

1770

James Bruce discovers what he believes to be the source of the Nile.

1812

Napoleonic Wars: Battle of Smoliani, French Marshals Victor & Oudinot defeated by Wittgenstein.

1851

Moby-Dick, a novel by Herman Melville, is published in the USA.



1889

Jawaharlal Nehru, Indian lawyer and politician, 1st Prime Minister of India (d. 1964)

Frankenstein

el Frankenstein

First published in 1818, Mary Shelley's Frankenstein is usually read as a novel about a scientist's continuing refusal to assume responsibility for his Promethean creation. Shelley's narrative also manifests two thematic interests that will become central not only to the official new science of ALife, but also to a significant body of contemporary fiction that bears the latter's stamp or ethos even when there is no evidence of direct influence. This first interest is not simply in the creation – or re-creation – of a life form, but also in the definition of life and how it is to be distinguished from non-life or inert matter. In Shelley's novel this interest is inscribed in the "spark" that reanimates and thus brings to a living, self-aware state the assemblage of human bones, tissue, and organs that Victor Frankenstein has brought together on what is probably the first entrance of the dissecting table into fictional discourse; but it is also evident in the network of subtle references to the scientific debate between vitalism and materialism that had raged in London from 1814 to 1819 (much of it publicly staged) and in which Percy Shelley's (and Byron's) personal physician, William Lawrence, had participated. The second interest is reproduction and the attendant possibility of evolution, which enter the plot of Shelley's novel at a later turning point. This occurs

Throughout Frankenstein we are often made aware of the Creature's frightful body and unbearable physical presence. The Creature is alive, but will always remain outside the life cycle.

when Frankenstein promises the Monster – as he comes to refer to the Creature on whom he believes he has bestowed life – that he will fabricate for him a female partner if the Monster will cease hounding him and depart for South America with his new mate. Frankenstein, however, reneges on his side of the bargain. That Frankenstein will not repeat the act of creation both intensifies and leaves open to interpretation exactly how that act should be understood: as a human mimicking of divine creation or – in what amounts to a very different understanding of both human and vital agency – a setting up of the specific material conditions necessary for life's emergence. Throughout Frankenstein we are often made aware of the

Creature's frightful body and unbearable physical presence. The Creature is alive, but will always remain outside the life cycle. Contrarily, there is never any question of the Creature's intelligence. Similarly, in Capek's play R.U.R. the intelligence of the robots is not at all an issue; it is, rather, the fact that they cannot and do not know how to reproduce. This is the secret that their human makers withhold from them. Thus in both Frankenstein and R.U.R., intelligence follows "naturally" from the fact of having a body, a living body, even if it originates in wholly artificial conditions. And here we can observe an absolute continuity with Huxley's genetically and chemically engineered humans in Brave New World: in both play and novels, levels of intelligence stem merely from different chemical gradients. However, all of this will change dramatically with the birth of the electronic or digital computer. Whereas the very concept of life requires a body, henceforth intelligence will seem to require only a computer or computational apparatus, which is usually made of inert matter. For the first time in human history, intelligence is divorced from life, thus making it possible to be intelligent but not alive.

(Nasrullah Mambrol is an academician and blogger.)

Link of US economy

High-income families invested in the education of their children, and, in turn, educated inventors were more productive and this has been continuing over decades.

state like Massachusetts, which from 1900 to 2000 had four times as many patents as a less innovative state, like Wyoming, would become 30pc richer in terms of GDP per capita by 2000. Inventors in the golden age were overwhelmingly white and male. They were less likely to marry and they had fewer children, perhaps because of the time commitments associated with making technological discoveries. Inventors in US history have tended to be highly educated, in contrast to the common portrait of the uneducated amateur. They typically invented in pursuit of

profit, and the financial returns to innovation were large. The innovation sector was highly competitive. The best inventors survived. The worst exited quickly. The family backgrounds of inventors were distinctive. Having a father who was an inventor increased the likelihood of becoming one, perhaps because fathers passed along their aspirations, or perhaps because it facilitated access to the right types of social networks. Fathers' incomes were positively correlated with the probability of becoming an inventor. This means that talented individuals from low-income families were more likely to be excluded. Much of the link between family income and invention appears to have been due to education. High-income families invested in the education of their children, and, in turn, educated inventors were more productive. Studies and analysis say that US and the Western countries will lead innovation while it will take some time for Asian and African countries to catch up.

(Christopher Connell is a writer with Share America.)



TOP
4
TWEETS

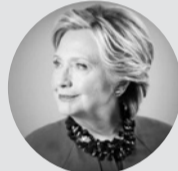
01



I condemn Hamas rocket fire, and am deeply concerned by civilian casualties. Civilians in Israel and Gaza must be protected. Everyone must step back from the brink and avoid further escalation. UK fully supports Egypt/UN efforts to calm situation & find lasting solution to Gaza.

@AlistairBurtuk

02



Last Tuesday, Americans voted a wave of amazing Democrats into office up and down the ballot, including, for the first time, over 100 women in Congress. This Tuesday, ask someone amazing you know to join them in running for office:

@HillaryClinton

03



JUST IN: @CNN is suing Pres. Trump and top aides. CNN claims the White House is violating the 1st Amendment & 5th Amendment rights of correspondent Jim Acosta after taking away his White House press pass.

#KOMOnews @CayleThompson

04



It was 24 years ago today that Pedro Zamora died. A hard truth is that he's been gone longer than he was alive. He leaves behind an eternal legacy that still inspires people all over the world as well as a generation of young people who weren't born when we all came to know him.

@JuddWinick

Disclaimer: (Views expressed by columnists are personal and need not necessarily reflect our editorial stances)

Wide Angle

The Amazing Stan Lee and his Spider Sense



JOEL INDRUPATI

The name of Stan Lee, who died on Monday, will always make me think of two thin comic books I had borrowed from a small book-shop near my house.

One was of 'The Amazing Spider-Man' and another of 'The Incredible Hulk'.

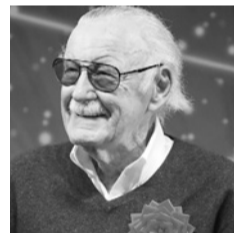
The year was probably 1981. And for an over-imaginative teenager I was then - and for someone already high on the adventures of 'Phantom' and 'Bahadur', published in those days by 'Indrajal Comics' of India - finding these new comics was a special moment. A discovery of pure joy.

Flipping through the pages, my friend and I were fascinated by the brightly-coloured characters and the action-packed scenes. We wasted no time in borrowing these comics. And on rushing home, soon get immersed into a magical world of newfound super-heroes.

Our small book-shop-plus-lending-library had many books in the vernacular language, but a very small collection of English books and comics. It was not located in some high-class urban setting, near posh schools, to warrant the shopkeeper to buy and store foreign-published comics easily.

But thanks to our friends at school, among whom our comic books got circulated privately, a big group of boys soon descended on the shop. And thanks to all of them demanding copies of Marvel Comics from abroad, the proprietor had to give in.

From comics to movies, Stan Lee's imagination has only taken us, and the entertainment world, 'ever upward'. Excelsior!



Stan Lee

He saw a business opportunity, and soon procured not only more adventures of 'Spider-Man' and 'The Incredible Hulk', but also of 'Fantastic Four', of 'Thor', of 'The Avengers' and of 'X-Men', among several others.

And the great excitement we had derived, from access to these comics, is not easy to explain to a new generation that has seen them all on television and cinema screens. Especially, to the millennials who probably will never know the wonder and awe of action-packed comic books.

The passing of Stan Lee, therefore, is the passing of an era. As a man who co-created some of the most endearing superheroes, he has taken sci-fi fantasy and super-hero stories to a higher plane.

It was in 1962 that 'Spider-Man, created by Stan Lee and Steve Ditko, first appeared. But it was only in 2002 that the first Spider-Man movie released. And I am still surprised as to why it took Hollywood so long.

However, in quick succession, with the Spider-Man movie series came other highly successful series of 'The Avengers' and 'X-Men'. Also, 'Iron man', 'Ant Man' and 'Captain America' which have all had the fabulous finger-prints of Stan Lee.

"I never had any idea that these characters would last this long", he had said in interview clips which were telecast by CNN on his demise. "In fact, I, and the people I worked with, who co-created them, with me - the many talented artists - just hoped that the books would sell and we continue to get our salaries and be able to pay our rent".

Even he did not know how far his dreams would take him. His mid-boggling futuristic imagination, and his portrayal of superheroes with all their failings and flaws, ensured that the readers' and audience's love for super-heroes does not die.

A few months ago, when my daughters excitedly went to watch 'Avengers: Infinity War' by Marvel Studios, on the day it released in Bahrain, I thought of my teenage times. The times I had rushed to the book store on hearing that a new set of Marvel Comics had arrived.

Also, Stan Lee's cameo appearances in almost all Marvel Studio productions have portrayed him as a simple lovable human being. But he will remain a super-hero. A real one. Not a fictional one.

From comics to movies, Stan Lee's imagination has only taken us, and the entertainment world, 'ever upward'. Excelsior!