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Mini Reviews, Part 4 (film reviews by Mark R. Leeper and Evelyn C. Leeper):

Two mini-series:

WYATT EARP AND THE COWBOY WAR (2024): WYATT EARP AND THE COWBOY WAR is a Netflix mini-series that goes into far more detail than most viewers of TOMBSTONE or WYATT EARP will want, but if you're a hard-core Western fan who has watched all the films about the gunfight at the O.K. Corral (even the obscure ones like FRONTIER MARSHAL and DOC), you won't want to miss this. [-ecl]

Released streaming 21 August 2024.

Film Credits: https://www.imdb.com/title/tt33038128/reference

What others are saying: https://www.rottentomatoes.com/tv/wyatt_earp_and_the_cowboy_war

LES MISÉRABLES (2018): We just watched the 2018 Masterpiece Theater production of LES MISÉRABLES, and I was struck by how the scene of Jean Valjean traveling through the sewers of Paris is reminiscent of Andy Dufresne's journey through the sewer pipe in THE SHAWSHANK REDEMPTION, particularly since they both emerge into rain. This is not an uncommon trope, and supposedly represents baptism and rebirth, so I suppose I shouldn't be surprised to see it, but I suspect Victor Hugo was the first to use it in literature, and from there it made its way onto the screen. [-ecl]

Released streaming 14 April 2019.

Film Credits: https://www.imdb.com/title/tt5900600/reference

What others are saying: https://www.rottentomatoes.com/tv/les_miserables

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Asteroid "Mining" (comments by Gregory Frederick):

Cool video summarizing the results of a NASA mission to an asteroid where they collected samples of material there and brought them back to Earth to study:

https://youtube.com/shorts/jDr7II5XJ5Q?si=CpUH1IVyen993NfR

[-gf]

MÜNCHHAUSEN (letters of comment by Paul Dormer and Gary McGath):

In response to Mark and Evelyn's comments on MÜNCHHAUSEN in their review of HITLER'S HOLLYWOOD in the 02/07/25 issue of the MT VOID, Paul Dormer writes:

MÜNCHHAUSEN turned up on the BBC about the time the Terry Gilliam version came out. I bought it on DVD a while after. A great opening sequence which completely had me fooled. [-pd]

Gary McGath writes:

[Evelyn/Mark write,] "It discusses, for example, how the use of various optical tricks and techniques promoted the idea pf illusions, of a permeable border between reality and unreality, of the unsureness of one's own perceptions." [-ecl/mrl]

There was a lot of that in pre-Nazi German cinema as well. THE CABINET OF DR. CALIGARI is the most obvious example.

The script for MÜNCHHAUSEN was written by Erich Kaestner under a pseudonym. Kaestner's writing was banned under the Nazis. I don't know why exactly, but in [his] kids' novel EMIL AND THE DETECTIVES, one of the sympathetic characters says, "Bist du meschuggah?" suggesting the character is Jewish.

[Evelyn/Mark write,] "Of these films, and of the Third Reich in general, Hannah Arendt said, 'What convinces masses are not facts, not even invented facts, but only the consistency of the illusion.'" [-ecl/mrl]

Yes, and it's not just "masses" but even smart people who are susceptible to repetition of claims. [-gmg]

Paul Dormer adds:

It's also said that the film was commissioned by Goebbels, not only the propaganda minister but also the head of the UFA studios, for its 25th anniversary. Kaestner and the director Josef von Báky decided on Munchhausen as he was an even bigger liar than Goebbels. [-pd]

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

I've been bingeing the Poirot "Mystery" series lately, and have only just now noticed a giant plot hole in one of the stories, and it's present in the original novel as well. The novel is ONE, TWO, BUCKLE MY SHOE by Agatha Christie (William Morrow, ISBN 978-0-062-07377-8), and here come SPOILERS.

SPOILERS

In the novel, and in all adaptations, the first murder being investigated is clearly arranged ahead of time with great planning. The set-up to make Blunt look like the intended victim means Carter has to be hired *before* that murder, and it means the telegram has to be sent probably the day before. But it also means that the murderer has to arrange that three people have consecutive dentist appointments on the day, one of whom is not an established patient, and that a fourth person is also a patient of that dentist. And the murderer has no control over the new patient's appointment, which is an emergency one.

We also have the classic Christie tropes of the false target and the mis-identified corpse.

END SPOILERS

I like the basic idea behind the story, and it is one of my favorites, but it still has this major plot hole. [-ecl]

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Quote of the Week:

> If we attend continually and promptly to the little that we can do, we shall ere long be surprised to find how little remains that we cannot do.
> --Samuel Butler

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