

MT VOID 11/04/22 -- Vol. 41, No. 19, Whole Number 2248

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Changing Terminology (comments by Evelyn C. Leeper):

When Ray Bradbury wrote FAHRENHEIT 451 in 1953, he could use the ambiguity of "fireman" to startle the reader. Now that the term is "firefighter", either one would seem antiquated in using the word "fireman" or one couldn't use the current term ambiguously (although I suppose a "freedom fighter" is someone who fights for freedom, not someone who fights against freedom). [-ecl]

Mini Reviews, Part 2 (film reviews by Mark R. Leeper and Evelyn C. Leeper)

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

JURASSIC WORLD--DOMINION: Before the start of JURASSIC WORLD--DOMINION, the dinosaurs (and mosasaurs, and pterodactyls and probably other non-dinosaur animals) were rescued from Isla Nublar and taken to a mainland refuge. However, they escaped and spread throughout the world.

It is surprising that so many of the characters from the first chapter are still around to show up to this reunion, and also that the old good guys turn into new good guys. (But why is she always *Doctor* Ellie Sattler, and he is just plain Alan Grant?) The plot manages to allow for some exotic international locations, sort of like a James Bond film. And at least one scene had us saying, "We haven't seen anything like this since VALLEY OF GWANGLI."

But the multiple locations contribute to making the plot a little hard to follow, and the film longer than it really needs to be. The reuniting of the original cast, and the really bad Hollywood touch at the end, would seem to indicate that this is the conclusion if the series. (And the final silhouette sequence, while poetic, raises more issues than it resolves. For starters, if currently existing species are endangered by habitat loss, wouldn't adding more species effectively occupying the same ecological niche just make it worse?)

Hey, it's got giant dinosaurs and all, so it's not a total waste of time, but it is basically relying on that to carry the entire film.

Released theatrically 10 June 2022. Rating: high +1 (-4 to +4), or 6/10

Film Credits: <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt8041270/reference>

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

THE LOST CITY: THE LOST CITY starts with a "bodice ripper" sequence, which turns out to be an imagining of the main character's latest novel. Yes, the is an adventure comedy in the Very intentional tradition of ROMANCING THE STONE. For starters, the book tour promoting the book is called "Romancing the Page". While it never quite reaches the level of ROMANCING THE STONE (Channing Tatum is no Michael Douglas, and the presence of Daniel Radcliffe does not make up for the absence of Danny DeVito), it is an enjoyable enough way to pass an evening.

Released theatrically: 25 March 2022. Rating: +1 (-4 to +4) or 6/10.

Film Credits: <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt13320622/reference>

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

CRIMES OF THE FUTURE: CRIMES OF THE FUTURE is David Cronenberg's return to science fiction after a twenty-three year hiatus (EXISTENZ was in 1999). This is not to be confused with Cronenberg's 1970 film of the same name, which had an entirely different plot. Cronenberg either kept some of the props from EXISTENZ, or used the same prop master. (Cronenberg likes to work with the same people: this is his fifth film with Viggo Mortensen and his fourth with Don McKellar.) Cronenberg has returned to his favorite science fiction trope: body horror. But this one gets more into the philosophy of body modification. Still, some of the images may be a bit intense for some people, so be warned.

Released theatrically 3 June 2022. Rating: +1 (-4 to +4), or 6/10.

Film Credits: <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt14549466/reference>

What others are saying: https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/crimes_of_the_future_2022

[-mrl/ecl]

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

I recently wrote about THE PRIME OF MISS JEAN BRODIE, both the book by Muriel Spark and the 1969 film with Maggie Smith. But there is also a 1978 mini-series from Scottish Television, which I just got on VD, and it provides yet a third version of the story. For example, in the book it is Jean Brodie's politics that bring about her downfall, in the 1969 film, it is her morals, and in the 1978 mini-series, there is no downfall.

In fact, while the 1978 version has its own virtues (more background, more time with the girls, and so on), it really softens and whitewashes Jean Brodie's character. She is not the "Mussolini of Marcia Blaine", she doesn't inspire anyone to go off and get killed for the wrong side in a war, and indeed when presented with opposing views (on Mussolini, on advanced schooling for girls whose families cannot afford it, etc.), she is amenable to changing her opinion.

Perhaps because this was made for television, rather than the theaters, there is in fact almost nothing of the questions of morality. Jean Brodie seems true to the memory of Hugh, refuses Teddy Lloyd's advances, and the music teacher is nothing like the Mr. Lowther of the film, and certainly no romantic interest for Jean Brodie.

Indeed, this version seems to want to rehabilitate Jean Brodie into a sympathetic and even admirable figure, rather than one who justifies Sandy's proclamation in the film, "You are dangerous and unwholesome, and children should not be exposed to you!" Part of this may be that the anti-establishment mood of the late 1960s had given way to a more conservative period (although still a year or so short of Margaret Thatcher's Prime Ministership). [-ecl]

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Quote of the Week:

I am a pupil, and need to be taught
(Inscription which PETER THE GREAT
always carried with him)

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