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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.

Star Trek Movies (film reviews by Mark R. Leeper):

This month is the 40th anniversary of STAR TREK III: THE SEARCH FOR SPOCK, the 35th anniversary of STAR TREK V: THE FINAL FRONTIER, and the 15th anniversary of STAR TREK (the 2009 reboot). So here's a comparison of excerpts from Mark's reviews when each of the three of them came out.]

STAR TREK III: THE SEARCH FOR SPOCK: No other science fiction series ever succeeded in providing ideas, action, and drama as often as STAR TREK. Up to the present, neither have the "Star Trek" films. STAR TREK III by far comes the closest of the three to what made a good episode of the TV series. Leonard Nimoy's direction start a little maudlin and hammy, but soon takes on a darker tone. In retrospect, it seems like there was not a lot of plot for the screen time, but the tale never drags and the characters are interesting and empathetic. At this point, it was no small feat to make Kirk once again a sympathetic character. In the previous two films he seemed a pompous incompetent whose correct decisions never seemed to compensate for his blunders. Welcome back, STAR TREK.

STAR TREK V: THE FINAL FRONTIER: This is the most flawed of the Star Trek movies. But it also has the courage to say something controversial and for once something that is not pat. For reasons I cannot say here without spoiling plot, I see this as a film of subversive ideas. For that reason I have surprised myself by liking the film a lot. Rating: +2 (-4 to +4). STAR TREK (2009): The new film STAR TREK (the title is just the two words) is J. J. Abrams's restart of the "Star Trek" series. While nobody is going to give it any awards for great new ideas, it does tell a good action-filled adventure story and makes a prequel and origin to the original TV series that is almost consistent. The viewer does see and hear the 1966 characters in their younger incarnations--no small feat for the filmmakers. One almost wants to go back and watch the original series to see what happens next. A new fan of the series--and there are more that I would have expected--can enjoy STAR TREK, but a veteran "Trek" devotee will get a lot more out of it. I rate the new movie a +2 on the -4 to +4 scale or 7/10.

[-mrl]

BOYTON BEACH CLUB (film review by Art Stadlin):

[A discussion of The Villages and other retirement communities in Florida on our retirees' mailing list prompted this review. -ecf]

Okay, I watched this one over the weekend. Married couples retire and move to paradise to live out their golden years in an active community with lots of activities. This could be Boynton Beach, The Villages, Del Boca Vista, or hundreds of senior communities in Florida (or elsewhere).

In the world of aging, eventually men and women lose a spouse and find themselves alone in paradise, grieving. And this is the central theme of BOYNTON BEACH CLUB: losing a spouse, joining others to grieve with in weekly meetings, and searching for a path forward. In this movie, that path forward means finding a new love interest.

So how does a faithful, loving husband or wife move forward after losing his/her spouse to cancer after a 45-year marriage? As you might imagine, there are many awkward moments. Also touching moments.

This movie follows a few residents, each very different in how they grieve and how they move forward. In that way, this movie is a kind of two-hour soap opera. I wouldn't be surprised to see this played on a Sunday afternoon on mainstream TV. No nudity, no foul language, no violence any worse than THE WIZARD OF OZ.

If you were hoping to be entertained by some of the politics of HOAs, this is not the movie.

I watched it on Peacock, with my lower cost subscription that contains ads. For me, Peacock showed several ads before starting the feature. Then somewhere in the middle was another batch of ads (which was enough time for a bio break). Otherwise, uninterrupted.

Now playing free or with subscription on Peacock, Tubi, Roku Channel, Pluto, Prime Video, Hoopla. [-as]

[Mark's review of SOME KIND OF HEAVEN, about The Villages, ran in the 04/02/21 issue of the MT VOID and can be found at <http://leepers.us/somekind.htm>.]

Ted Chiang Wins 2024 PEN/Bernard and Ann Malamud Award:

"The PEN/Faulkner Foundation announces that Ted Chiang has been selected as the winner of the 2024 PEN/Bernard and Ann Malamud Award for Excellence in the Short Story. Given since 1988 in honor of the late Bernard Malamud, the award recognizes writers who have demonstrated exceptional achievement in the short story form."

Full story at:

Smaug's Net Worth:

In an article updated on 04/09/24, Forbes's 2011 calculation of Smaug's net worth is discussed:

<https://www.cbr.com/lord-of-rings-smaug-net-worth-explained/>

"A Subway Named Mobius" (letter of comment by Someone.Else):

In response to [Evelyn's comments on the film MOBIUS](#) in the 06/14/24 issue of the MT VOID, "Someone.Else" writes:

Evelyn wrote, "The story is, of course, 'A Subway Named Mobius' by A. J. Deutsch. This may have achieved its greatest fame when it was included in Martin Gardner's FANTASIA MATHEMATICA." [-ecf]

An understandable mistake, but FANTASIA MATHEMATICAL and THE MATHEMATICAL MAGPIE were both edited by Clifton Fadiman. [-se]

Evelyn responds:

And as proof that I'm not paying attention, I originally read this as saying I had named the wrong book, went to the shelf to check, and looked under Martin Gardner to try to find it! [-ecf]

Split Infinitives (letter of comment by Peter Rubinstein):

In response to [various comments on word use and mis-use](#) in the 06/14/24 issue of the MT VOID, Peter Rubinstein writes:

Jim Susky wrote, "Sometime last century I read a New Year's review in which certain non-standard (mis-) usages were cited. One I remember--to NOT use "impact" as a verb."

And Evelyn wrote, "'Namesake' is another tricky one. It originally meant someone named after someone else, but now seems to also mean the reverse.

When I was a child, it was verboten to split an infinitive. When I consider the matter now, it seems clearer in many cases to go ahead and split them. [-pir]

And Evelyn adds:

Apologies to Jim Susky for misspelling his name in the last issue. [-ecf]

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

Recently our book and movie group watched INCEPTION and read "The Circular Ruins" by Jorge Luis Borges to accompany it. (No, INCEPTION was not based on "The Circular Ruins".) What I (re-)discovered is that not all translations are created equal.

The Original:

Lo cierto es que el hombre gris besó el fango, repechó la ribera sin apartar (probablemente, sin sentir) las cortaderas que le dilaceraban las carnes y se arrastró, mareado y ensangrentado, hasta el recinto circular que corona un tigre o caballo de piedra, que tuvo alguna vez el color del fuego y ahora el de la ceniza.

FICCIONES (Anthony Bonner, 1956, 1962):

What is certain is that the gray man kissed the mud, climbed up the bank without pushing aside (probably, without feeling) the blades which were lacerating his flesh, and crawled, nauseated and bloodstained, up to the circular enclosure crowned with a stone tiger or horse, which sometimes was the color of flames and now was that of ashes.

LABYRINTHS (James E. Irby, 1962, 1964):

The truth is that the obscure man kissed the mud, came up the bank without pushing aside (probably without feeling) the brambles which dilacerated his flesh, and dragged himself, nauseous and bloodstained, to the circular enclosure crowned by a tiger or horse, which once was the color of fire and now was that of ashes.

THE ALEPH AND OTHER STORIES 1933-1969 (Norman Thomas di Giovanni, Jorge Luis Borges, 1970)

The fact is that the gray man pressed his lips to the mud, scrambled up the bank without parting (perhaps without feeling) the brushy thorns that tore his flesh, and dragged himself, faint and bloody, to the circular opening attached over by a stone tiger, or horse, which once was the color of fire and is now the color of ash.

A PERSONAL ANTHOLOGY (Anthony Kerrigan, 1967):

The certain fact is that the anonymous gray man kissed the mud, scaled the bank without pushing aside (probably without even feeling) the sharp-edged sedges lacerating his flesh, and dragged himself, bloody and sickened, up to the circular enclosure whose crown is a stone colt or tiger, formerly the color of fire and now the color of ash.

COLLECTED STORIES (Andrew Hurley, 1998):

But in fact the gray man had kissed the mud, scrambled up the steep bank (without pushing back, probably without even feeling, the sharp-leaved bulrushes that slashed his flesh), and dragged himself, faint and bloody, to the circular enclosure, crowned by the stone figure of a horse or tiger, which had once been the color but was now the color of ashes.

Unnamed translator (from the Internet, probably later than all the above):

What is certain is that the grey man kissed the mud, climbed up the bank with pushing aside (probably, without feeling) the blades which were lacerating his flesh, and crawled, nauseated and bloodstained, up to the circular enclosure crowned with a stone tiger or horse, which sometimes was the color of flame and now was that of ashes.

Kerrigan is the most "variant", reversing the order of two pairs ("mareado y ensangrentado" and "un tigre o caballo de piedra"), and also makes "caballo" a colt rather than a horse. ("Colt" in Spanish is "potro").

"Cortadera" is a word (and possibly a plant) specific to Argentina, Chile, Cuba, and Peru, and Kerrigan's "sedge" is probably too specific, as is Hurley's "bulrushes". "Sedge" is usually translated as "juncia" in Spanish, and "bulrush" as "espadaña".

I have previously commented on the four Kerrigan translation (The Babylonian Lottery) in my column in the 06/10/2016 issue of the MT VOID, and concluded that of the another translations of that story I read, his was the worst. The original said, "Una jugada feliz podía motivar su elevación al concilio de magos o la prisión de un enemigo (notorio o íntimo)...." Kerrigan translates this as "A happy drawing might motivate his elevation to the council of wizards or his condemnation to the custody of an enemy (notorious or intimate)...." This is clearly better translated as "A happy drawing might cause his elevation to the council of mages or the imprisonment of an enemy (notorious or intimate)...." All the other translators get it right. This story makes me conclude that none of his translations should be trusted.

Also, everyone translates "unánime noche" as "unanimous night" except for Norman Thomas di Giovanni in collaboration with Jorge Luis Borges, who translates it "encompassing night." one could argue that this is therefore the accurate translation, and all the others are misled by a false cognate. It has been suggested that "unanime" is supposed to also suggest "un-animated", i.e., not alive, i.e., in a dream.

I have no idea where Irby found the word "dilacerated".

As noted, I had previously written about translations of Borges. What I referred to above as "The Babylonian Lottery" is in the original Spanish "La lotería en Babilonia", but is variously translated "The Lottery in Babylon", "The Lottery of Babylon", "The Babylon Lottery", and possibly other variations. One can argue these are differences without distinctions, but they do indicate *something*. [-ecf]

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Quote of the Week:

All models are wrong but some are useful.
--George Box

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