

MT VOID 03/04/22 -- Vol. 40, No. 36, Whole Number 2213



Mt. Holz Science Fiction Society
03/04/22 -- Vol. 40, No. 36, Whole Number 2213

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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.

Mini Reviews, Part 10 (film reviews by Mark R. Leeper and Evelyn C. Leeper):

Here is the tenth batch of mini-reviews, all films of the fantastic.

LAST NIGHT IN SOHO: LAST NIGHT IN SOHO looks back at the 1960s through the dreams--often nightmares--of Ellie, a would-be fashion designer (played by Thomasin McKenzie), in the present-day. The extensive use of 1960s songs gives even the present it a 1960s atmosphere; luckily the use of filters and different film stock helps fix the time periods of the various scenes. Kudos to the set designer for the 1960s look. Ellie dreams about Sandie, a would-be singer in the 1960s (played by Anya Taylor-Joy); Sandie can see multiple possible futures for herself; most have a downside. (Ellie's dreams back to the 1960s give this a "Midnight in Paris" vibe.) LAST NIGHT IN SOHO also features Diana Rigg in her last film role, as well as Terence Stamp and Rita Tushingham in supporting roles. This is a surprising film with enough ideas for two films.

Released theatrically 10/29/21. Rating: +3 (-4 to +4), or 9/10.

Film Credits: <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt9639470/reference>

What others are saying: https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/last_night_in_soho

TITANE: TITANE is a film of "body horror", reminding one of much of David Cronenberg's works, but particularly VIDEODROME. Alexia (played by Agatha Rousselle) has to take great pains to disguise herself beyond what the viewer would expect, as the film examines not just questions of prosthetics and human-machine interactions, but also of gender as well. This is one of the more original fugitive stories. After seeing it, I said that it seemed ideal for the "Midnight Madness" track of the Toronto International Film Festival; upon checking, I discovered it was the closing film in that track this year. That position is something of an honor.

Released theatrically 10/01/21; available on Amazon Prime. Rating: +1 (-4 to 4) or 6/10.

Film Credits: <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt10944760/reference>

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

LITTLE FISH: LITTLE FISH is a near-future science fiction story about a memory loss virus. However, the societal implications are only somewhat touched on: Emma, the narrator, talks about a man who forgot how to steer his boat, and a pilot that forgot how to fly, and "the woman in the marathon who forgot to stop running." (That last one seems like a totally different sort of forgetting that anything else in the film.) We also see more dogs in the pound where Emma works, apparently because more people forget to close their gates. People start to get "memory tattoos", with names, or phone numbers, or addresses. (They cannot just write themselves notes, because they don't remember to look at a notebook in their pocket, or as Jude asks, "How am I going to know I forgot?") There are also obvious parallels on the international level to COVID-19 situation. But the film is primarily a story of a couple, one of whom is starting to show symptoms of the virus. The wife Emma (played by Olivia Cooke) is a veterinarian; the husband Jude (played by Jack O'Connell) is a photographer (ironic, given that the virus wipes out the sorts of memories he makes permanent in his occupation). This has echoes of MEMENTO and of a science fiction story in which there are the equivalent of memory tattoos. (The title may refer to Dora in FINDING NEMO, or possibly to the speech about goldfish's memory in HEAR MY SONG.)

Released theatrically 02/05/21; available on DVD and various streaming services. Rating: +2 (-4 to +4), or 7/10.

Film Credits: <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt9735470/reference>

What others are saying: https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/little_fish_2021

[-mrl/ecl]

MRS. HENDERSON PRESENTS (letter of comment by Paul Dormer):

In response to [Evelyn's comments on MRS. HENDERSON PRESENTS](#) in the 02/25/22 issue of the MT VOID, Paul Dormer writes:

Amusing fact. About the time [MRS. HENDERSON PRESENTS] came out, I went on holiday to Munich. The German title was "Lady Henderson prasentiert" not Frau Henderson which would be how I'd translate it (not that I have much German). [-pd]

FLORENCE FOSTER JENKINS (letter of comment by Sam Long):

In response to [Evelyn's comments on FLORENCE FOSTER JENKINS](#) in the 02/25/22 issue of the MT VOID, Sam Long writes:

Ref. the mention of the film FLORENCE FOSTER JENKINS...my wife and I enjoyed the film very much: she's trained as an opera singer, and I'm into music too; we both knew the "music" of FFJ from decades ago. The film was on locally here, so we went to see it. We were the only people in the theater for that showing--which was fine: we could laugh and talk without bothering anyone else. As always, Meryl was first-class...and so were the other actors, especially Simon Helberg, the guy who played Cosme McMoon, Florence's accompanist, and Hugh Grant, who played Florence's husband. [-sl]

THE STRANGE CASE OF DR JEKYLL AND MR HYDE (letters of comment by Gary McGath, Dorothy J. Heydt, and Peter Trei):

In response to [Mark's comments on THE STRANGE CASE OF DR JEKYLL AND MR HYDE](#) in the 02/25/22 issue of the MT VOID, Gary McGath writes:

I like the 1920 version. John Barrymore did the transformation without makeup and without a cut, using just facial expressions and body language.

In the original story, the identity of Jekyll and Hyde was the shock ending. I don't think any movie has ever done it that way. Today it would fail to surprise anyone. [-gmg]

Dorothy J. Heydt disputes:

Without makeup or a cut on his face. There's both on the closeup of his hand. Hardly necessary. [-djh]

Peter Trei adds:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B8i0U3nUi8E>

[-pt]

THE DISPOSSESSED and First Person Pronouns (letter of comment by Jim Susky):

In response to [Evelyn's comments on THE DISPOSSESSED](#) in the 02/25/22 issue of the MT VOID, Jim Susky writes:

In MT VOID on Friday Evelyn commented on LeGuin's THE DISPOSSESSED, (which I gather builds on her THE LEFT HAND OF

DARKNESS??). Evelyn surmised:

"why would Pravic--an invented language--even have the words "my", "mine", and so on?"

René Descartes was not covered in the survey philosophy courses I took for fun and credit (and blessed relief from STEM courses). I regret that my own poor self-education also neglected Monsieur Descartes' writing. Still, it seems that first-person pronouns (and possessive ones) would be fundamental for sentient beings.

Lest this seem too serious, I recall that in 2016 my mother's alma mater (mid-50s grad school)--the University of Michigan called for students to (optionally) login to "Wolverine Access" and state his/her/their/_____ preferred pronoun.

Such pronouns were to be printed on class rosters and used by lecturers.

Grant Strobl "made the news" when he entered his preference as "His Majesty". A little reflection shows this to be ungrammatical--surely, in a classroom setting that should be the second-person *Your* Majesty?

By now, with endless usages, I am no longer confused about it, but synapses involuntarily fire when I see plural pronouns written and spoken with singular subjects (objects?)--which is to say, that sort of ungrammatical use abounds in 2022. [-js]

Evelyn responds:

Other than both taking place in LeGuin's Hainish universe, there is no connection between THE LEFT HAND OF DARKNESS and THE DISPOSSESSED.

There is ample historical evidence for the use of the "plural" pronouns as indefinite singulars (e.g., Jane Austen). For that matter, "you" used to refer to only the plural, and "thee" and "thou" were the singular. There was also a ruckus over the change to "you" as a singular.

And while generations of English teachers insisted (and maybe still insist, AFAIK) that "everyone" et al are singular and hence should take singular pronouns, I doubt that any of that impressive assemblage would accept the correctness of the sentence "Everyone I knew was there, and he had a good time." [-ecl]

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

Paraphrasing Chris Isaak's song, I did a bad, bad thing. Well, not *that* bad. by most standards.

About this time each year (at least B.C.), I would write about my forays to various annual book sales. But we are trying to downsize, albeit slowly. So for example, if I went to Philcon (back in the days when I went to Philcon) with four bags to sell at the bookstore and two bags for the freebie table, and came back with only three bags of books *from* the freebie table, that was a win.

Other than Second Time Books (which I use to visit three times a year, but have been only once in the last two years), there are no decent used bookstores around here, so my buying was/is limited to library sales (ongoing and annual) and the annual Bryn Mawr book sale. But of course, none of my libraries has had annual sales for two years, and even the on-going sales were closed most of the time.

Well, after no annual sales for two years, the Old Bridge Friends of the Library decided they needed to clear out a lot of books and DVDs. So they set up a \$5-a-bag sale, with full-sized paper grocery bags. And, yes, it even included DVDs.

I needed to go in to pick up a book for our discussion group, and saw this. So, okay, I went a little crazy. I filled a bag with books and when I brought it to the desk, I asked, "The sale doesn't include DVDs, does it?" (because you can put a *lot* of DVDs in a bag). The librarian said that it included everything, DVDs and CDs as well as books. So what could I do? I went back and filled a bag with DVDs.

In the end, for \$10 I got 25 books (including two coffee table books of space photography and a batch of Spanish-language classics for my niece), and 47 DVDs (including three slipcased sets, so call it a round 50). I knew we already had a half-dozen or so of the DVDs, but they seemed like ones I could re-sell.

The good news of all this is I may have satisfied my craving for going to the Bryn Mawr book sale and/or Second Time Books, at least for a while.

[After I wrote that I went back to the library to return some books I had borrowed, and got another bag of DVDs. The librarian was embarrassingly grateful for my taking them, wanted to make sure I had filled the bag to the top, and said they'd be putting out more soon.]

[-ecl]

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Quote of the Week:

All our lives we are putting pennies--our most golden pennies--into penny-in-the-slot machines that are almost always empty.

--Logan Pearsall Smith

Tweet

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