



Table of Contents

[Mini Reviews, Part 20 \(GODS AND GENERALS, GETTYSBURG\)](#)
(film reviews by Evelyn C. Leeper)
[WEDNESDAY](#) (series review by Paul S. R. Chisholm)
[SIMULACRON-3](#) (letter of comment by Andre Kuzniarek)
[Brother Guy Consolmagno, UNKNOWN, and "The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde"](#) (letter of comment by Taras Wolansky)
[BEN-HUR, Silent Film Accompaniment, King Kong, and Historical Writing](#) (letter of comment by Gary McGath)
[This Week's Reading](#) (Solar Pons, Jules de Grandin) (book comments by Evelyn C. Leeper)
[Quote of the Week](#)

Editor: Evelyn Leeper, 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 evelynchimelisleeper@gmail.com
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.

Mini Reviews, Part 20 (film reviews by Evelyn C. Leeper):

In honor of the anniversary of the birthday of Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain on September 8:

GODS AND GENERALS (2002): This is a very engaging movie in the service of a lot of misinformation. For example, Stonewall Jackson tells Jim Lewis that slavery will end, and it should have already. Yet in real life when Jackson died, he was still held six people in slavery—including Jim Lewis. All the slaves who are portrayed like those who are holding them in slavery, cheer the Confederate troops, and even express a desire to fight for the Confederacy. Seriously?!

While observing that I thought the movie well-made in many technical aspects, I am reminded of Ulysses S. Grant's quote about the Civil War: "I felt like anything rather than rejoicing at the downfall of a foe who had fought so long and valiantly, and had suffered so much for a cause, though that cause was, I believe, one of the worst for which a people ever fought, and one for which there was the least excuse."

I don't know if the scenes of the Fredericksburg house used as a hospital were in Jeff Shaara's 1998 novel. But I do know that similar scenes were in the film A BRIDGE TOO FAR (1977), and if those scenes were in the novel, I would not be surprised to learn that Shaara was inspired by that film, and that the inspiration flowed through to this film as well.

Released theatrically 21 February 2003.

Film Credits: <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0279111/reference>

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

GETTYSBURG (1993): In the opening credits, all the leading actors are shown morphing from actual photographs of their characters to their own photographs (also done in sepia) in their roles. This includes Kevin Conway. But Conway plays a fictional character, Buster Kilrain. In fact, as many people have pointed out, "Buster" did not exist as a name before Buster Keaton acquired it as a nickname at eighteen months; his original name was Joseph Frank Keaton, and he apparently never officially changed it. But name changes were a lot more informal back then: my maternal grandmother, my mother, and my father all went on official documents by (first) names other than those on their birth certificates, but none ever officially changed them.

So the question is, whose photograph did they use to represent Kilrain?

I recommend the extended director's cut, which adds almost a full hour (resulting in a run time of four-and-two-thirds hours). The specific changes are described on <https://www.movie-censorship.com/report.php?ID=401805>. (Don't let the name fool you; it wasn't censorship that caused the additional scenes to be omitted from the theatrical release.) The major additions are the Battle of Antietam, a subplot with John Wilkes Booth, and more about Col. Joshua Chamberlain and the 20th Maine, as well as many other additions (including an additional five minutes of end credits). A few scenes were removed or shortened.

GETTYSBURG was made before GODS AND GENERALS but takes place later, so there are inconsistencies. For example, in GETTYSBURG, Chamberlain is constantly reminding his brother Thomas (a captain) to call him "Colonel", not "Lawrence". But in GODS AND GENERALS we see the two of them serving together in those positions almost a year earlier and if Thomas hasn't learned his lesson by the time of GETTYSBURG, he was never going to change.

I highly recommend the extended director's cut here as well, which adds seventeen minutes (resulting in a run time of four-and-a-half hours). The specific changes are described on <https://www.movie-censorship.com/report.php?ID=590158>. The added scenes enlarge upon the interactions with civilians in Gettysburg, General Longstreet's backstory (which has a connection to a subplot in GODS AND GENERALS), Ewell's and Early's attempts to explain their actions in not taking the hill, more about Pickett's desire to see more fighting than he has up until now, more about Harrison's espionage efforts, and several other aspects.

Released theatrically 8 October 1993.

Film Credits: <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0107007/reference>

What others are saying: <https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/1046038-gettysburg>

[-ecl]

WEDNESDAY (series review by Paul S. R. Chisholm):

The Addams family, but turned full-on fantasy. (Not "hard fantasy"; still rooted in the Charles Addams cartoons and the 1960s show.)

In the Netflix series bearing her name, Wednesday Addams has been sent to Nevermore Academy, where her parents Gomez and Morticia met.

The academy is full of "outcasts," various kinds of supernatural beings. For example: Furs are werewolves; self explanatory. Fangs are vampires; they wear dark glasses and SPF 1000 sunscreen. Scales are mermaids slash sirens, and can hypnotize with a look. Stoners are gorgons; unless they hide their snakes, they (temporarily!) turn people into statues. None of the outcasts are popular with the "normies" in the nearby town.

Wednesday herself is more than just mysterious and spooky. She's a psychic. When touching someone or something she gets dark, mysterious visions of the past or future. Her default appearance reflects this: dismal, forlorn, and sarcastic.

That hides her burning obsession for justice. And when people start getting murdered....

Jenna Ortega masters this role. She plays Wednesday as someone desperately trying not to show she cares, when deep inside she's passionate enough to risk her life (and sometimes the lives of those around her) to find the murderers.

Honorable mention to Emma Meyers. She plays Enid Sinclair, Wednesday's cheerful, bubbly, almost-vampire roommate. She can only turn her fingernails into claws, but she's painted them into a rainbow of bright pastels. The contrast of moods is terrific.

WEDNESDAY is by turns hilarious, mysterious, and tense. The show leans hard into horror tropes without being gory or terrifying. (My wife and I appreciate that.)

Sadly, some of the insurmountable-seeming problems are too easily surmounted.

Warning: The series demands to be binged. Once we started watching, we couldn't stop.

Recommended, and I can't wait for season 3. [-psrc]

SIMULACRON-3 (letter of comment by Andre Kuzniarek):

In response to [Evelyn's comments on THE THIRTEENTH FLOOR](#) in the 08/28/25 issue of the MT VOID, Andre Kuzniarek writes:

[Evelyn refers to SIMULACRON-13.]

Just a minor title correction: [it's SIMULACRON-3 actually]. I know because itâ€™s one of my top five favorite SF stories. I've had a couple copies of the Bantam first edition since having first read it a decade after publication. I was lucky that it was on the bookshelf in our junior high English class for the week we were expected to select something to read and report on! The ideas were/are mind-blowing, though the writing is fairly pulpy (no pretending itâ€™s sophisticated literature). [-ak]

Brother Guy Consolmagno, UNKNOWN, and "The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde" (letter of comment by Taras Wolansky):

In response to [Evelyn's comments on the NEW YORKER](#) in the 08/29/25 issue of the MT VOID, Taras Wolansky writes:

The NEW YORKER article about Vatican astronomer Brother Guy Consolmagno, S. J., can be read online. (Your cookies may vary.) [-tw]

Evelyn responds:

My cookies or whatever do not let me read it. [-ecl]

In response to [Joe Karpierz's review of SPACE SHIPS! RAY GUNS! MARTIAN OCTOPODS! INTERVIEWS WITH SCIENCE FICTION LEGENDS](#) in the same issue, Taras writes:

The fantasy magazine edited by John W. Campbell in the early Forties was, of course, UNKNOWN, a.k.a. UNKNOWN WORLDS, not FANTASY. Though there were several magazines of that name, over the years.

In response to [Evelyn's comments on "The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde"](#) in the same issue, Taras writes:

Finally, until I read your review of "The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde", it never occurred to me that Stevenson's novella may have influenced the motion picture, FORBIDDEN PLANET, with its noble Krell brought low by "monsters from the id". [-tw]

BEN-HUR, Silent Film Accompaniment, King Kong, and Historical Writing (letter of comment by Gary McGath):

In response to [Evelyn's comments on the 1925 BEN-HUR](#) in the 08/28/25 issue of the MT VOID, Gary McGath writes:

The 1925 Ben-Hur was very rough on the extras, of whom there were something like 10,000. Some may have drowned in the sea battle scene. [-gmg]

In response to [Evelyn's comments on the 1925 PHANTOM OF THE OPERA](#) in the same issue, Gary writes:

There will be a screening of the 1925 PHANTOM OF THE OPERA in Boston's Symphony Hall on Halloween, with live organ accompaniment. I've bought a ticket. [-gmg]

Evelyn adds:

In the distant past, Boskone had live organ accompaniment to silent films, and the organist was John Kiley, the same person who played the organ at Fenway Park. My Boskone XXI con report indicates that that year (1984) it was THE MARK OF ZORRO, and my comments indicate that this had been done with other films for several years.

In response to [Evelyn's comments on Mark's "Ballad of King Kong"](#) in the same issue, Gary writes:

[Evelyn's wrote,] "[An alternate version has "But a biplane put him in his grave". Which you prefer depends on whether you think "the airplanes got him" or "'twas Beauty killed the Beast." [-ecl]

Definitely the airplanes, or else suicide. It was the ape's fault he got himself into that situation. [gmg]

In response to [Evelyn's comments on the first person singular in historical writing](#) in the same issue, Gary writes:

I used the first person in some parts of my history of filk, TOMORROW'S SONGS TODAY. They fell into the "personal experience" category. [-gmg]

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

Once again, I have been slacking off on the new books on my shelf (although THE ESSAYS OF GEORGE ORWELL, PRIDE AND PREJUDICE, and RALPH WALDO EMERSON'S ESSAYS could hardly be called new books), and binge-reading old favorites, in this case the "Solar Pons" books. As I have said before, these are perhaps the best of the Holmes pastiches, at least the ones by August Derleth. Brought forward in time (the 1920s and 1930s), and with Parker a more perceptive associate than Watson, these are definitely worth reading, and they are available in reasonably priced editions. (Even the original paperbacks are not outrageously priced, probably because there have been reprints.) I suppose after this I should revisit Seabury Quinn's Jules de Grandin stories, being Holmes pastiches with supernatural elements. [-ecl]

Evelyn C. Leeper
evelynchimelisleeper@gmail.com

Quote of the Week:

Whenever I hear anyone arguing for slavery, I feel
a strong impulse to see it tried on him personally.
--Abraham Lincoln

Go to [our home page](#)