

חדשות האגודה – נובמבר 2024 The Israeli Society for Science Fiction and Fantasy

תל אביב: מועדון הקריאה יעסוק בספר "עריצה היא הלבנה" מאת רוברט היינליין. ויתקיים ביום חמישי 11.28, בשעה 19:30, בדירה בת"א. לקבלת המיקום יש להירשם במייל של דפנה קירש. בדף האירוע בפייסבוק. <https://www.facebook.com/events/1041913523811981>

ירושלים: מועדון הקריאה יעסוק בספר "ראינוע" מאת טרי פראצ'ט. לפרטים על המפגשים הבאים ניתן להצטרף לקבוצת הפייסבוק או ליצור קשר במייל עם מרכזת, גלי אחיטוב, sal.maple@gmail.com, 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:

- Special Wartime Issue (#14) – Some thoughts
- CyberCozen AI Podcast – by a reader
- Star Trek: Deep Space 9 (DS9) TV series (1993-1999) – Some Thoughts (including about Genocide)
- Our usual tidbits from the Web – will return next month!

– Your editor, Leybl (Leon) Botwinik

Special Wartime Issue #14

UPDATE: 400+ days with no end in sight... ☹️... 101 hostages still being held in Gaza.

There seems to be some progress, some light at the far distant end of the tunnel, but no way of knowing how long it will take us to reach there. The IDF has taken out most of the top leaders and commanders of the Hamas. In an unprecedented surgical strike, Israel has even immobilized or killed thousands of key Lebanese Hezbollah terrorists within minutes of activating tiny explosives in their beepers, and the next day – when the survivors switched over to a different radio device to communicate – those exploded too...

If we're talking unprecedented, Iran sent hundreds of drones and ballistic missiles at Israel. One attack in April 2024, and one in October 2024. Israel's response to the first attack was negligible. Even so, Iran sent a second wave (no drones this time). "According to the Israel Defense Forces (IDF), the aerial attack by Iran comprised more than 180 ballistic missiles, **the largest single ballistic missile attack ever.**"

(<https://www.ajc.org/news/what-to-know-about-irans-ballistic-missile-attacks-and-israels-efforts-to-defend-itself>)

In its response to the 2nd, more violent Iranian attack (that again targeted the entire civilian population of Israel, Jews and Arabs alike), Israel sent over 100 airplanes at Iranian facilities and even knocked out the Iranian air defence systems and did other damage – but did not target civilians (like the Iranians did).

But the darkness is ever present – Israel is accused of genocide^(*), when the Hamas charter specifically and proudly states that its intent is to destroy the Jewish state. The Iranian regime of fanatic Ayatollahs and terrorist IRGC also calls for the destruction of Israel (and the USA too). And all over the world anti-Israel protestors call for a "Free Palestine from the River to the Sea" which is also a blatant call for genocide.

Meantime, just days ago, tens of Israeli soccer fans (and tourists) were ambushed, attacked, and hunted down by hundreds of Muslim extremists using clubs, chains, knives, and car/taxi/motorbike chases – in Amsterdam! This, coincidentally, 2 nights before the date of the 1938 Kristallnacht pogrom in Germany. Apparently, no arrests have been made (or only a small handful). Israel sent planes to evacuate its citizens!

Is 'Freedom to Express anti-Semitism in Word or Deed' the new world norm? Sci-Fi at its best/worst...

Leybl Botwinik, Editor

* For more on 'Genocide' see the following article about Star Trek: DS9

CyberCozen AI Podcast – by a Reader

Unbelievable! The day after I sent out the October issue, I received an email from our reader Arnon Katz, with an audio clip attached – a podcast with a man and woman discussing the October issue’s contents. It was so well done, that I was amazed and would have like to speak to them about future podcasts of CyberCozen. However, Arnon wrote the following:

I did it with notebooklm.google.com .

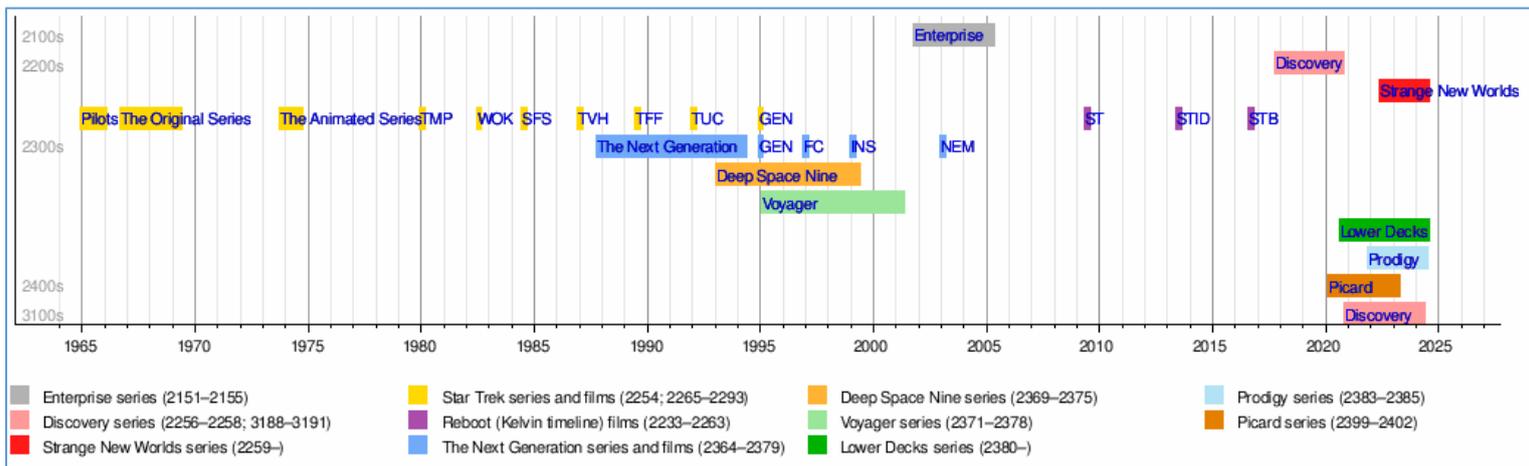
These are not real people 😊.

As a big fan of innovation, since the days of 2000 פנטזיה, I always look for new ways to bring Sci-fi to reality. I'll search for a tool in Hebrew as well. I didn't publish it anywhere though.

I’m considering putting it up on YouTube (with a link to the issue on our repositories). I will ask Arnon first. Meantime, I’m attaching it with this issue, as a ‘bonus’. Let me know what you think.

Star Trek: Deep Space 9 (DS9) TV series (1993-1999) – Some Thoughts

By Leybl Botwinik



I finally finished watching all 7 seasons of one of Star Trek’s most intriguing TV series: “*Deep Space 9 (DS9)*” that ran from 1993 through 1999 and decided to write up some of my thoughts on the series. There were a total of 176 episodes that I would classify/categorize as ‘the good, the bad, and the ugly’. And I say “intriguing”, because some of the ideas that evolved in the series are worth further study and discussion.

I’m sure it’s not easy to come up with original material for 7 seasons of shows, with an average of 25 shows per year (let alone the tremendous amounts of sets, acting requirements, and the serious budget required for it). So, it’s expected that not all the episodes will be up to par, or to everyone’s satisfaction ... And yet ...

Background

For those unfamiliar with the series, here’s a quick breeze through the background, setting, and main protagonists. For more specifics, feel free to see [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Star Trek: Deep Space Nine](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Star_Trek:_Deep_Space_Nine).

<p>1) Deep Space 9 (DS9) is the 9th of many Federation space stations/commercial hubs across the galaxies, and initially of minor importance. It is jointly controlled with the inhabitants of the planet Bajor. It was abandoned by the Cardassian Empire after they were defeated/expelled by the Bajorans. The Cardassians had conquered Bajor and brutally enslaved them, using the station as their Empire's outpost. After stripping it of almost everything useful, they handed it over to the Federation.</p>	
<p>2) The Cardassians are a very militant fascist-like race, highly technologically advanced and physically tall and strong with over-long necks and many ridges in their skull shapes (great makeup job 😊). The most prominent of the bad guys: Gul Dukat.</p>	
<p>3) The Bajorans are a friendly race who suffered greatly under the conquerors. They have an interesting religion with God-like living prophets and many intrigues amongst their priests. They select one of the leaders of the revolt – the charming female Major Kira Nerys, to be their military liaison on the DS9 station.</p>	
<p>4) Commander Benjamin Sisko is the Federation rep and commander of the station. He is thrown into his mission to revamp the gutted station – a semi-hopeless and difficult endeavour – when he discovers a wormhole not too far away, that becomes a gateway to a different quadrant (the Federation's is 'Apha Quadrant', and the unknown new one at the other end of the wormhole is named 'Gamma Quadrant'). With this discovery, DS9 suddenly takes on critical importance to the Federation. He himself is coined "<i>the Emissary</i>" by Bajoran mystic 'gods', that reside within the wormhole. This entitles him to specific religious powers and presence vis-à-vis the Bajorans. Sisko's teenage son, Jake, is also on board. Sisko is a widower.</p>	 <p>See also: https://reactormag.com/the-emissary-speaks-the-autobiography-of-benjamin-sisko-edited-by-derek-tyler-attico/</p>
<p>5) Quark is a Ferengi, one of a race of cheating, lying, sometimes space pirate/smuggler/businessmen. He runs a bar and casino and is joined by his brother and teenage nephew (who befriends Sisko's son). Although he is busy making a buck any way a Ferengi can, he eventually becomes one of the 'good guys' and changes his ways (up to a point).</p>	

<p>6) Odo is the station's chief of security. His natural form is a blob/liquid-like state, and he can change shape at will. Not knowing his origin, he generally assumes human male form, but wishes he knew where he came from. Eventually, in the series, he discovers that his 'people', known as Changelings (Founders of the Dominion), are from the Gamma Quadrant and want to dominate the universe on both sides of the wormhole. The discovery comes with the outset of the "Dominion War" that occupies the main focus of the last 2 seasons of the series but has its origins or initial back plots in earlier seasons.</p>	
<p>7) Etc. ... There are numerous other supporting characters – each with her/his back story – including Doctor Julian Bashir and Jadzia Dax and the mysterious Cardassian Garak (the only one who remained after the others abandoned the station). He acts as a tailor and his shop is on the promenade of DS9. He is a well-connected but disgraced ex-spy of the notorious Cardassian 'Obsidian Order'.</p> <p>There are other Ferengi, Klingons, Romulans, Changelings, Cardassians, Bajorans, and others, appearing throughout the season, as well as the core additions of <i>Star Trek: TNG</i> veteran personages Chief Miles O'Brian and Klingon Commander Worf. There is even an AI singing hologram who belts out songs at a really high musical level and offers excellent advice – like some big brother or bartender.</p>	<p>See also: https://screenrant.com/star-trek-best-supporting-characters-ranked/</p> 

Good, Bad, Ugly

DS9 presents numerous great stories (remember that there were a total of 176 episodes all told) and excellent acting by the majority of the actors. Many of the plots are well thought out. There are political intrigues and 'clashes' of civilizations and cultures, and social issues too. Unlike other Star Trek series, there is much less travelling to other parts of the galaxy or even near space (e.g. to Bajor or Cardissia) and so, most of the episodes take place on the space station.

Whereas many of the plotlines are in the spirit of SF (science, medical, and related ethical issues), others deal with religious, social ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Past_Tense_\(Star_Trek:_Deep_Space_Nine\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Past_Tense_(Star_Trek:_Deep_Space_Nine))), and political issues (Cardessian subjugation of the Bajorans, Klingon-human cross-cultural differences, etc.).

I particularly liked the stories involving Odo, the Changeling, and how he developed throughout the series. However, I believe, that there could have been more exploitation of Odo's ability to change shape. The Odo persona dealt with many serious questions about how he deals with being the only one of his kind in the entire known galaxy. Eventually, he discovers that in the adjacent galaxy – on the other side of the wormhole – his people, the **Founders of the Dominion**, exist ... only to find out that they are carrying out an evil plan to subjugate (or eliminate) everyone that is not like them – the 'Solids'.

That having been said, and because of the mixed nature of the main characters and their back stories, we also have 'lighter' episodes dealing with youth/teenage issues involving the son of Sisko and his friend, the nephew of Quark the Ferengi. And speaking of the Ferengi – they are always depicted as being passionate

to the point of obsession (if not neurosis) about all things dealing with money and finances. Some of the episodes involving them verge on the absurd/silly and are more often than not exaggerated to the extreme.

During the earlier seasons, many of the episodes were focused on the back stories of each of the main characters, including some of the darker events in their backgrounds. Thus, the stories become more individual oriented and are less concerned with the backdrop of the station or of the greater issues around them. I suppose that this was necessary to build up an ethos for the series, and to give the characters a strong set of roots as their personalities develop. Personally, I often found this tedious and not relevant.

Genocide

On the other hand, there was another issue that came up during the final season, that more or less shocked me. It took place near the end of season 7. The Federation (and Humanity in general) was in a most dire situation against the Dominion forces allied against them. In season 7, episode 24, "*The Dogs of War*" we discover that an offshoot of the Federation's ultrasecret spy group '**Section 31**' had set in motion a dire plan to wipe out the entire race of Changelings – to the last one – using a deadly virus that affects only them (including Odo, who was injected with a virus that was then transmitted to the Changelings on their planet).

This genocidal plan was uncovered by Sisko, and when the Federation was informed about it (it was never, **initially**, a Federation plan) the powers that be, did not condone it. They looked the other way and were not interested in finding an antidote for the debilitating and lethal virus (Dr. Bashir eventually does). The shadowy **Section 31** had taken upon itself to use any and all means – mostly unethical ones, such as lies, subterfuge, etc. – to carry out their sworn purpose: to protect Humanity by any means necessary.

I was rather taken aback. Not by Section 31's sinister plan, but by Federation top brass condoning/being OK with the genocide of the entire Changelings race. True, they were going to annihilate the humans and take over the Universe, but still...

At this point, Sisko's revelation to his superiors and their reaction reminded me of the story of the Patriarch Abraham (this was in the weekly Torah reading today). When God was about to destroy the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah for their evil ways, he tried to intervene: "... Maybe there are 50 good people there ... Maybe 40, ... 30, ... 20, ... Maybe 10..." It didn't help, but he did try!

Doing a bit of research on the web, I've found that the attempted genocide of the Founders was not the sole instance of genocide in the Star Trek universe. Here are some links to a few other instances (and don't forget the destruction of Vulcan in the 2009 film, "*Star Trek*", when the Romulan villain Nero blew up Spock's home world).

Some Star Trek 'Genocide' related links:

- <https://memory-beta.fandom.com/wiki/Genocide>
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dDNCQMnf1_s

Some Star Trek 'DS9' related links:

- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Star_Trek:_Deep_Space_Nine_episodes
- https://memory-alpha.fandom.com/wiki/Star_Trek:_Deep_Space_Nine
- <https://www.startrek.com/en-un/series/deep-space-nine>
- [Star Trek: Deep Space Nine 1993 Cast Then and Now \(2022\) | 29 Years After
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kE3fiY6b3IM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kE3fiY6b3IM)

For Comments: E-mail: levbl_botwinik@yahoo.com. Tel: Leybl Botwinik +972-54-537-7729
Editor: Leybl Botwinik. Founding Editor: Aharon Sheer (ל"ז). Logo by: Miriam Ben-Loulou (ל"ד).

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