

# MT VOID 12/30/22 -- Vol. 41, No. 27, Whole Number 2256

©©©©© © @ ©©©©© © @ ©©©©©© © @ © ©©©©© ©©©©© ©©©© ©©©© ©©©  
© © © © © © © © © © © © © © © © © ©  
© ©©©©© ©©©© © © © © © © © © © © © © ©  
© © © © © © © © © © © © © © © © © © ©  
© © © ©©©©© © © © © © © ©©©© ©©©© ©©©

12/30/22 -- Vol. 41, No. 27, Whole Number 2256

---

## Table of Contents

[Problems Sending Last Week's MT VOID](#) (comments by Evelyn C. Leeper)  
[Science Fiction \(and Other\) Discussion Groups, Films, Lectures, etc. \(NJ\):](#)  
[My Picks for Turner Classic Movies for January](#) (comments by Mark R. Leeper and Evelyn C. Leeper)  
["Radium Age" Science Fiction](#) (comments by Evelyn C. Leeper)  
[CATHERINE CALLED BIRDY](#) (letter of comment by Gary McGath)  
[This Week's Reading](#) (THE BOOK OF NOTHING) (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: [evelynchimelisleeper@gmail.com](mailto:evelynchimelisleeper@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).

---

### **Problems Sending Last Week's MT VOID** (comments by Evelyn C. Leeper):

Last week, Yahoo decided to reject all the addresses on yahoo.com, as well as those on aol.com, verizon.net, ameritech.net, att.net, cs.com, outlook.com, and sfsnj.com (which I'm guessing go through yahoo.com as a gateway).

Strangely, we didn't get bounces on mail we sent out about the problem. I suspect that means that something \*in\* the MT VOID is the problem, but I don't know what. We eventually sent PDF version to those subscribers affected, and those were not rejected.

You can always pick the MT VOID up up as HTML from my web page <http://leepers.us/mtvoid/latest.htm> or <http://leepers.us/mtvoid/VOIDmddd.htm>, where "mddd" is the month and date. (If we see massive failures, we will try to get that up ASAP.)

Anyone who wants to switch to PDF, please let us know. [-ecl]

---

### **Science Fiction (and Other) Discussion Groups, Films, Lectures, etc. (NJ):**

Meetings are still fluctuating between in-person and Zoom. The best way to get the latest information is to be on the mailing lists for them.

January 5, 2023 (MTPL), 5:30PM: "To Serve Man" by Damon Knight and "Twilight Zone" episode thereof  
<https://tinyurl.com/HowToServeMan-Knight>  
Jan 5 TO SERVE MAN (1962): by Damon Knight  
Feb 2 ALPHAVILLE (1965) & "You'd Be Surprised"(a.k.a. "Don't Be

Surprised") by Peter Cheyney (not SF)  
<https://www.hoopladigital.com/title/14748408>  
<https://tinyurl.com/Cheyney-BeSurprised>  
<https://tinyurl.com/Cheyney-Complete-99c>

---

**My Picks for Turner Classic Movies for January** (comments by Mark R. Leeper and Evelyn C. Leeper):

If you want a nice, amiable, and really enjoyable comedy try *DESIGNING WOMAN* (1957). This was a film that one of the major studios launched to be played on national TV. But then the film was seemingly forgotten, which is why it had to be introduced to me twice.

At the time it was made there had been several popular comedies with Katherine Hepburn and Spencer Tracy. This film was probably written with them in mind, but the script was shot with Gregory Peck, and it suffered none at all by the substitution. Grace Kelly was originally cast as the female lead, but she had given up her acting career to marry the Prince of Monaco. She probably would have been a little too demure in the role anyway. Peck plays a newspaper sportswriter doing an expose on organized crime infiltrating the fight racket. Off in Florida to cover a golf tournament, he meets a fashion designer who is as different from him as seems possible. Yet opposites attract. Bacall becomes suspicious and obsessed with a woman out of Peck's past, but what she really should be concerned about are the gangsters ready to kill her husband. Adding to the confusion is Maxie Stultz, a punch-drunk prizefighter given to Peck as a bodyguard. Vincent Minelli directed the script by George Wells, who won an Academy Award for Best Screenplay. (It has lines like "Maxie Stultz sleeps with his eyes open"--well, you have to see it in the film to appreciate it.) If you see it, give my regards to Maxie Stultz. [-mrl/ec1]

[*DESIGNING WOMAN*, Sunday, January 15, 2:30PM]

---

**"Radium Age" Science Fiction** (comments by Evelyn C. Leeper):

"Our modern world can sometimes appear like a story out of science fiction—and yet the triumphs and failures we experience in current days were, surprisingly, oftentimes foretold by thinkers of the past. The MIT Press's new Radium Age series, under the guidance of editor Joshua Glenn, seeks to resurface these prescient stories by reissuing notable proto-science fiction from the underappreciated era between 1900 and 1935."

Read more at <https://mitpress.mit.edu/blog/introducing-radium-age/>.

Michael Dirda, book reviewer for the Washington Post, and unabashed science fiction fan, has reviewed four of these at:

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/books/2022/03/23/world-of-women/>

<https://tinyurl.com/dirda-clockwork-man>

<https://tinyurl.com/dirda-nodenholts-million>

<https://tinyurl.com/dirda-of-one-blood>

[-ecl]

---

**CATHERINE CALLED BIRDY** (letter of comment by Gary McGath):

In response to [Mark and Evelyn's review of CATHERINE CALLED BIRDY](#) in the 12/23/22 issue of the MT VOID, Gary McGath writes:

[re comments on the use of modern language in the film]

All I've seen of *CATHERINE CALLED BIRDY* is the trailer, so I can't comment knowledgeably on it, but I think modernized grammar is entirely acceptable and often preferable in portraying the Middle Ages. Getting it right is hard and is apt to confuse people. If the setting is before 1066, the Anglo-Saxon people spoke then is effectively a foreign language. "Translating" the dialogue into modern English avoids a lot of problems.

Avoiding modern word imagery is more important when trying to immerse the reader or viewer. A character in the trailer talks about a pox "going around." This feels like a modern way of thinking about a disease. Immersion seems to be the last thing the creators had in mind, so the anachronism may have been intentional. A serious treatment might talk about a pox "descending on" or "sweeping through" the area. [-gmg]

Evelyn notes:

The film takes place in 1290, so the language would be Middle English. [-ecl]

---

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

My first complaint about THE BOOK OF NOTHING: VACUUMS, VOIDS, AND THE LATEST IDEAS ABOUT THE ORIGINS OF THE UNIVERSE by John D. Barrow (Pantheon, ISBN 978-0-375-42099-3) is that \*someone\* decided to use a font that used "I" (the capital letter "I") to represent the digit "1" ("one"). Maybe they have secret crush on Roman numerals, but back in the day, when there were typewriters without a "1" digit in the top row, everyone used "l" (a lower-case "L") instead. (And we used "single-quote--backspace--period" for an exclamation point.)

And well before the current grammatical dispute about pronouns, Barrow manages to make a complete hash of \*all\* the rules. In discussing LifeSaver candy, Barrow writes, "Nobody seems to notice that they are buying a toroidal confection that contains a good chunk of empty space, but then he wouldn't." Traditionally, "nobody" is considered singular, so the "they" is theoretically incorrect. Later, Barrow switches to "he", changing from a genderless "plural" to a gendered singular pronoun. Clearly, Barrow wants to have his cake and eat it too. (And the rule about "nobody" being singular is part of a rule that says "no one", "everybody", and "everyone" being singular. But no one would say, "Everybody was at the party and he had a good time.")

I realize that neither of these address the substance of the book. Barrow begins with the concept of zero--or rather, the two concepts of zero. Zero served both as a place-holder in positional numerical notation, and as the result of such arithmetical operations as "3 minus 3". Barrow progresses to how zero implies infinity, and then moves on to the idea of nothing as a vacuum in space (not outer space, necessarily, but any section of space containing nothing).

At times philosophical, at times mathematical, at times scientific, it eventually got too abstruse for me to follow, but I would still recommend it. [-ecl]

---

Mark Leeper  
mleeper@optonline.net

Quote of the Week:

Would you convey my compliments to the purist who reads your proofs and tell him or her that I write in a sort of broken-down patois which is something like the way a Swiss waiter talks, and that when I split an infinitive, God damn it, I split it so it will stay split.

--Raymond Chandler  
(to Edward Weeks)

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