities and bulky, clumsy bodies — this doesn't seem to really cut the mustard.



The heart of the problem seems to lie in the rigidity of current robot bodies that severely limits their range of possible actions. That's where a new approach comes in: a soft artificial "muscle", extremely strong and rather easy to manufacture, has been dreamed up recently. Using the latest trend of mimicking natural structures in order to create enhanced, artificial versions (an approach used, for instance, to create the wings of an airplane), researchers 3D-printed robot "muscle" tissue that can lift up to 1000 times its own weight.

The trick is simple, really: the printed tissue is made of silicon rubber gel, with a structure that includes millions of tiny bubbles, each filled with ethanol. When a low electric current is applied to the tissue, the alcohol expands and changes the shape of the "muscle", which in turn can create movement – from brute force for industrial uses, to delicate microsurgery. This may be a major leap from what we used to see as robot muscles, that is, inflating balloons made of plastic or rubber that are capable of little movement and limited force.

This technology is still in its infancy, but it has great promise: This "muscle" can be fashioned into any shape and size, to accommodate a potentially huge range of practical needs; it is also incredibly cheap in comparison to existing technology. There are, of course, limitations to this prototype. Although the required voltage is low (8V), the "muscle" needs to be heated to almost 75°C in order to function – that's pretty hot! Subsequently, it takes a long time to cool down again, which means that the prototype moves really, really slowly.

On the other hand, I've seen enough SF movies to know that a giant killer robot can wreak havoc in slow motion just as well as at normal speed!

### Links:

Scientists create artificial muscles, which could allow robots to lift 1,000 times their own weight

<http://news.sky.com/story/scientists-develop-artificial-muscles-which-could-allow-robots-to-lift-1000-times-their-own-weight-11043010>

Soft material for soft actuators: <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41467-017-00685-3>

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

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