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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).

### Passover Video:

Karen Silverstein's fourteen-minute video about gefilte fish ("A documentary about an endangered species":

<https://vimeo.com/261016424>

### Mini Reviews, Part 23 (film reviews by Mark R. Leeper and Evelyn C. Leeper):

This is the twenty-third batch of mini-reviews, all films of the fantastic.

THE GOLEM, AND HOW HE WAS MADE (DER GOLEM, WIE ER IN DIE WELT KAM) (1920): THE GOLEM, AND HOW HE WAS MADE is considered the definitive "Golem" film, by Paul Wegener and Henrik Galeen has made major changes to the original legend. For starters, the life-giving power comes from Astaroth, not God. It consist of an amulet on the golem's chest, not the word "emet" on its forehead. Astrology is also involved. And they added a love story, between Rabbi Loew's daughter and Prince Florian (shades of Shakespeare's "Merchant of Venice"!)." [-ecl]

Released 29 October 1920 [United States 19 June 1921]. Available on Kanopy, Internet Archive (archive.org), and other sites.

Film Credits: <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0011237/reference>

What others are saying: [https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/golem\\_1920](https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/golem_1920)

THE HALFWAY HOUSE (1944): THE HALFWAY HOUSE bears a certain resemblance to DEAD OF NIGHT--or perhaps more accurately, DEAD OF NIGHT bears a certain resemblance to THE HALFWAY HOUSE, since THE HALFWAY HOUSE came out a year before DEAD OF NIGHT. In both cases, a group of people gathers, or is gathered, at an inn in rural Wales. Each has their own story, just as in DEAD OF NIGHT, and there is also a supernatural element, but unlike DEAD OF NIGHT the supernatural element is for the framing sequence, not the individual stories. As such this is perhaps less engaging than DEAD OF NIGHT: the individual stories are rather mundane and common: no time-traveling mirrors, ghostly golfers, or malevolent dummies here. Still, it is an excellent example of wartime Ealing filmmaking. [-ecl]

Released 2 April 1944. Available at Internet Archive (archive.org).

Film Credits: <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0035962/reference>

What others are saying: [https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/the\\_halfway\\_house\\_1944](https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/the_halfway_house_1944)

MYSTERIOUS ISLAND (2005): The 2005 TV version of MYSTERIOUS ISLAND is based more on the 1961 Ray Harryhausen film than on the Jules Verne novel, though it diverges quite abit from either. Harryhausen came up with the idea of giant animals on the island (or more probably, producer Charles Schneer). This version keeps that idea, although it attempts to do some technobabble to explain it. It also follows the 1961 version by making sure that there are some women in the cast (following what Carl Denham said: " ... the public, bless "em, must have a pretty face.").

It diverges from both the book and the earlier movie by introducing Captain Nemo almost at the very beginning, having a lot more interaction with the pirates, and introducing a racist Confederate so that everyone else can criticize him whenever he says something racist.

When I was about ten or eleven, I found a copy of the Scribner's edition of THE MYSTERIOUS ISLAND in the house and literally read it almost to pieces. (Yes, literally--the cover were attached only by shreds of the cloth that covered the binding.) Newer editions may have a more accurate translation, but that to me is the canonical version. I accept the Harryhausen film on its own, though not as a true adaptation, and the other versions basically fail for me. (We won't even talk about the 1929 version, especially the "duck-men".) [-ecl]

Released 17 September 2005.

Film Credits: <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0448965/reference>

### Supermarket Offers Supermarket Offers (letters of comment by Gary McGath, Scott Dorsey, and Keith F. Lynch):

In response to [Evelyn's comments on supermarket coupons and offers](#) in the 04/12/24 issue of the MT VOID, Gary McGath writes:

[Evelyn writes.] "The free holiday entree (Easter ham or turkey, kosher chicken, etc.) now requires \$400 of purchases in the four weeks preceding Easter, which is normally the four weeks preceding Passover. Not this year. So if you want the kosher chicken, you have to spend \$400 even before they have put out the Passover food (which definitely boosted your spending). The one bright point is they will let people redeem their points for the kosher chicken until Passover, even though the usual deadline is Easter. (This part is not the supermarket's fault; blame Pope Gregory XIII.)" [-ecl]

The Greek Orthodox church has an extra rule that Easter must come after Passover. [-gmg]

Scott Dorsey asks:

What if I want both options so I can cook the kosher chicken with the Easter ham inside? [-sd]

Keith F. Lynch replies:

Sorry, but that isn't halal. Especially not during Ramadan. [-kfl]

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

I recently read a column by Natalia Sylvester about translation entitled "Some Words Feel Truer in Spanish":

[https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/13/opinion/first-generation-bilingual-language.html?unlocked\\_article\\_code=1.IU0.ZAdo.d17yFnT3IKmi&smid=url-share](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/13/opinion/first-generation-bilingual-language.html?unlocked_article_code=1.IU0.ZAdo.d17yFnT3IKmi&smid=url-share)

One of the observations Sylvester made was, "Was there really no differentiating in Spanish between the fingers (dedos) on our hands, and those on our feet we call toes?"

Which reminded me of my own observations on trying to translate (well, one of my observations--it is a favorite topic of mine):

Leopoldo Lugones's "Yzur" is considered by some a forerunner (though not a precursor) to Edger Rice Burroughs's "Tarzan" books. And this story is a perfect example of the pitfalls or problems of translation. Gilbert Alter-Gilbert's translation says, "I bought the ape at an auction of property," but then switches to "the lack of articulate language in monkeys," "monkeys once were men," and other references to monkeys, until he gets to "the chimpanzee (which is what Yzur was)." My first reaction is that Lugones doesn't seem to know the difference between monkeys (tails) and apes (no tails), chimpanzees being apes. But then I pause, and check, and in Spanish both "ape" and "monkey" are called "mono". (When you get down to the species level, there \*are\* separate words for "chimpanzee", "orangutan", and "gibbon".) When I check the Spanish, Lugones has used "mono" and "chimpancé". Alter-Gilbert, however, has decided to translate "mono" first as "ape" and then as "monkey", even though the latter is basically incorrect in English. My feeling is that he should have translated "mono" as "ape" throughout, since I believe that Lugones was referring primarily to apes, not monkeys, though "primate" would be an acceptable substitute (albeit more scientific than literary).

Luis Borges's article "El oficio de traducir" sums up a lot of the problems of translation. When translating poetry, he says, word choice and word order are very important, so literalness would seem to be the goal. Yet "Buenas noches" should not be translated As "Good nights," and "Good morning" is not "Buena(s) mañana(s)." Germanic languages have compound words, while Latinate languages do not (except as neologisms). So Shakespeare's "world-weary flesh" becomes "carne cansada del mundo"--not the same at all(\*). Similarly, the Spanish "sentadita" has no real English equivalent, which seems to be a combination of "seated" and "abandoned", sort of like a girl brought to a dance and then left sitting on the sidelines the whole time.

(\* So I guess my coining of "tecnoparleo" to be the Spanish for "technobabble" is probably inaccurate. :-)

And in writing about translations of Chaucer, Borges observes that various translators of "The Pardoner's Tale" into Spanish have chosen many different words or phrases for the title character: perdonador, bulero, buldero, vendedor de indulgencias, mercader de perdones, echacuervos.

And as I have before, I recommend IS THAT A FISH IN YOUR EAR?: TRANSLATION AND THE MEANING OF EVERYTHING by David Bellos, as a good (non-academic) book on the subject. [-ecl]

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### Quote of the Week:

The only normal people are the ones you don't know very well.  
--Joe Ancis