

# MT VOID 09/15/23 -- Vol. 42, No. 11, Whole Number 2293



09/15/23 -- Vol. 42, No. 11, Whole Number 2293

## Table of Contents

- [Mini Reviews, Part 6](#) (film reviews by Mark R. Leeper and Evelyn C. Leeper)
- [LORDS OF UNCREATION by Adrian Tchaikovsky](#) (audio book review by Joe Karpierz)
- [THE BIG SLEEP](#) (letter of comment by Kip Williams)
- [TRAVELLING SALESMAN](#) (letter of comment by Paul Dormer)
- [This Week's Reading](#) (MAKING HISTORY) (book comments by Evelyn C. Leeper)
- [Quote of the Week](#)

Co-Editor: Mark Leeper, [mleeper@optonline.net](mailto:mleeper@optonline.net)  
 Co-Editor: Evelyn Leeper, [eleeper@optonline.net](mailto:eleeper@optonline.net)  
 Sending Address: [evelynchmelisleeper@gmail.com](mailto:evelynchmelisleeper@gmail.com)  
 All material is copyrighted by author unless otherwise noted.  
 All comments sent or posted will be assumed authorized for inclusion unless otherwise noted.

To subscribe or unsubscribe, send mail to [eleeper@optonline.net](mailto:eleeper@optonline.net)  
 The latest issue is at <http://www.leepers.us/mtvoid/latest.htm>.  
 An index with links to the issues of the MT VOID since 1986 is at [http://leepers.us/mtvoid/back\\_issues.htm](http://leepers.us/mtvoid/back_issues.htm).

### Mini Reviews, Part 6 (film reviews by Mark R. Leeper and Evelyn C. Leeper):

This is the sixth batch of mini-reviews for this season, a couple of miscellaneous films.

THE GENERAL (1926): Buster Keaton's THE GENERAL does indeed glorify the Southerner Johnnie Gray (played Buster Keaton). (Is he a Confederate? He was rejected when he went to enlist?) But while it can be claimed that it is inherently racist (by making the Southerner the hero), it is overtly misogynistic. Annabelle is your quintessential ditz: She starts by not believing Gray when he says he tried to enlist but was rejected. Then she tries to help with the fire in the boiler. but throws out a piece of wood because it has a hole in it, then makes a big show of throwing small sticks and wood chips into the fire. Johnnie reacts by starting to strangle her. The result is that, unlike THE BIRTH OF A NATION or GONE WITH THE WIND, if you showed this film to someone with no knowledge of the historical events, they would not see any racism, but would see the misogyny. [-ecl]

Released theatrically 25 December 1926. Rating: high +3 (-4 to +4), or 9/10.

Film Credits: <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0017925/reference>

What others are saying: <https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/1008166-general>

DAGON (2001): DAGON is a Spanish film based on H. P. Lovecraft's "The Shadow over Innsmouth" (although it is directed by American Stuart Gordon). It is definitely more true to the source material than a lot of other "Lovecraftian" films. For those who are not Lovecraft fans, though, it's not clear what the film has to offer: as with many adaptations, there is more interest in seeing where the film is accurate to the source and where it is inaccurate than as a standalone film. (If you want films that are really true to the source, you need to seek out the films made by the H. P. Lovecraft Historical Society: "The Call of Cthulhu", "The Testimony of Randolph Carter", and THE WHISPERER IN DARKNESS.) [-mrl/ecl]

Released on video 23 July 2022. Rating: +high +1 (-4 to +4), or 6/10.

Film Credits: <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0264508/reference>

What others are saying: <https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/dagon>

**LORDS OF UNCREATION by Adrian Tchaikovsky** (copyright 2023, Orbit, 20 hours and 50 minutes, ASIN: B0BJ4DNK4J, narrated by Sophie Aldred) (audio book review by Joe Karpierz):

LORDS OF UNCREATION, the final installment of Adrian Tchaikovsky's The Final Architecture trilogy, is a perfect example of what Space Opera should be (at least in my mind). It has heroes and villains, aliens, space battles, political intrigue, and by this time, well developed characters that we know and care about. LORDS OF UNCREATION, for the most part, is a brilliant conclusion to The Final Architecture. It has its flaws, certainly, but the overall story is well worth the time the reader needs to put into it. It's the longest of the three novels in the series, and once it gets going (we'll get to that) it gets to the end before you know it.

It's at this point I'm tempted to summarize what has happened up to this point (just as with serialized TV shows: "Previously, in The Final Architecture"), but that would make this review way too long. But to get us started, the Architects, those moon sized creatures that drop out of unspace and turn whole planets into flower like constructs, have returned. Back at the beginning of this, we learned that the intermediary Idris Telemmier was able to turn back the Architects at Berlinhoff (having listened to all three of these novels, I hope that spelling is correct). Idris has tried to turn them back again, but has failed. But via a construct called the Eye, an Artifact of the Originators, Idris has learned that the Architects are just pawns, doing the bidding of their Masters--whoever they may be.

So, I guess I did summarize, just a little bit. But there's just a little bit more. You see, there's a war going on amongst the various political factions of the citizens of the galaxy, and in the case of the Parthenon, there's a rebellion \*within\* their own government. While everyone wants to see an end to the conflict with the Architects--and whatever is driving them--they can't seem to put aside their petty differences for just a little while to concentrate on the one thing that does matter. What does matter, at least to most of the races that are affected by the Architects, is that the Architects should be destroyed. Genocide or not, the Architects must be vanquished and utterly obliterated.

Idris, on the other hand, thinks that is not only a waste, but it's wrong. The Architects are not working under their own free will--they are being directed to destroy intelligent races in normal space. He believes that the proper thing to do, the proper response to handling the Architects, is to go after their Master, a mysterious presence that resides deep within unspace, down near the center of all things.

I mentioned earlier that it takes some time for the story to get moving. There is a lot of political maneuvering, a lot of talking, a lot of planning, a lot of, well, everything but movement on the story. The early part of the novel drags a bit, while all the players that will eventually contribute to the climax of the story get themselves all sorted out. But once things get sorted and the action gets going, things are pretty much non-stop for the most of the rest of the novel. Space battles between the Architects and those in normal space, the discovery of the "birthplace" of the Architects, and the encounter with that mysterious presence, are all just part of the non-stop action that occurs. The story does move at a breakneck pace, and the end is reached before you know it.

For the reader who is into characters as well as plot and action, well, there's something here for them too. A bond grows between Solace and Idris, an unlikely couple, and that bond is strong and important. The symbolism of the strength of their bond is obvious as they work together to get to the mysterious presence at the center of unspace. Olli, who has been involved since the very beginning, becomes an important and sympathetic character as the story reaches its climax. The list goes on, but you get the idea.

And what can I say about the narration provided by Sophie Aldred. Before I started listening to the trilogy, my only knowledge of Aldred was as Ace, the companion to Sylvester McCoy's Doctor in the last couple of seasons of Classic Doctor Who. I was originally dubious about Aldred narrating a story like this, but now I would happily listen to her narration any time. LORDS OF UNCREATION is a fitting conclusion to The Final Architecture trilogy, which is itself a beautiful example of what Space Opera should be. Any lover of that sub-genre of science fiction will appreciate what Tchaikovsky has written. Here's hoping there's more to come. [jak]

---

**THE BIG SLEEP** (letter of comment by Kip Williams):

In response to [Evelyn's comments on THE BIG SLEEP](#) in the 08/25/23 issue of the MT VOID, Kip Williams writes:

Who killed Owen? I solved it.

<https://kipwblog.blogspot.com/2020/07/solving-unsolved-murder-in-chandlers.html>

[-kw]

---

**TRAVELLING SALESMAN** (letter of comment by Paul Dormer):

In response to [Evelyn's comments on TRAVELLING SALESMAN](#) in the 09/08/23 issue of the MT VOID, Paul Dormer (of the UK) writes:

"Evelyn wrote,] "\* Yes, a double 'l' and no definite article."

Well, that's the correct way to spell "travelling" according to my dictionary. :) [-pd]

---

**This Week's Reading** (book comments by Evelyn C. Leeper):

MAKING HISTORY: THE STORYTELLERS WHO SHAPED THE PAST by Richard Cohen (Simon and Schuster, ISBN 978-1-982-19578-6) is 750 pages and covers historians (and others) from Herodotus and Thucydides through Henry Louis Gates, Jr. (The "others" include writers of historical fiction, or even then-contemporary fiction such as Jane Austen's novels that gives future readers a look into what a historical period was like.)

I will admit to skimming or even skipping some chapters. I don't know enough about medieval history to make sense of the medieval historians. And even Cohen doesn't do much with non-Western history. Yes, there's a chapter on "The Muslim View of History", but nothing on Chinese historians, or African historians, or South American historians.

Even within those limitations, Cohen seems inexplicably selective. I'm not sure how he is defining "historian" but I find it odd that Will Durant gets only three entries in the index, none of which are discussions of his massive eleven-volume world history.

The book is primarily chronological, with occasional topical chapters. One chapter is "History from the Inside" (Julius Caesar, Napoleon, and Ulysses S. Grant) even though many of the other historians, particularly ancient ones) were present at many of the events they described.

I personally found the early chapters very interesting, probably because I'm interested in Roman history. (And obviously, the Gibbon chapter as well, though he shared it with Voltaire, who did \*not\* interest me.) The chapter on the Bible took a different approach than one usually sees, as did the Shakespeare one. (Cohen is at least somewhat of a Ricardian.)

The chapter on the Civil War historians (and the partial chapter on Ulysses S. Grant) are of course worth reading, though Edmund Wilson's PATRIOTIC GORE (mentioned as a reference) is clearly a must-read for that period. (See my review from the 07/23/2004 MT VOID at <http://lepers.us/evelyn/wilson.htm/gore>.)

If you're a historian, maybe all the chapters would be of interest. (On the other hand, don't historians usually concentrate on a single era, or geographical area?) For most readers, my recommendation is to read the chapters that interest you and just skip the rest. Doing this, I found the book quite enthralling. [-ecl]

---

Mark Leeper  
mleeper@optonline.net

Quote of the Week:

Suits are corporate cosplay.

--Terry Frost

Go to [our home page](#) THE MT VOID