

The Israeli Society for Science Fiction and Fantasy 2022 מרץ – חדשות האגודה

תל אביב: מועדון הקריאה התל אביבי יעסוק בחציה השני של האסופה "היה יהיה 2021" (שמונת הסיפורים האחרונים). המועדון יתקיים ביום חמישי, 31.3, ב-19:30. המועדון יתקיים כנראה באופן היברידי. מיקום פיזי יישלח לנרשמים במייל. קישור לזום יתפרסם בדף האירוע בסמוך למועדון. מנחה: **דפנה קירש**.

ירושלים: לפרטים על המפגשים של המועדון הקריאה ניתן להצטרף לקבוצת הפייסבוק: **מועדון הקריאה הירושלמי של האגודה**, או ליצור קשר במייל עם מרכזת המועדון בירושלים - **גלי אחיטוב**, ולהצטרף לקבוצת הוואטסאפ של המועדון.

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

This month's roundup:

- Dedication to my father, David Botwinik (o'h – ע"ה) who just passed away, and his SF humour
- Book review: "More Zion's Fiction" Part 3: Keren Landsman's "Schrödinger's Gorgon"

Our usual, interesting tidbits from the Web.

– Your editor, Leybl Botwinik

A Special Dedication:

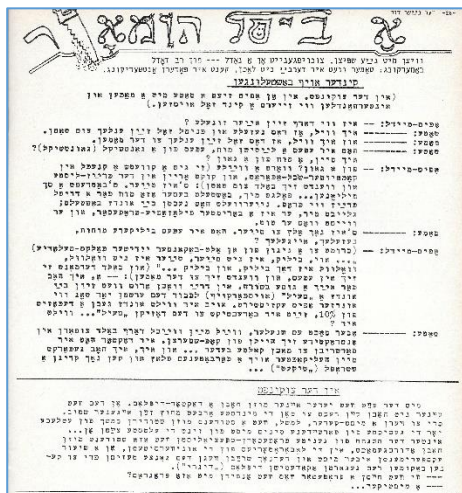
Yiddish Humor of the Future: by David Botwinik (ע"ה - o'h)

As I had mentioned in the email I had sent out on the 10th of February, the February issue of CyberCozen would be delayed due to the passing of my father, David Botwinik (o'h) at the age of 101 years.

My father was a composer (see "https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/David_Botwinik"), and many of his Yiddish songs can be found on YouTube, sung by an array of great singers, cantors, and choirs (just search for "David Botwinik") – or see this 13-minute 'demo' that was compiled by my brother Alexander who is also an accomplished musician and worked very closely with my father on musical issues: "<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4eDC2LbXoZY>". Others knew my father as a passionate and stalwart fighter for the right of Yiddish as a living language.

Those who knew my father more intimately, however, also knew of his great humour and story-telling skills. Back when I was in my youth, my father and I published four issues of a glossy family magazine in Yiddish "Der Nayer Dor" (The New Generation) that also contained a humour section, and later, a 1-shot newspaper-like satirical sheet "Der Shmayser" (The Spanker/Whipper).

Here are two examples of his futuristic humour (my translation follows) from issue #4, 1982:



[Top right: Page 26 - Der Nayer Dor]

[Title made up of caricatured-letters
"a bisl humor" = A Bit of Humour]

[Following 2 lines:

- Jokes with new spikes/points, sewn together without a needle [Yiddish: NODL], by Reb DODL* (*that's my father, Dovid, making fun of his own name)
- Remark: If you don't get a laugh out of this, you can ask for compensation]

Kinder oyf Bashtelungen [Custom-order Children]

(In the future, a father and a mother are discussing what they want their child to look like)

Office Girl -- So, how would you like your boy to be (*)? (* - i.e., what should he look like?)
Father ----- I would like his nose and face to be like his father's.

Mother ----- And I would them to be like his mother's.
 Father ----- Do you maybe have a good brain, something of a 'gonchikl'
 – I mean, the brain of a genius?
 Office Girl -- Of a genius? One minute (she pushes a button in her computer and looks at the price list and then turns to the father): It's expensive, many millions ... Take my advice, order a brain for a third of the cost, like professor Nayervelt [**new-world**] bought yesterday. Believe me, he is a famous Philosophy professor, and he knows what he's doing.
 Mother ----- It's still too expensive. Do you have less expensive brains, nose, eyes?
 Office Girl -- (Hums the tune of a well know Yiddish folksong) "Oy, Cheap is not Expensive, Expensive is not Thrifty, Thrifty is Cheap,... and Cheap..." (and then she remembers something and turns to the mother): Oh, I have good news for you, in 3 weeks' time we'll be holding a Sale to celebrate our first year since we opened our office. If you would like to give us a deposit for 10%, you can participate in the Sale ... Would you like that?
 Father ----- But please hurry it up, because my wife needs to visit the Antarctic to heal her headaches. Her doctor prescribed cold-water baths ... and I've parked my Helicopter in an illegal spot and might yet get a ticket ...

in der tsukunft [In the Future]

In time, everyone will need to have a doctor's degree. Without this, people won't be able to take on even the simplest jobs outside of the home. To be a garbageman, for example, a student will need to study the history of different types of rubbish for a few years, since the earliest of times. Under the direction and supervision of skilled professor-specialists, the student will need to have carried out numerous experiments in the university labs concerning trash, and afterwards write entire theses about them, to receive the coveted academic degree.

---- What would a professor who runs such a program be called?

---- A 'mistiker'*

(* play on words: 'mist' [pronounced 'meest'], in Yiddish, means 'garbage/rubbish' ... and 'mistiker' = Mystic)

Some thoughts from our readers:

Long time no write, Leybl.

My apologies for being lax on writing but fall semester of last year was massively busy - I taught an overload class, so there went most of my time - and simply did not have much time to do fun stuff like writing letters of comment on fanzines.

My own fanzine publishing schedule slowed down a lot, too; just under a month ago both *Askew* and *Askance* had their most recent issues posted to efanzines.com, which felt good. So now here I go on a bit of a letter-writing spree.

Good to see artwork from Jose Sanchez in this issue. He has been submitting a lot of artwork to assorted fanzines (see the N3F zines for much of his work), including mine, and this is a very good thing. We faneditors need to encourage more participation in the fan publishing side of things to keep the flame alive. And like you and Jose, I am also very much a nature lover, trees and everything. This is the only planet we have, so we must do what we can to take care of it.

That reminds me, have you seen the 2021 movie *Don't Look Up* yet, Leybl? It's a brilliant, darkly satirical allegory on the climate crisis - according to its producers - and I highly recommend it.

I might have to check out that Stephen Fry book *Making History*. It sounds interesting.

Even though I am not Jewish I still caught a lot of the cultural references in *Star Trek:OS* that David Gerrold writes about. Face it: that show was a ground-breaker in more ways that can be counted on our fingers. I attribute my Jewish knowledge base to all the Jewish friends I knew growing up in St. Louis Park, Minnesota. In the post-World War II years, something like 7000 Jewish immigrants moved into St. Louis Park, a small city on the immediate west side of Minneapolis, and essentially built the community into a

rapidly growing, vibrant city of eventually 45,000 residents. I grew up with these people and learned from them.

One of these years I need to go home again and see who's all still around. Come to think of it, my 50th high school graduation reunion (Class of 1972) is being planned, so that would be a good excuse to go. Heck, my brother still lives in Minneapolis, so there's that as well.

Hmm. Must consider this.

Well, that's it for now. Take care, and May 2022 be a much better year for all of us.

All the best,

John Purcell

Always great to hear from you, John.

- and thanks for sending me your great "Askew" and "Askance" – more people should read them!

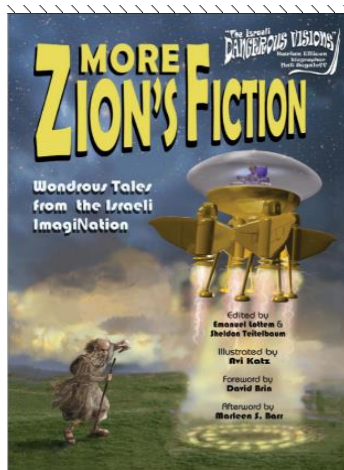
Agree wholeheartedly: we need to take care of this world!

also: May 2022 be a much better year for all of us

Take care,

Leybl

On Sunday, January 16, 2022, 09:16:59 PM GMT+2, John Purcell <askance73@gmail.com> wrote:



MORE ZION's FICTION – Review #03

Schrödinger's Gorgon – by Keren Landsman (e-Book: p50-79)
(Translated by Emanuel Lottem)

This is a great story. Well written, and with a good flow.

(There's a 'BUT' here – although no reflection on the author, only on the editors of this collection – see at the end).

Before getting into the storyline itself – if you do plan on reading the story – it's worth a quick detour to the meaning of the two parts of the title, for those unfamiliar (or you can skip these links and go on to the rest of my review):

Schrödinger's cat –

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Schr%C3%B6dinger%27s_cat_in_popular_culture

Gorgon – <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gorgon>

<http://zionfiction.com/>

Keren Landsman's story takes place somewhere in outer space on a ship that's quarantined itself due to an unknown epidemic that's killed everyone except one survivor. You've surely seen or read many similar stories of an unknown disease and either someone in the crew tries to find an antidote before it's too late (as in the start of this story) – and/or some medical team comes aboard to try and save the day (also, as in this case). For example, the original Star Trek series has at least one such episode (<https://reelrundown.com/tv/Star-Trek-Episodes-About-Viruses-Epidemics-and-Pandemics>).

'Epidemic' stories – and particularly films – are, apparently, a dime a dozen, and probably as popular as zombie and other horror films (Here's a list of 79 movies: <https://www.vulture.com/2020/04/best-pandemic-movies-on-netflix-hulu-prime-and-more.html>). This one seems very realistic. Landsman, according to the bio preceding the story, is a "a medical doctor specializing in epidemiology and public health, and an award-winning SF author". This gives the story particular authority and a 'real' feeling.

Many of the procedures and terms used throughout (and it's detailed!) are probably based on real-

life situations, possibly with some extrapolation to probable future technology, tools, and methods. Emanuel Lottem did a great translation job (though I haven't seen the original Hebrew). I'm pretty sure it wasn't easy, given the great number of epidemiology and other medical terms and descriptions that Landsman has in her story. One term "**Rating**" threw me. It describes some of the personnel on the ship, and particularly from the medical team that comes to investigate the epidemic. Merriam Webster has it as: "*chiefly British*: a naval enlisted man".

The story is a good one, with a fascinating ending which I will not divulge – which is kind of too bad, because I would otherwise compare it to similar such stories – but then I'd be giving away the ending... So yes, I do recommend reading it – and although not too familiar with Landsman's writing (I did enjoy "*Burn Alexandria*" and reviewed it in the March 2019 issue of *CyberCozen*), she is considered a high-level storyteller and has won numerous prizes for her writing.

BUT: That having been said, the story – unlike "*Burn Alexandria*" – has no connection to/with Israel, or Jews, or anything Jewish. This is one of my main critiques concerning the choice of stories (and I've mentioned this before): I don't think that such a story, that is devoid of any connection to 'Zion'/Israel/Judaism belongs in a collection titled "*Zion's Fiction*"^(*). I wouldn't have included it in this anthology because I would consider it misleading to a reader who wants to read "Zion's" science fiction – i.e. SF stories that reflect Zion/Israel or some connection to Judaism. If I had been asked, I would have suggested including this story in a collection with a different name. Maybe something like: *Best SF&F by Israeli writers*...

* They did have a sub-title for *Zion's Fiction*: "*A Treasury of Israeli Speculative Fiction*" and for the current *More Zion's Fiction*: "*Wondrous Tales from the Israeli ImagiNation*" – but, in my personal opinion, I still don't think that's enough...

Look forward to more reviews of "*More Zion's Fiction*"

in our upcoming issues

Fun from the Web

- **Canadian radar satellites to help Ukraine fight off Russian invasion**
<https://www.space.com/canada-satellite-imagery-for-ukraine-russia-invasion>
- **SpaceIL unites with Parasol Foundation Women in joint program**
<https://www.spaceil.com/parasol-foundation-women-in-spaceil>
- **20 trailblazing women in astronomy and astrophysics**
<https://www.space.com/trailblazing-women-in-astronomy-astrophysics>
- **The Universe: Big Bang to Now in 10 Easy Steps**
<https://www.space.com/13320-big-bang-universe-10-steps-explainer.html>
- **Could we really build Star Trek's USS Enterprise?**
<https://www.space.com/real-uss-enterprise>



- How to Close the Gateway to Hell
<https://gizmodo.com/gateway-to-hell-turkmenistan-extinguish-1848399121>
- How Will Future Implant Technology Get Power?
<https://www.howtogeek.com/785907/how-will-future-implant-technology-get-power/>
- **NEVER TOO LATE:** Send your valentine a spacey e-card, with NASA's help this Valentine's Day
<https://www.space.com/nasa-valentines-day-card-space-photos>

TV&MOVIES:

- 'Obi-Wan Kenobi' Star Wars spinoff series premieres May 25 on Disney Plus
<https://www.space.com/disney-plus-star-wars-obi-wan-kenobi-premiere-date>
- New trailer for 'Lightyear,' the Buzz Lightyear origin story
<https://www.space.com/disney-pixar-lightyear-new-trailer-poster>
- Making 'Moonfall': Geophysicist Mika McKinnon talks about the fun of annihilating Earth in the fictional disaster film (video)
<https://www.space.com/moonfall-geophysicist-mika-mckinnon-interview>
- Why it's time for a new Stargate series
<https://www.space.com/why-its-time-for-a-new-stargate-series>
- Best sci-fi TV shows of all time
<https://www.space.com/best-sci-fi-tv-shows-of-all-time>
- The greatest spaceships of science fiction
<https://www.space.com/42312-greatest-spaceships-of-science-fiction.html>
- 'Star Trek: Picard' season 2 explodes onto our screens with a phenomenal first episode
<https://www.space.com/star-trek-picard-season-2-episode-1-review>

GAMES

- Space-related board game deals 2022
<https://www.space.com/space-board-game-deals>
- Investigate the retro sci-fi realm of Simon Stålenhag in new 'Tales From the Loop: The Board Game'
<https://www.space.com/tales-from-the-loop-board-game>

BOOKS

- Best sci-fi books of 2022
<https://www.space.com/best-sci-fi-books>

We'd love to hear your thoughts on the above topics and with your OK, we may publish them!

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