

חדשות האגודה – ינואר 2025 The Israeli Society for Science Fiction and Fantasy 2025

תל אביב: מועדון הקריאה יעסוק בספר "חרשתא" מאת יהודית קגן, ויתקיים ביום חמישי 01.30, בשעה 19:30, בדירה בת"א. לקבלת המיקום יש להירשם במייל של דפנה קירש (dafna1485@walla.co.il), **בדף האירוע בפייסבוק**, <https://www.facebook.com/events/1041913523811981>

ירושלים: מועדון הקריאה יעסוק בספר "מלבד הכלב" מאת קוני ויליס, ויתקיים ביום חמישי 01.09, בשעה 20:00 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 (#16) – Some FINAL thoughts? Not YET!
- Reviews: Two outstanding non-Sci-Fi TV miniseries
- Sheldon Teitelbaum: Updates on SFE (The Encyclopedia of Science Fiction)
- Our usual tidbits from the Web will be published in the next issue (my apologies ...)

Sorry for some typos, and editorial mistakes in the previous issue (e.g. December issue, but still had the November footer...).

For various personal reasons, I end up publishing in the middle of the month, as opposed to at the beginning.

Hopefully this will start to change, and I'll get back to a more regular schedule.

This issue in particular is being written up/finalized even beyond the middle of the month (15-16) for several reasons:

A) I was busy marrying off my son 😊 (last week).

B) I held off for a few more days, because of the Hostage deal, to see how that works out – See my write up below.

– Your editor, Leybl (Leon) Botwinik

Special Wartime Issue #16

UPDATE: For over 469 days, there are now 98 hostages still being held in Gaza (babies and elderly, men and women) under intolerable conditions of pain and suffering – but hopefully the hostage deal that has been committed to by Hamas and Israel will work out. Many of these 98 may not even be alive anymore. Hamas has not provided any information about them, except for a few whose video images were released as a form of psychological warfare.

(Last month, there were 100 hostages – the two that the IDF had managed to locate since, were Israel Bedouin, Moslem citizens. We had high hopes that Hamas would let them live, but that didn't work out. Hamas doesn't care for human beings – not even their co-religionists...)

Yes, some sort of a hostage deal has been negotiated. **It was the right thing to do.** However, it was not the right way to do it. First of all, the release of ALL the hostage should have been on the table and worked out over a year ago, and not at this late stage. At this point, I will stop writing down my thoughts on the issue.

Tomorrow morning at 08:30 Israel time, a ceasefire will come into effect. At around 16:00, 3 female hostages are to be released (we don't even know who they will be). A week later, 4 males will be released, etc. – less than a handful each week. Israel is to release between 30-50 murdering terrorists per Israeli hostage released. Negotiations have only dealt with the first 33 hostages. New negotiations will take place in about a month for the continuing exchange.

Unfortunately, I'm a sceptic. I hope that all the hostages will truly be returned, and the sooner the better – those who are still alive, as well as those, unfortunately, already dead. We'll discuss this further in a month's time.

Leybl Botwinik, Editor

LB: Two outstanding non-Sci-Fi but masterful fantasy TV miniseries.

Normally, I stay away from writing about Fantasy, as opposed to Sci-Fi, but I couldn't not write about these 2 mini-series. The first, is a complete(d) series. The second, "Omens" may have more than the two seasons – I hope so, as I thoroughly enjoyed both seasons.

1) The Fall of the House of Usher – TV Mini-series

Review by Leybl Botwinik

If you are familiar with the masterful writings of Edgar Allan Poe, you will surely enjoy this modernized version of a number of his more famous works. Known for both macabre tales and early detective stories, as well as a brilliant command of the English language in both prose and poetry, this TV series takes Poe's many tales and reformulates them into a flowing homage to his genius.

One of the more famous tales is "*The Fall of the House of Usher*" about the actual household/building of the Usher family. In the TV series, it's been modernized and upgraded into the family business 'House of Usher' – a dynasty of offspring of the founder of a wealthy and powerful pharmaceutical empire. Each episode covers one or more of Edgar Allan Poe's masterpieces.

As I am quite familiar with most, I picked up on many of them, as the writer of the series Mike Flanagan (<https://www.imdb.com/name/nm1093039/>) masterfully transformed and neatly stitched together the storylines into one great tale that the Master, Poe, would surely have approved of. The series includes 8 episodes, each linked to the main storyline, and each reflecting one or more of Poe's tales or poems.



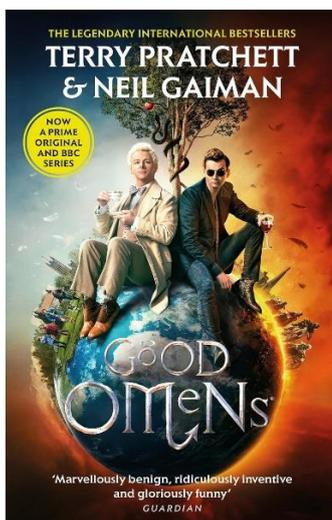
2) Good Omens – TV Seasons 1&2

Review by Leybl Botwinik

If life is getting you down, then it's time to take a lighthearted romp through Heaven and Hell and see that our own petty problems are as nought compared to the existential turmoil of the 'above' and the 'below'. In fact, with the Apocalypse hovering over our very existence, it will take the joint effort of an angel and a devil (a fallen angel, actually) to save our very existence and everything we know.

Thus, the premise of the dark comedy series created originally as a novel by the genius of Terry Pratchett (who passed away in 2015) and Neil Gaiman. Where Pratchett gave us an entire world of fun – Discworld – Gaiman also gave us other masterful views of our lives and of the universe around us in other novels, comics, and films such as in "Sandman" and "American Gods" (see IMDB mini bio: <https://www.imdb.com/name/nm0301274/>).

The two seasons take place mostly in England, in today's day and age, with a brief visit here and there, to Heaven and Hell.



From Sheldon Teitelbaum: Updates on SFE

“Zion's Fiction” editor is also a contributor to “The Encyclopedia of Science Fiction”:

1) https://sf-encyclopedia.com/entry/teitelbaum_sheldon

(1955-) Canadian journalist and film and sf critic, resident 1977-1985 in [Israel](#), where he served close to five years in the infantry and as a staff officer seconded to the paratrooper corps. His sf/horror column in the *Jerusalem Post* was the first such outside the sf magazines; he also had a film column in the Hebrew-language magazine *Fantasia 2000*. From 1986 to 1996 Teitelbaum was the Los Angeles correspondent for [Cinefantastique](#). During his sojourn he covered sf-related affairs for *The Los Angeles Times* and *The Jerusalem Report*, where he worked as a US-based senior writer for more than a decade. He also won Canada's first Northern Lights Award for independent journalism in 1998, for a *Wired* magazine article.

His ambitious **Zion's Fiction Anthology** series, opening with *Zion's Fiction: A Treasury of Israeli Speculative Literature* (anth **2018**) with Emanuel [Lottem](#), presents a wide-ranging selection of stories from the 1980s on, some in their original English, others translated by various hands. The book won a German Kurd Laßwitz Special Prize in 2023 (see [Awards](#)). The follow-up is *More Zion's Fiction: Wondrous Tales from the Israeli ImagiNation* (anth **2021**). Both books have extensive introductions by the editors; a third volume is under way, with *Fantasia 2000* and *F2100* editor Aharon Hauptman replacing Teitelbaum's former co-editor Lottem, who died in 2024. [PN/DRL]

2) <https://sf-encyclopedia.com/entry/israel>

Israel's traditional orientation towards the West, the initially [Utopian](#) character of Zionism – partly inspired by founding Zionist ideologue Theodor [Herzl](#)'s polemic *Der Judenstaat* (**1896**; trans as *The Jewish State* **1946**), and his short novel *Altneuland* (**1902**; trans Lotte Levensohn as *Old-New Land* **1941**) – and the country's adherence to its particular form of parliamentary democracy, all ought to have made it a promised land for speculative literature. But, despite the seminal influence of Jewish writers, editors and publishers within the Anglocentric genre, sf has not, until very recently, attained more than marginal stature and acceptance within The Jewish State.

Survival in a pressure-cooker region seems to have stunted the capacity or willingness of many Israelis to contemplate alternate realities and far-flung futures. Indeed, the political, military, and environmental stringencies of survival in the Middle East consumed, and continue to consume, the energies of Israelis as individuals and as a nation. The initial ideological expectation, in the pre-state and early post-independence periods, was that everyone should contribute to the national effort, writers and poets included. Hence, they were counted on to write realistically about national hopes or day-to-day life in pioneering settlements, glorify heroes, and convert the traditional image of the Jew as a passive, oppressed person into a self-assured, dedicated, and valiant individual.

This left little room for whimsy or flights of imagination. Those authors who did try their hand at speculative fiction were generally looked at askance, and usually relegated to the children's bookshelves, along with translated books by authors like Jules [Verne](#) or Edgar Rice [Burroughs](#), or to the trashy newsstands that sold "shunt", cheap Hebrew [Pulp](#) publications, [Westerns](#), porn, and sometimes, sf/fantasy. The earliest of these translated "children's" novels is probably *The Food of the Gods and How It Came to Earth* by H G [Wells](#). It was translated by Avraham Aryeh Akavya as *Mezon Haelim: Sipur Dimioni Simli* ["The Food of the Gods: An Imaginary Symbolic Story"] (**1912**).

Interestingly, [Herzl](#)'s *Altneuland* was preceded in 1892 by another fabulist foray, *Masa' le-Erets Yisra'el bi-shenat tat* ["A Voyage to the Land of Israel in the Year 800 to the Sixth Thousand"] (**1892**) by Elhanan Leib Levinsky (1857-1910), a [Utopia](#) set in a perfected future Jewish state, which some cite as the first novel written in modern Hebrew. *Yerushalayim Habenuya: Chalom Behakitz* ["Rebuilt Jerusalem: a Daydream"] (**1918**) by Boris Shatz (1866-1932), the founder of the Bezalel Academy of Arts, is another early example of a utopia, a novella which envisioned an internationally recognized Israel at peace with nature and the local Arab population; its cultural center was the Third Temple, an impressive art museum. Originally written in Yiddish, it was translated by Mordechai Ezrachi (Krishevski) into modern Hebrew in 1924. One of the earliest examples of an [Alternate History](#) novel is *HaYehudi HaAchron: Sipur* ["The Last Jew: A Story"] (**1946**) by Jacob Weinsall (1891-1980). The author's association with Zev Jabotinsky's Revisionist Movement put him at odds with the Yishuv's (pre-state Jewish community) Labor establishment, resulting in the book's publication by a little-read independent publisher.

These authors wrote in Hebrew, the language of Scripture that had just recently been revived for everyday and literary use. Consequently it initially lacked many words that have to do with the modern world, particularly those that are used to describe [Technology](#) – a significant handicap for those who wished to write sf. Indeed, merely agreeing on a Hebrew term for sf (initially "mada dimioni" ["imaginary science"]) and ultimately, in the late 1970s, "mada bidioni" ["fictional science"]), severely challenged the semantic abilities of Israel's emergent sf community.

During Israel's 1948 War of Independence, Avram [Davidson](#) served as an IDF medic (after completing a wartime stint in the US Navy as a hospital corpsman attached to the First Marine Division), before returning to

the United States in 1950. While his sojourn would have qualified him for immediate Israeli citizenship, there is no evidence that he ever availed himself of this opportunity. In their introduction to *Zion's Fiction: A Treasury of Israeli Speculative Literature* (anth **2018**), Sheldon [Teitelbaum](#) and Emanuel [Lottem](#) contend that his service, and the length of his postwar stay in Israel, nevertheless earned him a place within the Israeli sf/f pantheon.

In the 1950s and 1960s, brief forays by publishers tantalized would-be fans with a few Hebrew translations of novels by such genre notables as Robert A [Heinlein](#) and Fredric [Brown](#) before their efforts ended in bankruptcy. So too ended three plunges into [sf magazine](#) publishing, with *Mada Dimioni* (**1958**, 13 issues), *Cosmos: Sipurei Mada Dimioni* ["Cosmos: Stories of Imaginary Science"] (**1958**, 4 issues), and *Flash Gordon* (**1963**, 7 issues); none published work by domestic authors. The only Israeli sf writer of note in this period, Mordecai [Roshwald](#), published his acclaimed apocalyptic novel *Level 7* (**1959**) and the [Satirical](#) *A Small Armageddon* (**1962**) abroad. Neither has been translated into Hebrew, and Roshwald, whose work remains lamentably unknown in Israel, eventually settled in the US. Also unremembered is celebrated poet, journalist and translator Nathan Alterman (1910-1970), whose play *Pythagorean Theorem*, about an intelligent [Computer](#) (see [AI](#)), was staged, unsuccessfully, in 1965. This period also introduced Amos Geffen (1937-1998) as an sf translator. Among other literary feats, he translated Heinlein's *The Puppet Masters* (**1951**) as "Pelisha LeKadur HaAretz" ["Invasion of Earth"] (**1961**) for the Matzpen ["Compass"] publishing company. The book was later republished in 1979 as *Hashalitim* ["The Masters"], part of the Masada series of translated sf works. Geffen would later mint new Hebrew words for his sf translations, such as the widely accepted "Chaizar" ["[Alien](#)"].

The election to power of the Likud bloc in 1977 unleashed a wave of consumerism in Israel that permitted a brief boom in sf. Encouraged by young Israelis' new spending power and the success of such films as [Star Wars](#) (1977) and [Close Encounters of the Third Kind](#) (1977), publishers embarked upon ambitious schedules of mostly translated sf. Despite the prolonged stagflation following the 1982 invasion of Lebanon, nearly 200 of the classic books of modern sf were translated, many by Amos Geffen and the éminence grise of Israeli sf/f, Emanuel [Lottem](#).

Of several new sf magazines, few survived long, but *Fantasia 2000* merits special notice. Launched in 1978 by Tel Aviv University students Aharon and Tzippi Hauptman, Dubi Lehrer and Eli Tene, it nurtured a group of local writers and a small, vigorous fan community during its 44-issue, six-year life as the second-most expensive Israeli periodical extant. Among its writers was Hillel F Damron, author of the critically well-received *Milchemet haMinim* ["The War of the Sexes"] (**1982**), set in a [Post-Holocaust](#) colony [Underground](#) where a society of sexual equals devolves into full-scale subjugation of males. The author of this entry, Sheldon [Teitelbaum](#), served as a book and film reviewer, as well as a member of the magazine's editorial board. A special 45th anniversary issue of the magazine was published in 2008, thirty years after the first issue was originally released. In 2019, editor Aharon Hauptman together with Eli Tene revived *Fantasia 2000* in a new website containing scanned copies of all original 45 issues. It featured new, original stories as well as a genre blog.

Sf/f magazine publishing skipped a generation, with another notable sf magazine emerging in 2002 as *Halomot beAspamia* ["Castles in Spain," literally *Dreams in Aspamia*.], which published 23 issues by 2016. It featured more original stories than had *Fantasia*, an indication of the growth of a corps of writers from within the Israeli genre.

This period also introduced the first fan clubs and the first attempts at organizing sf conventions. These fan clubs were small, short lived, and have mostly been forgotten except by those who attended them. Ra'anana genre book broker Eli Herstein (1965-) founded one such club in the city of Holon, and later became the editor of the first Israeli fanzine, *Olamot*. The first, unnamed convention took place in Hadassah Medical Center in Jerusalem. The second was JeruCon, a failed attempt in 1982 by Hebrew University's now-emeritus sociologist Nachman Ben Yehuda (1948-) to organize an international conference. First Harry [Harrison](#) and then Harlan [Ellison](#) was supposed to attend, but the first Lebanon war put the final kibosh on bids for resuscitation. JeruCon was followed by two successful conferences in the mid-nineteen-eighties. These took place in Jerusalem's Cinematheque, and at the Cultural Affairs section of the United States Israeli embassy. Thomas M [Disch](#) attended the embassy conference.

Before the first Lebanon War, Israeli sf tended to be reticent on [Politics](#), but the 1982 military watershed altered this. In 1980, *Fantasia* alumnus David Melamed published *Tsavo'a beCorundy* ["A Hyena in Corundy"] containing a swath of sf stories, most, albeit, with little immediate relevance to Israel. However, his third novel, *He'Halom haRevi'i* ["The Fourth Dream"] (**1986**), recounted the travails of an Israeli refugee in Germany after a [Near-Future](#) fall of the Jewish state. Similarly, Zeev Ben-Yosef's *Shalom al Israel* ["Peace on Israel"] (**1993**) envisioned a Jewish State undone by a joint Palestinian and neo-Nazi military campaign. Boaz Izraeli (1960-) followed suit with *Eyfoh Kulam* ["Where Is Everyone?"] (**1997**). Hanan Steinhart's *Kokash Kodash!* [a Hungarian expression for a rooster's call to battle] (**2001**) attributed the country's demise to an uprising of Galilean Arabs. Other examples of political sf inspired by the Israeli-Arab conflict include: *Ketz Hamilenium* ["End of The Millenium"] (**1998**) by Dov Fuchs (1948-), which tells of an attempt by Israeli fanatics to destroy the Temple Mount, resulting in the entire Moslem world uniting against Israel; and Shlomo Erell (1920-2018), the seventh commander of the Israeli Navy, wrote *Diplomatia BeMa'amakei Hayam* ["Diplomacy under the Sea"] (**2000**), about the future struggles of the State of Israel against an emergent Palestine in 2004.

Nineteen eighty-three proved a watershed for Israeli sf due to the imminence of the calendar year of 1984. In 1983, prominent left-wing columnist, playwright and sculptor Amos Kenan (1927-2009) published *HaDerech leEin Harod* (trans from the Hebrew and then French as *The Road to Ein Harod* **1984**), which postulated a [Near-](#)

[Future](#) military takeover (and the judicious use of time-traveling nukes directed by an Ariel Sharon-style renegade general against various historical Jewish enemies and villains) of Israel. It was not his first speculative novel – that being the more surreal *Shoah II* ["*Holocaust II*"] (1975) – but it was the only Israeli sf novel ever awarded a peace prize by the pre-Oslo Palestine Liberation Organization. Although the book embraced well-known sf and [Technothriller](#) tropes, Kenan vehemently denied its genre roots, not least because of the Israeli literary establishment's pronounced disdain for genre literature. A second significant [Dystopia](#) was written by established novelist Binyamin Tammuz (1919-1989): *Pundako Shel Yirmiyahu* ["*Jeremiah's Inn*"] (1984), a broad [satire](#) about an Israel taken over by ultra-Orthodox zealots.

An even grimmer version of the future was presented in *Mal'achim Ba'im* ["*The Angels are Coming*"] (1987) by Yitzhak Ben Ner (1937-), in which a global atomic apocalypse (see [World War Three](#)) has somehow spared Israel. By the twenty-first century, alas, life within this rampaging theocracy is characterized by ubiquitous street violence, persecution of secular Jews, and widespread societal alienation. A similar scenario was more presciently intimated in *Pargod HaBdolach* ["*The Crystal Screen*"] (1969), by Yehoshua Granot (1934-2004), which imagines a 1989 openly nuclear Israel controlled by the three largest Jewish parties. Arabs, including those living across the green line, are minimum wage workers with no political rights. Various Jewish undergrounds with competing agendas attempt to set things right. These fever dreams spilled over in 1998 into Michal Peleg's *Ha-Ir HaPnimit* ["*The Inner City*"] and Hedy Ben-Amar's *Beshem Shamayim* ["*In the Name of God*"]. The former imagined an Orwellian Israel with language strongly reminiscent of newspeak; geographic locations are not mentioned, specific details are omitted, but the readers know exactly what is being described. The latter portrayed the events which led to the election of the first Jewish ultra-Orthodox prime minister and the establishment of a religious state. *Am Oved* ["*The Third*"] (2015) by Yishai Sarid (1965-), set in a near-future Jerusalem that has rebuilt the Third Temple, inspired considerable public controversy. Moshe Dayan's son, the actor and writer Assi Dayan (1945-2014), published *Tochen Ha'Inyanim* ["*Table of Contents*"] (1989). *Cosmotism* (1987) by Mordechai Y Nessyahu (1929-1997), by the erstwhile Labor Party ideologue who influenced Shimon Peres and Yitzhak Rabin in forging the Oslo Accords, portrays a future Israel against the backdrop of a universe teeming with alien civilizations.

While some authors preferred to write [Dystopias](#), others chose to try their hand at reimagining its antithesis. In the nineties, ultra-right wing firebrands Moshe Feiglin (1962-), Moti Karfel (1953-) and Shmuel Sacket (1961-) founded the *Manhigut Yehudit* ["*Jewish Leadership*"] faction in the Likud party as part of their opposition to the Oslo accords. To help spread their ideology, they published the *Lekatchila* ["*In the First Place*"] newsletter, which featured a utopian news section in which the faction would lay out its vision of what a proper right-wing religious future Israeli future could look like. This would envision Jewish dominance over the Palestinian population, freely expanding construction across the Green Line (the demarcation line separating Israel from its neighbors, and based upon the 1949 Armistice Agreements), and retaking the Temple Mount.

Zirmat Hachamim ["*Semen of the Wise*"] (1982) and *Luna: Gan Eden Geneti* ["*Luna: A Genetic Paradise*"] (1985) by geneticist Ram Moav (1930-1984), about the [Genetic Engineering](#) of humans, inspired accusations of fascism on the part of the author, who had written these two books while terminally ill. *HaTzariach* ["*The Turret*"] (1983) by Ruth Blumert (1943-2014) is a fantasy somewhat reminiscent of Mervyn [Peake's Gormenghast](#) trilogy.

In Reuven Rupin's *The Jewish War II* (1994), the Jews of 70 AD defeat the Romans. Their newly founded Jewish state, however, does not survive the contradictions between state and religion. *Tel Aviv* (2012) by Yair Hasdiel (1971-), meanwhile, posited a world in which the Holocaust never happened, with Poland home to millions of Jews, and the Land of Israel bearing testament to a failed attempt to create a Jewish republic.

This new foray into speculative realms was not limited just to Israel's Jewish population. In 1977, a former Israeli-Arab member of the Israeli Knesset, Emile Habibi (1922-1996), wrote *The Secret Life of Saeed: The Pessoptimist* (1984; trans Trevor Le Gassick and Salma Khadra Jayyusi 1985) a dark, satirical work that incorporates many sf and fantasy elements as the eponymous protagonist recounts his travails to a friend from the safety of outer space in the company of benevolent aliens.

After a generation of stagnation, Israeli sf started reviving in 1996 with the establishment of the Israeli Society for Science Fiction and Fantasy. The society was founded by Aharon Hauptman, Amos Geffen, Emanuel Lottem, Orzion Bartana (1949-), Thomas Goodman (1954-), and a handful of other academics. The first official member of the new society was Brian [Aldiss](#), who gave an inaugural lecture at the British Embassy in Tel Aviv. The new society brought together nascent writers and avid readers and started a burgeoning wave of original genre writing, mainly short stories and novellas. Between 2000 and 2009, the ISSF&F published *Ha-Meimid Ha'Asiri* ["*The Tenth Dimension*"], a magazine which included new original Hebrew and translated short stories. Among the more noteworthy Israeli writers published in the magazine were Etgar Keret (1967-), Lavie [Tidhar](#), Vered [Tochterman](#), and Nir [Yaniv](#). The magazine also occasionally published nonfiction work from other notable writers and editors, including Aharon Hauptman, Emanuel [Lottem](#) and Abigail [Nussbaum](#). In 2009, the magazine was subsequently replaced by *Hayo Yihye* ["*Once Upon a Future*"], an annual volume, edited by Ehud Maimon (1971-), featuring some of the best sf/f short stories of the year.

The birth of the internet, followed by online forums in the late nineties, gave a huge boost to Israeli sf. The sf and fantasy forum in the Israel On Line (IOL) platform (nicknamed "Yoel" by its members) was a breeding ground for a new community of fans, many of whom later graduated to become the next generation of Israel's authors and editors, including Rotem Baruchin (1982-), Or Bialik, Yael [Furman](#), Yuli Michaeli (1982-), Guy Hasson (1971-), Keren [Landsman](#), Ehud Maimon, Noa Menhaim (1974-), Rami Shalheveth (1971-),

Vered Tochterman (1970-) and Nir [Yaniv](#). When the IOL platform proved unable to keep up with faster technology, the forum members slowly migrated to the more user-friendly system of the ORT science and technology vocational educational network. In addition to IOL and ORT, many community members divided their time between the Nana, Ynet, Walla and Tapuz web forums as well. Eventually, the Israeli sf/f community got completely fed up with having to go to the IOL forum to access the content they created, so they used the ORT system to establish the *Bli Panika* forum ["Don't Panic!"] in 2000, edited by Rami Shalheveth (nicknamed Gromit on the IOL platforms). The ISSF&F website edited by Yaniv, another ORT forum member, was also established around the same time. Eventually the activity on these forums faded as members aged, and conventions and Facebook became more popular. In 2006, *Bli Panika* moved to WordPress, a more modern platform. Since its establishment, the website has published hundreds of original genre short stories as well as essays, articles, and useful reference lists.

In 1999, ISSF&F created the Geffen award, named after Amos Geffen. It is Israel's only literary award for sf and fantasy, and it is given annually in five categories: best Hebrew book (from 2003); best Hebrew short story (from 2002); best translated sf book; best translated fantasy book; and best translated young adult book (from 2008, and then from 2013). The prize committee collects all the eligible works every year and sends the list to the members of ISSF&F who can then vote on which books should be nominated for the award: the five most popular entries in each category. The public then proceeds to vote in Israel's Icon festival, deciding which books and short story should receive the award. Icon is the largest Israeli sf and fantasy festival, traditionally held during the Sukkot (Tabernacles) holiday in October. The first genre Hebrew book to win the award was *Liphaim Ze Acheret* ["Sometimes It's Different"] (**2002**) by Vered Tochterman, a collection containing 26 of the author's best short stories at the time.

Since then, several other notable Hebrew sf books have won this award. These include: *Hydromania* by Assaf Gavron (**2009**), which posited a vastly truncated Jewish State that had lost much of its territory, including the Sea of Galilee, its primary source of freshwater; *Mesopotamia Shetikat Hakochavim* ["Mesopotamia the Silence of the Stars"] (**2011**) by Yehuda Israeli and Dor Rave, which described a far flung future in which the planet was destroyed by a religious war; and *Herzel Amar* ["Herzel Said", the Israeli "Simon Said!"], (**2011**) by Yoav Avni (1969-) which portrayed an alternative history in which Israel was established in Uganda.

This new period of flourishing sf in Israel also suffered its fair share of setbacks. Armageddon Con, the largest ever Israeli convention, was supposed to have taken place on December 28, 2000, and fans from around the world were expected to flock to Israel to explore apocalyptic fiction and celebrate the upcoming Armageddon, the third millennium it was supposed to introduce. Numerous authors had already confirmed their attendance. Larry [Niven](#), Paul J [McAuley](#), and Joan D [Vinge](#) were the nominal guests of honor, and the master of ceremonies was Ian [Watson](#). The agenda included an archaeological tour of Tel Megiddo, the site from which the Greek word "Armageddon" is derived. However, advance registration was very poor; few visitors from abroad expressed an interest in traveling to Israel, and local Israelis balked at the steep prices the organizers needed to charge for the three-day conference. When the second Intifada broke out in September 2000, and the international guests of honor began withdrawing their attendance, the organizers officially cancelled the conference. Larry Niven subsequently visited Israel in 2008 as the guest of honor for the Icon Festival.

In 2000, Israeli sf artist Avi Katz designed a set of three Israeli postage stamps on "Science Fiction in Israel" for the occasion, honoring, respectively, Jules Verne, H G Wells and Isaac Asimov (who ironically, was not a Zionist and who pointedly declined to visit Israel during his lifetime.)

The ISSF&F organizes several conventions. Over time these conventions have grown, merged, split, and been renamed. The largest of these are the Icon festival and Olamot convention, which take place during the Sukkot (Tabernacles) and Passover holiday weeks respectively. Icon was originally a two-day convention; "Sector 972" which took place in 1997, focused on [Star Trek](#), [Babylon 5](#) (series co-star Claudia Christian, who played a Russian-Jewish character in the series, attended), and comics. Following the convention's success, the organizers established Starbase 972, a separate, *Star Trek*-oriented fan organization that joined the ISSF&F in sponsoring Icon as an annual convention. In 2001 it was rebranded as part of the Icon festival, hopefully to appeal to a wider audience. In 2002, The Israel Roleplaying Society joined the other two organizations in managing the festival. Later, following a split, the ISSF&F became involved in the festival's management, and it currently manages the event jointly with the Israel Roleplaying Society.

Icon has been attended by a large number of international sf authors, including Orson Scott [Card](#) (2003), Neil [Gaiman](#) (2006), Ted [Chiang](#) (2015), and Ann [Leckie](#) (2018). In 2005, the Israeli FantasyCon and Stardust conventions were merged into the Olamot (Worlds) convention. Olamot is managed by ISSF&F and the Israeli Tolkien Society. Icon offers the Einat Award for best short story to commemorate Einat Peleg (1972-2005), an Israeli journalist and critic who was very active in the local community. These contests have separate tracks for young and adult authors. Notable Israeli speculative authors, including Yael Furman (1973-), Judith Jael Kagan, and Odeliya Goldman, won early recognition in the Einat Award for their work. The Meorot ["Lights"] convention is a science and sf convention that takes place annually during the Hanukkah holiday in Jerusalem. It was founded in 2009 by Keren Landsman and Ehud Maimon. In addition to lectures and panels, the convention also sponsors a short story contest, the *Meorot Project*.

Quite a few authors have grown up within the genre since 2000. Those among them who had at least some of their work translated into English include Guy [Hasson](#); Etgar Keret (1967-) with various volumes of quirky short stories and novellas; Keren Landsman (1977-) with *The Heart of the Circle* (**2108**; trans Daniella

Zamir **2019**); Nir [Yaniv](#) with *The Love Machine & Other Contraptions* (**2012**); Yoav [Blum](#) with *The Coincidence Makers* (**2011**; trans Ira Moskowitz **2018**), translated into more than ten languages; and more.

The best-known among Israeli speculative fiction authors, who broke out internationally, is multi-award-winning Lavie [Tidhar](#). He writes most of his work in English, his second language; nevertheless, his novels and stories bear an unmistakable Israeli atmosphere, as in his **Central Station** stories (assembled in his *Central Station* fix-up **2016**) and *Unholy Land* (**2018**). Many of his other novels, novellas and short stories take up Jewish and Israeli themes, including *The Tel Aviv Dossier* (**2009**) co-written with Nir [Yaniv](#), *A Man Lies Dreaming* (**2014**), *By Force Alone* (**2020**), *The Hood* (**2021**) and an historical sequence set in Israel beginning with *Maror* (**2022**). The editor of several major anthologies of World sf, Tidhar, whose ongoing dialogue with Golden Age sf is noteworthy, has become a major voice in international sf. Ironically, like Roshwald, he remains little known in his native country.

At the same time, several mainstream Israeli writers also started crafting their own speculative fiction. The first breakthrough came with *Haderech leGan Eden* ["The Road to Paradise"] (**1999**) by Gail Hareven (1959-), which is a celebrated collection of short sf stories. She was followed by such authors as Nava Semel (1954-2017) with *And the Rat Laughed* (**2009**), a [time travel](#) novel about the Holocaust, and *Isra-Isle* (**2005**; trans. Jessica Cohen **2016**), an [alternate history](#) novel placing a Jewish state in the US. Shimon [Adaf](#), is an author noted for his lyrical prose, excursions into [magic realism](#), and greater reliance on Jewish mysticism than most of Israel's speculative authors. His [Delany](#)-esque novel *Kfor* ["Frost"] (**2010**), about Yeshiva students in Tel Aviv some 500 years hence who begin to sprout wings, has been declared, by Tidhar, a masterpiece (Tidhar co-wrote with Adaf a non-fiction book, *Art & War: Poetry, Pulp and Politics in Israeli Fiction* (**2013**)). The few other authors who tried their hand in invoking ancient Middle Eastern mythologies include Hagai Dagan (1964-) with his *Shedim biRhov Agrippas* ["Demons in Agrippas Street"] (**2012**) and Asaf Asheri with the urban fantasy *Simantov* (**2008**; trans Marganit Weinberger-Rotman **2020**). Ofir Touché [Gafla](#)'s work, including *Olam Hasof* (**2004**; trans Mitch Ginsbur as *The World of the End* **2013**), is remarkable for its smooth glissandi among genres and styles. Efrat Roman Asher's *Iroshalem* (**2003**) – a variant of the name Jerusalem – reflects the author's pronounced [Feminist](#) outlook. Yoav Avni, another popular author, is known for crafting stories out of "what if" questions that could only occur in Israel, and populating them with characters that have a distinctively Israeli sense of humour. His breakthrough novel, *Sheloshah Devarim le'i Boded* ["Three Things to Take to a Deserted Island"] (**2006**) tells the story of an Israeli hi-tech worker who gets stranded on a deserted [Island](#) during what should have been a typical work trip. Yoav Katz (1965-), an Israeli author, playwright, script writer and translator, wrote the hilarious *Natbag* ["Ben Gurion International Airport"] (**2011**); in which the Deputy Superintendent of Israel's sole international airport applies for refugee status in Canada after failing to offset a sudden [Zombie](#) invasion on and alongside the tarmac.

Many of these authors were fostered by a new generation of editors who helped create inroads for speculative works into Israel's larger and more traditional publishing houses. Noa Menhaim, the head of Hebrew Department at Kinneret Zmora Dvir, one of Israel's largest publishing houses, is considered by many to be the true patron saint of contemporary Israeli sf/f. Menhaim's career at Kinneret has spanned almost two decades. During this period, Kinneret has published dozens of sf/f novels, many of which Menhaim edited herself, including the above-mentioned *Herzel Amar*, and Landsman's *The Heart of The Circle*. Groundbreaking author Shimon Adaf, who teaches SF at the Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, in Beersheva, worked as an editor in Keter Books between 2000 and 2005. During this period, he encouraged new Israeli authors to write sf/f. Some of the more notable books he edited include the aforementioned *Olam Hasof* by Ofir Touché Gafla, *Let It Be Morning* (**2006**) by the Arab-Israeli journalist, and now Illinois resident, Sayed Kashua (1975-), and the *Leviathan of Babylon* by Hagar Yanai, an epic fantasy that draws from Jewish, Babylonian and Mesopotamian mythology. Adaf also edited the *Postcap* series, four linked novellas that imagine a post-capitalistic Middle East in 2066. Adaf authored one of the books in the series, *Keshel Hazikaron* ["The Failure of Memory"] (**2023**). Hagar Yanai (1972-), the author whom Adaf edited, has since become a freelance editor for independent Israeli authors, most notably Naama Bar Shira (1989-), the author of the *Archangel Sisters* trilogy (**2022-24**; trans Noelle Canin **2023**, 1st volume).

Most original sf/f books in Israel are published by the large traditional publishing houses: Kinneret Zmora Dvir, Keter, Yediot Sepharim, Am Oved and Modan. These tend to release 8-9 new titles per year. However, since the mid-2010s, with the rise of crowdfunding platforms, there has also been a steady increase in self-publishing. The book that pioneered this new era is probably *Agam Hazelalim* ["Lake of Shadows"] (**2015**), a YA fantasy novel by Roni Gelbfish (1969-), which went on to win the Geffen Award, the first self-published novel to ever win the prize. Despite this increase, until 2020, the number of new self-published novels was not particularly high, averaging three-to-four new titles per year. However, since 2021, these numbers have dramatically increased: seven new titles in 2021, eight in 2022, and 37 in 2023. It now seems as if there are more self-published novels than those traditionally published. These novels tend towards fantasy, a subgenre some have argued is antithetical to the Israeli literary experience. But there are also some notable titles that can be considered straightforward sf, such as *Zeeva* ["She-Wolf"] (**2020**) by Mayan Rogel (1980-), a novella with dark overtones that takes place in an Israel recovering from a (non-Covid) pandemic, and *Merlin Ha'Aduma* ["Red Merlin"] (**2023**) by Daniella Giuia Traub (1989-), an alternative history which imagines an Israel conquered by Iran.

Opus is one of Israel's oldest publishing companies for translated sf/f, founded in 1987 by Gil and Batya Tegar. The company's original focus was new age books and computer guides, but in the early nineties, the owners decided to expand into fantasy, and then later, in 1994, into sf as well, beginning with *Ender's Game* (**1985**) by

Orson Scott [Card](#), translated by Boaz Weiss. Since then, roughly 200 titles have been translated by the company. The overwhelming majority belong to the fantasy genre, but there are also a sizable number of translated sf titles as well, such as: the entire *Ender* series by Card (**1994-2023**; Hebrew trans Rechavia Berman, Boaz Weiss, Zafrir Grosman); the *Hyperion* series by Dan [Simmons](#) (**1999-2002**; Hebrew trans Yael Sela-Shapiro, Vered Tochterman); *The Player of Games* by Iain [Banks](#) (**2002**; Hebrew trans Inbal Har-noi), who subsequently refused to allow his books to be available in Hebrew translation, in keeping with much Scottish antipathy toward the Jewish State; *Stories of Your Life* by Ted [Chiang](#) (**2003**; Hebrew trans Rechavia Berman), and *Red Shirts* by John [Scalzi](#) (**2015**; Hebrew trans Zafrir Grosman). Opus has employed and continues to employ some of Israel's most popular sf/f translators and editors. These include (in addition to the names previously mentioned): Yael Achmon (translator), Yael Sela (translator), Maya Ankaoua (editor), Assaf Asherov (editor), Eyal Goren (editor), Zafrir Grosman (editor and senior translator), Didi Hanoch (1971-) (editor), Kineret Higgins Davidi (translator), and Batya Ziso (translator). Vered Tochterman and Assaf Asherov later graduated to write their own books, and Didi Hanoch moved on to create his own publishing company, Nova.

Publishing translated sf has always been a risky venture in Israel. Israel's larger publishing companies can afford to take the occasional hit, but for the smaller ones a handful of poorly selling titles may drive a company under. Amos Geffen's first publishing company, Matzpen, lasted barely five years before going bankrupt. This has not deterred Israelis from attempting to bring over their preferred sf to their native audience. Rani Graff and Didi Chanoch are two famous examples that best embody this drive. Graff, a long standing member of Israel's sf/f community, founded Graff Publishing in the early 2000s, the first book his company translated being *The Chronoliths* by Robert Charles [Wilson](#) (Hebrew trans Didi Chanoch, **2004**), followed by *Spin* (**2006**) and *Julian Comstock* (**2011**). *Spin* was the only volume translated in the series. Graff hit his stride upon acquiring the rights for the wildly popular (in any language) **Percy Jackson** series by Rick Riordan (1964-). As a result, the company has grown and thrived, produced over 60 titles, many trending as mainstream, with the occasional title completely unrelated to sf/f. Didi Hanoch's *Nova* was not so lucky. Hanoch founded the company with the goal of introducing Israelis to diverse voices. Voices that had been dominating the Hugos for quite some time, but were largely unheard of in Israel. The first two books translated by the company were *The Lives of Tao* by Wesley [Chu](#) (**2015**) and *Three Parts Dead* by Max [Gladstone](#) (**2015**). But the company suffered a major setback with *Uprooted* (**2016**) by Naomi Novik (1973-), and poor sales forced Hanoch to shut down his operations.

Some of the authors mentioned above, both mainstream and genre, have written sf/f books for children and young adults. In fact, it appears that this section of the sf/f publishing industry, which mainly includes translated titles, is more ubiquitous than other, ostensibly more "serious" ones. Most Hebrew books for [Young Adults](#) and children belong to the fantasy genre. However, a handful of sf books have been written with the intention of familiarizing youngsters with scientific concepts and ideas. But YA sf books conforming to genre conventions are exceedingly rare. Yael Furman (1973-) wrote two novels. *Yaldei Beit Hazechuchit* ("The Glass House Children") (**2011**), set in a futuristic Israel with humans genetically engineered to live underwater, explores the relations between a human child and a "merchild" and the challenges they face overcoming societal prejudice. *Kirei Olam* ["World Fragments"] (**2017**) explores the adventures of two Israeli teenagers sucked into a [Virtual Reality](#). A handful of YA sf novels were published in 2022-2024, but it is too early to tell whether this heralds a new trend: *K'sheHaOlam Hithapech* ["When the World Turned Upside Down"] (**2022**) by Yoav Avni; *Max veHaphantom HaKosmi* ["Max and the Cosmic Phantom"] (**2022**) by Hanan Dror (1979-); the *Olam Acher* ["Other World"] (**2022**) series by Daniel Rimon (1990-), and *HaEl HaMechani* ["The Mechanical God"] (**2024**) by Ori Katz (1981-).

Due to the high proliferation of short stories written in 2003, Assaf Dekel (1976-2023), nicknamed Kipod (Porcupine), created a master list of all Israeli sf/f short stories ever published, "Reshimat Kipod" ["Kipod's List"]. This list is maintained by Rami Shalheveth on his *Bli Panika* website, and had been faithfully maintained until 2020. That task became increasingly difficult due to the increase in writing workshops, contests, anthologies, projects, and journals that collectively produce well over 100 new sf/f short stories every year. These include the Society's *Hayo Yihye* (Once Upon a Future) annual collection; the *Bli Panika* website; the *Meorot* project, the *Sefarim?* ["Books?"] Facebook group's summer writing project; the *Nahon* ["Correct"] journal for utopian and dystopian literature edited by Orzion Bartana, and the *Yekum Tarbut* ["Cultural Universe"] website edited by academic Eli Eshed.

Israeli sf/f writers traditionally avoided trucking in [Hard SF](#) motifs, gravitating toward the softcore, sociological variant. There have been a few exceptions, though: Yosef Ofer's *Zohar HaArgaman* ["The Scarlet Glow"] (**1970**) envisioned an insidious [Invasion](#) by [Aliens](#) intent on sowing violent discord and warlike impulses in furtherance of an eons-long colonizing program that results in a Nazi-inspired [World War Three](#) in 1988, Yaakov Avisar (1921-2005) published *Anashim MeKochav Acher* ["People from a Different Planet"], wherein an Israeli spaceship crew encounters Hebrew-speaking aliens. The plot seems like a riff on Poul [Anderson's](#) comic novel, *The High Crusade* (**1960**). *Haydak Katlani* ["A Deadly Microbe"] (**1997**), by Bo'az Ginsburg (1956-) depicts a Mossad attempt to thwart a Hamas plan to wage biowarfare using deadly microbes of German design. Yosef Soyka's *Sod HaOlam HaSheni* ["Secret of the Second World"] (**1998**), posits hitherto unknown ancient texts chronicling an encounter between the Ten Lost Tribes of Israel and aliens living underground. *HaKafil HaVirtuali* ["The Virtual Double"] (**2009**) by Moshe Menasheof (1958-) describes a physics experiment that goes awry, creating a doppelganger universe. Yehuda Israely and Dor Raveh published *Mesopotamyah* (**2010** 2 vols), the first volume being fantasy, the second [Hard SF](#). *Shemone Dakot* ["Eight Minutes"] (**2023**) by Or Shoham (1992-) takes the idea of the sun suffering extinction and

explores in short stories the reactions on Earth eight minutes after the event occurred (the amount of distance it takes for light from the sun to arrive to Earth). The story is reminiscent of Larry Niven's "Inconstant Moon" (in *All the Myriad Ways* coll **1971**).

Not all Israeli sf is written in Hebrew. The Russian wave of immigration that began at the start of the 1990s brought alongside a million newcomers several authors of note, Pesakh (Pavel/Paul) Amnuel (1944-), an astrophysicist and, despite his longtime residence in Israel, still nationally renowned as a scientist and Russian sf author. Elana Gomel (1961-) is a wildly talented and unusually prolific sf and horror writer of international repute, and associated with Tel Aviv University and Stanford University. Other noteworthy writers include Daniel Kluger (1951-) and Alexandr Rybalka (1984-). This Russian cohort is characterized by, among other things, a profound, unabashed love and respect for genre sf. Gomel's writes in English, while the other authors mentioned here write in Russian.

There are many other Israeli sf authors who have chosen to write in English, as the global market offers much greater reach than what can be found in the smaller local Israeli market. Also, sometimes the authors themselves, like Lavie [Tidhar](#), choose to relocate to English-speaking countries. Nir [Yaniv](#) wrote *The Love Machine and Other Contraptions* (**2012**), an anthology of short sf stories, and *The Good Soldier* (**2024**), heady sf that critiques the insanity of war. Hesh Kestin, an IDF veteran and international news correspondent now living in America, wrote *The Siege of Tel Aviv* (**2019**), an [Alternate History](#) in which Iran leads a coalition of Arab armies that successfully conquers Israel and rounds up all of Israel's Jews into a ghettoized Tel Aviv. The book was unceremoniously pulped by its publisher after being deemed, without reasonable substantiation, Islamophobic.

Debbie Iancu-Haddad (1974-) is a prolific author who has written two sf series for young adults: *The Sands of Achten-Tan* (**2022-2024**) and *The Children of The Stars* (**2023**). Uri Gatt-Gutman (1991-) chose to write *Requiem for A Star* (**2024**) as a means of commemorating Olga Romashkin and the October 7 (2024) massacre at a rave near Gaza, and translated the book into English so the message might reach a global audience.

The mainstreaming of Israeli sf has not skipped over Israel's political echelon. Amnon Rubinstein (1931-2024), a former Israeli communications, education, science & technology, and national energy, infrastructure minister, wrote *Hayam SheMaeleinu* ["The Sea Above Us"] (**2007**), a story that alternates between two different timelines. The first is historical and takes place after [World War Two](#), and the second is of a futuristic [Ecological Dystopia](#) involving [Climate Change](#), rising sea levels having caused Tel Aviv to sink beneath the waves. Yossi Sarid (1940-2015), another former minister of education and the environment, wrote *Lefikach Nitcanasnu* ["Therefore, We Have Gathered"] (**2008**), an anthology that relates true and alternate history tales of Israeli from a less-represented perspective, such as: David Ben Gurion's secretary, the doctor who took down Adolf Eichmann, and a soldier who participated in the Kfar Kassem massacre. Yuval Steinitz (1958-), another former minister, a member of the Likud party, wrote *Lo Yihyeh Lanu Le'an Lachzor* ["We Will Have Nowhere to Which to Return"] (**2023**) in which earth receives a message from an [Alien](#) civilization and needs to weigh whether the rewards of such [First Contact](#) are worth the risk of drawing the attention of a more technologically advanced species.

Sf [Poetry](#) exists in Israel, although it is rare. The most notable sf poet in Israel was David Avidan (1934-1995), who garnered posthumous fame for fearless early forays into the then much-dismissed genre. In his poems he explored black holes, nuclear destruction, the individual vs the universe, and the extension of human life through genetic engineering. Avidan, who languished economically later life, held himself to be a man from the future, and he did not let the dearth of quasi-futuristic words in modern Hebrew hinder his writing. If a term was missing, he invented it. For example "Binanim" ["in betweeners"] for intelligent beings from other planets (see [Aliens](#); [Life on Other Worlds](#)). These terms did not catch on among the wider public, and remain unique to his poetic works. A handful of his works were translated in *Futureman* (**2017**) by Tsippi Keller. Dan Pagis (1930-1986), an Israeli poet and Holocaust survivor, wrote a handful of poems that can be considered sf: "End of the questionnaire" (1970) lists questions sent by a potentially alien civilization, such as "Housing conditions: number of galaxy and star"; "Brain" (1976) conveys the perspective of a brain trapped inside a skull. These poems appear in *Points of Departure* (coll **1981** trans Stephen Mitchell). Maya Bejerano (1949-) wrote a handful of poems that can be classified as sf. They are collected in *Ibud Netunim 52* ["Data Processing 52"] (coll **1983**); the title refers to her experimental style of poetry. Finally, Asher Reich (1937-) wrote an entire volume of apocalyptic sf poetry collected in *Atid Domem* ["Silent Future"] (coll **2002**).

Genre filmmaking in Israel began with *Sheder Min He'Atid* ["Message from the Future"] (1981) directed [by the poet, and avant-garde filmmaker David Avidan (1934-1995) about future humans visiting present-day Israel. A low-budget, [Post-Holocaust](#) feature, *America 3000* (**1985**) – video release only – was produced by Menachem Golan (1929-2014) and directed by David Engelbach (1946-), featuring a cast of comely Israeli and US amazons (see [Women in SF](#)). Poet and *avant-garde* film-maker Richi Shelach (1944-) directed the (possibly) James [Blish](#)-influenced short film *Ishur Nehita* ["Permission to Land"] (1978) which tells of a visiting alien [Spaceship](#). Both films may have reflected that [Sense of Wonder](#) inspired among Israelis by the unexpected visit of Egypt's President Anwar Sadat. The 1989 adaptation, shot in English, of Kenan's 1984 novel as *Freedom: The Voice from Ein Harod*, failed to achieve Western distribution. Directed by prolific producer/director Doron Eran (1955-) and shot for a then otherworldly \$2 million, *Freedom* was one of the most expensive films ever produced domestically, but suffered from the Israeli army's refusal to donate the use of military matériel to add verisimilitude to a film about an Israel Defense Forces military coup; the peculiar lead casting of American actor Anthony Peck (Gregory's son) and Italian model and far-right politician Allesandra

Mussolini (granddaughter of Il Duce), also detracted from its plausibility. In 1990 the prolific and multi-talented Israeli filmmaker Avi Nesher (1952-) wrote and directed a Los Angeles-shot \$7 million [Technothriller](#), «Nameless» (vt «Timebomb»), as yet unreleased. Israeli writer/director Ari Folman's *Made in Israel* (2001) takes place in the Golan Heights shortly after a peace treaty between Israel and Syria, and follows the adventures of two sets of assassins on a mission to bring the last Nazi to justice. Folman also directed [The Congress](#) (2013), a live-action/animated sf film based on Stanisław Lem's "Ze Wspomnień Ijona Tichego: Kongres Futurologiczn" (in *Bezsenność*, coll 1971; trans Michael [Kandel](#) as *The Futurological Congress: From the Memoirs of Ijon Tichy* 1974).

[World War Z](#) (2013), directed by Marc Forster, based on Max Brooks's novel *World War Z: An Oral History of the Zombie War* (2006), posited a big-budget [Zombie](#) Apocalypse that transpired, among other settings, in Jerusalem. While a plague of "fast zombies" overcomes much of the world, Jerusalem (using Malta as a stand-in), fortified by its natural walls and a massive barrier erected alongside its protective security fence by Israel, withstands the onslaught, rescuing Jews and Palestinians alike. When residents begin dancing a celebratory hora, however, the sound of their heightened voices drives the zombies into a necrophiliac lather – they overcome the barrier with a self-made wall of frothing CGI-enhanced flesh. And as this latest Joshuite wall collapses, the Third Temple, as Israelis refer to their modern nation state, tumbles into the rubble yet again.

Israeli [Television](#) produced a noteworthy [Alternate History](#) miniseries in *Autonomies* (2018), which postulated a 1989 civil war between a secular Tel Aviv and an ultra-Orthodox Jerusalem that produced the competing sovereign redoubts later existing in both. The aforementioned *Let It Be Morning* (2006) by Sayed Kashua (1975-) was adapted for film in 2020, winning accolades from Cannes, where the Palestinian-Israeli participants nonetheless protested the movie's presentation as an Israeli product. The film was shorn of the book's speculative ending.

Israel has a growing number of sf podcasts and radio shows. Keren Landsman and Ehud Maimon host *Atid Mitmashech* ["Future Progressive"] (2023), in which they interview various figures who played a key role in the history of Israel's sf/f community; information from these interviews is included in this entry. *HaAchayot Grimm* ["The Grimm Sisters"] is a popular [Radio](#) show, with over 200 episodes, hosted by Noa Menhaim and Ayelet Triest, that explores various sf and fantasy literary works and characters that shaped modern western culture; the show occasionally deviates from speculative fiction to explore other genres, such as classic children's literature. *The Sci Fi Eye* by Naomi Karmi (2020) explores how current technological developments contribute towards a sf reality.

A small body of sf criticism emerged in the 1980s, the first regular column outside the sf magazines being former *Fantasia 2000* editorial board member and book and film reviewer Sheldon [Teitelbaum](#)'s in the *Jerusalem Post* (1981-1985). The early vagaries of the sf scene are discussed in "Sociological Reflections on the History of Science Fiction in Israel" ([Science Fiction Studies](#) March 1986) by Nachman Ben Yehuda. Orzion Bartana (1949-), then a professor of literature at Tel Aviv University, published Israel's first critical book on sf: *HaFantazia beSiporet Dor Hamdina* ["Fantasy in Israeli Literature in the Last Thirty Years"] (1989). Inbal Saggiv-Nakdimon published an MA thesis on Israeli sf at Tel Aviv University in 1999. Danielle Gurevitch and Elana Gomel edited *With Both Feet in the Clouds: Fantasy in Israeli Literature*. In 2013. Keren Omry published a wide-ranging survey of Israeli sf in the *SFRA Review* in the Fall of 2013; her research is reflected in this entry. A comprehensive review of Israeli dystopias can be found in "Mada Bidyon keBikoret Politit-Kalkalit: Distopiot Yisraeliyot" ["Science Fiction as Political-Economic Criticism: Israeli Dystopias"] by Hananel Livneh (2017). Vered Weiss uses the literary concept of "chronotopes" to catalog Israeli SF&F in "Israeli Fantasy and Science Fiction: Fantastical Chronotopes and the Modern Promised Land" (in *The Palgrave Handbook of Global Fantasy*, anth 2023, ed Elana Gomel and Danielle Gurevich). Raz Greenberg wrote a detailed review of Israeli sf in *Sugot BeSafrut Popolarit* ["Popular Literature Genres"] (2024). *Zion's Fiction: A Treasury of Israeli Speculative Fiction* (anth 2018), and *More Zion's Fiction: Wondrous Tales of the Israeli ImagiNation* (anth 2021), are a retrospective anthology sequence edited by [Teitelbaum](#) and [Lottem](#), with a third volume, co-edited by Teitelbaum and Aharon Hauptman (1948-), projected.

Israeli authors and translators with entries in this encyclopedia (most already noted in the text above) include Shimon [Adaf](#), Yoav [Blum](#), Uri [Dan](#), Yael [Furman](#), Ofir Touché [Gafila](#), Guy [Hasson](#), Emanuel [Lottem](#), Mordecai [Roshwald](#), Eli [Sagi](#), Lavie [Tidhar](#), Vered [Tochterman](#), and Nir [Yaniv](#). [ST/EL/YP]

see also: [American Cyborg: Steel Warrior](#); Menachem [Talmi](#).

Thanks for the above, Sheldon – a truly spectacular summary of SF in Israel or Israel-related. Good Job!

Note, that it wouldn't hurt to see an update that includes mention of Aharon Sheer and his important contribution to the Israeli SF landscape (of his Rehovot SF club and "CyberCozen").

Nor, might I add, of my own Yiddish SF contributions, as well as that of other Israeli Yiddish SF writers.

Our usual tidbits from the Web will be published in the next issue (my apologies ...)

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