

**חדשות האגודה – דצמבר 2021 The Israeli Society for Science Fiction and Fantasy 2021**

**תל אביב: מועדון הקריאה** התל אביבי היה הפעם מועדון צפייה. המועדון שהתקיים כבר ... ביום חמישי, 6.1.22, ב-19:30 ... היתעסק בסרטו של הייאו מיאזאקי "המסע המופלא" (2001). מנחה: הדס זעירא

**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 אחיסוב, ולהצטרף לקבוצת הוואטס'אפ 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:**

- Book review: "More Zion's Fiction" Part 2: Elana Gomel's "The Sea of Salt"
- Book review: Stephen Fry's "Making History"
- LA Museum exhibit: "Star Trek: Exploring New Worlds"
- More artwork by Jose Sanchez

Our usual, interesting tidbits from the Web.

– Your editor, Leybl Botwinik

**A very Special Announcement:**

**HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ONE AND ALL**

In these trying times, let's begin with some well-wishing and good (SF) news!

For those in the know, it's not really a 'Jewish thing' to **celebrate** the non-Jewish New Year (it's OK, however – and even recommended – to wish people "Happy New Year", "Merry Christmas", etc. because it's **THEIR** celebratory festival). That having been said, I do it all the time, since my birth date (by Jewish lunar calendar, usually...) falls early January – which makes it a new year for me 😊. This year, according to the Jewish date, it was in the first week of January, and according to the non-Jewish date it's this week !

Moreover, Jews actually celebrate 4 'New Years' each calendar year [see: <https://orjewishlife.com/did-you-know-there-are-four-jewish-new-years/> ], and the nearest, upcoming, one this year (again, according to our Jewish Lunar calendar) is also next week: T'U beShvat (or khamishoser beshvat) = 15<sup>th</sup> day of the Jewish month of Shvat, which is the New Year for Trees! (Though some Rabbis concluded that the 1<sup>st</sup> of Shvat should be considered the New Year for Trees – there's always at least one dissenter ...).

Anyway, to make a long story short, I was so happy that – coincidentally or not – our newest reader and guest artist, Jose Sanchez sent in his latest beautiful drawing that he actually titled: "**Skimming the Treetops**" !!



So,  
**Happy New Year, Trees !!**  
 (I am a devout tree lover 😊) !!

### And now for the good news:

A new collection of Yiddish sci-fi stories by Israeli poet and short story writer Velvl Chernin has just been published! I've just ordered a copy and hope to get it soon so I can enjoy it - and then I will review it. This website <https://www.etsy.com/listing/1109845721/yidishe-faktazyes-sci-fi-in-yiddish> says:

**"Science fiction in Yiddish? Yes, please!  
"Yidishe Faktazyes" is a collection of 11 magical stories in the borderlands between fantasy and reality.  
Written by Velvl Chernin, one of the very best contemporary Yiddish writers, and elegantly illustrated by Roza Strokova.  
This 280-page book is a must have for all libhobers fun yidish!"**

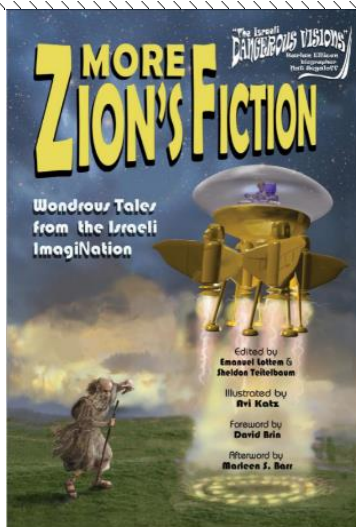


Meanwhile, there is a writeup in the Forverts (in Yiddish), by my friend Yoel Matveyev (another Yiddish SF writer), that I hope to bring to you next time in translation. For the more daring, feel free to read the original online (and you can click words and some real-time translations display): <https://forward.com/yiddish/480076/new-yiddish-sci-fi-by-novelist-velvl-chernin>.



So, for now, keep reading and take care of yourselves!

And if – due to social distancing – you can't hug your loved ones, at least hug a tree !



## MORE ZION'S FICTION – Review #02

The Sea of Salt – by Elana Gomel

Elana Gomel's very interesting 16-page story is the first in the anthology. It takes place in Israel, at the Dead Sea, where a portal opens to another place and time. Here, a cruel German scientist has been continuing his Nazi experiments on Jews (and possibly others) – creating morbid mindless monsters.

One of the interesting points in this story is the remorse and wanting to 'set things right' of that Nazi's granddaughter who comes to Israel and seeks the portal so she can go kill her murderous grandfather (the mad Nazi scientist).

Although this review is quite short (I didn't want to give too much away) it's really a well-written horror-SF story that is worth reading.

<http://zionfiction.com/>

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

in our upcoming issues

## Book Review by: Leybl Botwinik

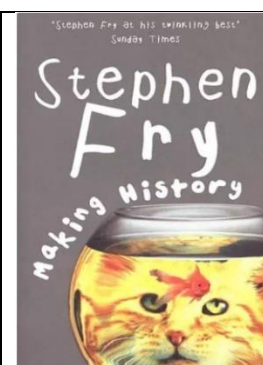
### Making History – by Stephen Fry

Originally published in 1996 in the UK, I read the 2004 (574 page) copy, republished by Arrow books

[NOTE: As I was looking for a picture of the cover, I came across this FREE Website that has a PDFed copy of the 1996 book.

You can read it one page at a time online:

<https://booksvoooks.com/nonscrollablepdf/making-history-pdf-stephen-fry.html?page=1>



Thursday, the 27th of January has been proclaimed by the UN as the International Day of Commemoration in memory of the victims of the Holocaust, and since this is January, I thought that now would be a good time to review this book that I read a few months ago and didn't get a chance to write up. (In addition, the "More Zion's Fiction" short story above, is also appropriate to the 'occasion').

**"Making History"** is a very interesting take on the 'kill baby Hitler' concept, with several interesting twists, and – of course – consequences: as we all SHOULD know, interfering with the threads of time has its consequences ... or, think of the adage: you play with fire, you are likely to get burnt...

Since the main protagonist (and we're assuming Stephen Fry, the author) is not into killing innocent babies, he figures out a more 'moral' solution to the dilemma: Make sure that Hitler is never born! With the help of a scientist, our story's hero manages to send back a pill into the drinking water of Hitler's father, making him impotent, so little Hitler is never born. Unfortunately, 'our' Hitler was never alone, and the person who would eventually replace him as leader of the Nazi party in that parallel history – was infinitely worse...

When I first picked up the book, I had no idea that it dealt with WWII and the Holocaust. I saw **'History'** in the title, and that's what initially attracted me. Then, the back cover: "... *Leo Zuckerman is an ageing physicist obsessed with the darkest period in human history, utterly driven by his fanatical hatred of one man.*" This scientist – who survived the war – however, was a Nazi scientist! He wants to atone for the evil he was a part of... Interestingly enough, Fry is not the first to use that concept of taking a Nazi, making him out to be a 'Jew', and turning him into a 'hero'.

Zukerman never said that he was a Jew (though in some books, the ex-Nazi kills people to hide his past, then assumes the role of a Jew – even as a 'Nazi hunter', like in the recent TV series **"Hunters"** starring Al Pacino. Another case, is a book I read many years ago of an SS officer who becomes an Israeli war hero, using his military skills to help during the 1948 War of Independence and eventually taking up a high-ranking role in the fledgling Jewish state). I recently picked up another book: **"The Storyteller"** by Jodi Picoult. I liked the title, though never read any of Picoult's other books. The back cover also 'misleads' and talks about Josef Weber who has a "...long-buried and shameful secret..." – again, the back cover doesn't mention WWII or the Holocaust. Weber was in Auschwitz – and again, not a Jew. He was an officer there ...

Another reason I picked up Fry's book was that the back cover's various quotes from the critics included: **"A sci-fi comedy..."**. There are various comic moments in the book – and it is very well written, keeping you wanting to continue reading – but I wouldn't call it a 'comedy'. I do, however, recommend the book.

### Thanks to Devra K. for the following: [Star Trek: Exploring New Worlds](#)

The **Skirball Cultural Center in LA** opened a special exhibit in honour of **"Star Trek"**, that includes a 'Jewish' angle (October 2021- February 20, 2022), according to a NY Times article:

***"To Boldly Explore the Jewish Roots of 'Star Trek'***

*"An exhibition at a Jewish cultural center has plenty of artifacts to delight Trekkies — but it also notes the Jewish origins of the Vulcan salute"*

The January 4, 2022, NYTimes article, by Adam Nagourney also asserts:



"Jewish values and traditions were often on the minds of the show's writers as they dealt with issues of human behavior and morality, said David Gerrold, a writer whose credits include *"The Trouble with Tribbles,"* one of the most acclaimed

“*Star Trek*” episodes, which introduces the crew to a cute, furry, rapidly reproducing alien life form.

“A lot of Jewish tradition — a lot of Jewish wisdom — is part of ‘Star Trek,’ and ‘Star Trek’ drew on a lot of things that were in the Old Testament and the Talmud,” Gerrold said in an interview. “Anyone who is very literate in Jewish tradition is going to recognize a lot of wisdom that ‘*Star Trek*’ encompassed.”

Article: <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/01/04/arts/design/star-trek-exhibition-skirball.html>

Read more at:

- <https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/tv/tv-news/star-trek-exhibit-los-angeles-skirball-1235025804/>
- <https://www.timeout.com/los-angeles/things-to-do/star-trek-exploring-new-worlds>
- <https://www.space.com/star-trek-exploring-new-worlds-exhibition>
- <https://spectrumnews1.com/ca/la-west/arts/2021/09/23/star-trek-exhibit-opens-at-the-skirball-cultural-center>
- <https://www.nbclosangeles.com/the-scene/beam-us-up-a-major-star-trek-exhibit-to-open-at-the-skirball/2670380/>

From the museum website (<http://www.skirball.org/exhibitions/star-trek-exploring-new-worlds>) – Highlights include:

- Set pieces from *Star Trek: The Original Series*, including the navigation console.
- Artifacts and props from the various *Star Trek* TV series and films, including an original series tricorder, communicator, and phaser; a Borg cube from the film *Star Trek: First Contact*; a Klingon disruptor pistol from *Star Trek: The Next Generation*; and tribbles from *Star Trek: The Original Series*.
- Spock’s tunic worn by Leonard Nimoy; Lt. Uhura’s dress worn by Nichelle Nichols; Khan garments past and present, including the open-chest tunic worn by Ricardo Montalban and the costume worn by Benedict Cumberbatch in the 2013 reboot; Captain Picard’s uniform worn by Patrick Stewart; plus, a Borg costume, the alien Gorn, and more.
- Original scripts, concept art, storyboards, and production drawings.
- Spaceship filming models of the *USS Enterprise* and *USS Excelsior*.

## Fun from the Web

- **WATCH: Israeli scientists train goldfish to drive vehicle on land**  
<https://worldisraelnews.com/watch-israeli-scientists-train-goldfish-to-drive-vehicle-on-land>
- **Google celebrates 315th birthday of French physicist Émilie du Châtelet**  
<https://www.space.com/emilie-du-chatelet-physics-google-doodle>
- **When, where, and how to see the planets in the 2022-night sky**  
<https://www.space.com/39240-when-to-see-planets-in-the-sky.html>
- **The 10 biggest space science stories of 2021**  
<https://www.space.com/biggest-space-discoveries-stories-2021>
- **The Most Exciting Things Happening in Space in 2022**  
<https://gizmodo.com/the-most-exciting-things-happening-in-space-in-2022-1848235629>
- **Here’s 7 things the International Space Station taught us in 2021**  
<https://www.space.com/international-space-station-2021-research-highlights>



- The 10 wildest things we learned about black holes in 2021  
<https://www.space.com/black-holes-science-discoveries-2021>
- NASA launches revolutionary space telescope to give glimpse of early universe  
<https://montrealgazette.com/news/world/nasa-launches-revolutionary-space-telescope-to-give-glimpse-of-early-universe>
- Asterisms: Definition, facts, and examples  
<https://www.space.com/what-is-an-asterism>

## TV&MOVIES:

- Wisdom of Spider-Man  
<https://www.aish.com/j/as/Wisdom-of-Spider-Man.html>
- Star Trek: Discovery Season 4 Is Taking a Break... to Make Way for More Star Trek  
<https://gizmodo.com/star-trek-discovery-season-4-is-taking-a-break-to-m-1848266435>
- Yes, The Matrix Resurrections Has an End Credits Scene  
<https://gizmodo.com/yes-the-matrix-resurrections-has-an-end-credits-scene-1848248320>
- New trailer for 'Moonfall' promises a disaster movie on a scale like no other, but how accurate is the physics?  
<https://www.space.com/moonfall-new-trailer-vfx-interview>
- 'The Expanse' is back on Amazon Prime for sixth and final season  
<https://www.space.com/the-expanse-season-6-back-on-amazon-prime>
- Girl Raised by a Robot Tries to Escape but Soon Finds The Truth About The Outside World  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=saEcc\\_zXQo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=saEcc_zXQo)
- 'The Book of Boba Fett' episode 1 reveals just how he escaped the Sarlacc pit and more  
<https://www.space.com/book-of-boba-fett-episode-1-star-wars-recap>
- Dark Horse reclaims publishing rights for more 'Star Wars' comics in 2022  
<https://www.space.com/star-wars-comics-dark-horse-publishing-2022>

## BOOKS

- An exclusive 1<sup>st</sup> look at 'Star Trek: Discovery – The Book of Grudge' from Hero Collector  
<https://www.space.com/star-trek-discovery-book-of-grudge-book>

### From our reader/guest artist Jose Sanchez:

I thought you might be interested in this video. It talks about the TR-3B Black Manta antigravity craft and is made by the Cousins Brothers on their Youtube channel "Thirdphaseofmoon" You can check them out on youtube. Also, in this particular episode, they showcased some of my artwork...(bashful... 🙈...)

<https://youtu.be/z6kqC4LEHyE>

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

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