

intelligent, and even profound. Screenwriter Charlie Kaufman formerly came to public attention with the creative BEING JOHN MALKOVICH. He followed it up with the nearly as good ADAPTATION. Now he is showing that he has not yet reached his peak. ETERNAL SUNSHINE OF THE SPOTLESS MIND is his best script by a surprising margin. Hopefully this is a movie that will show the film industry that good writing can do more for a film than good special effects."

And apparently it's a Charlie Kaufman month, because they are also showing (for the first time) his film ADAPTATION, of which Mark wrote in 2002, "This is Spike Jonze's and Charlie Kaufman's follow-up film to BEING JOHN MALKOVICH. I think that Charlie Kaufman has in one stroke made his the most recognizable screenwriter's name in the country. His new film is a meditation on the forces that make films successful; it is also a philosopher's chestnut and a marvelous mental toy. This is the kind of film that viewers can discuss for hours."

(Alas, they are not showing BEING JOHN MALKOVICH.)

[ETERNAL SUNSHINE OF THE SPOTLESS MIND (2004), Tuesday, February 13, 9:30 PM]

[ADAPTATION (2002), Sunday, February 18, 10:15 PM]

Also this month, you can get a dose of (almost) history. The mutiny on the H.M.S. Bounty (28 April 1789) and Captain William Bligh's amazing feat of seamanship in sailing a 23-foot open launch, overloaded with 19 men, 3500 nautical miles (4000 miles), has become a nautical legend. Five films have been made about it, in 1916 (THE MUTINY ON THE BOUNTY), 1933 (IN THE WAKE OF THE BOUNTY, with Errol Flynn in his film debut), 1935 (MUTINY ON THE BOUNTY), 1962 (MUTINY ON THE BOUNTY), and 1984 (THE BOUNTY). The first is a now-lost Australian film. The second, also an Australian film, was quickly forgotten when the third, with Charles Laughton and Clark Gable, was released. The fourth had Trevor Howard and Marlon Brando, and the last--the one TCM is showing--starred Anthony Hopkins and Mel Gibson. (The 1935 and 1962 films were based on the novel by Charles Nordhoff and James Norman Hall. The 1984 version was based on Richard Hough's book CAPTAIN BLIGH AND MR CHRISTIAN). The IMDb ratings seem to support the notion that remakes are not as good as the originals; if one considers the later films (of the three major versions) remakes, the ratings decrease for each subsequent film. However, the 1962 and 1984 versions do benefit from shooting on location, while the 1935 version merely had some second unit photography shot there. And the 1984 version is considered the most accurate of the three.

[MUTINY ON THE BOUNTY (1935), Thursday, February 1, 8:00 AM]

[MUTINY ON THE BOUNTY (1962), Monday, February 26, 11:30 AM]

(If you're willing to endure ads, ThE BOUNTY (1984) can be seen free on Tubi.)

[-mrl]

And some comments on some other films:

THE CHINA SYNDROME (1979) and NETWORK (1976): Two prescient films; The latter gets a lot more attention, because its dystopia is still going on.

MIDNIGHT IN PARIS (2011): An interesting time travel story, a bit different than the usual sort.

NIGHT AND DAY (1946): An example of the sort of really inaccurate biopics Hollywood used to make. It is dramatized in the more accurate biopic about Cole Porter, DE-LOVELY.

TRIPLETS OF BELLEVILLE (2003): Creative animation from France. There is little dialogue (though there are songs); much of the film is told through pantomime.

WOMAN IN THE DUNES (1964): A classic Japanese thriller/horror film.

TCM is also running several Hitchcock films, with a half dozen of the lesser-known films running February 5 and 6, and a couple more later in the month.

[-ecl]

Other films of interest include:

THURSDAY, February 1

8:00 PM The Power of Film Episode 5: The Power of Paradox (2023)

MONDAY, February 5

8:00 PM Notorious (1946)
 10:00 PM The Wrong Man (1956)
 12:00 AM I Confess (1953)
 2:00 AM The 39 Steps (1935)
 3:30 AM The Lady Vanishes (1938)
 5:15 AM The Girl Was Young (Young and Innocent) (1937)

WEDNESDAY, February 7

12:00 AM Modern Times (1936)
 8:45 AM The Enchanted Cottage (1945)

THURSDAY, February 8

2:15 AM The Masque of the Red Death (1964)
 8:30 AM Helen of Troy (1956)
 10:45 AM Atlas (1961)
 12:15 PM Atlantis, the Lost Continent (1960)
 2:00 PM Hercules, Samson & Ulysses (1963)
 3:30 PM Clash of the Titans (1981)
 5:45 PM The Colossus of Rhodes (1961)
 8:00 PM The Power of Film Episode 6: Love and Meaning (2023)

SATURDAY, February 10

2:45 AM Camelot (1967)
 4:00 PM Harvey (1950)

MONDAY, February 12

2:00 PM Brigadoon (1954)
 6:00 PM Knights of the Round Table (1953)

TUESDAY, February 13

5:30 AM The Thief of Bagdad (1940)
 5:45 PM The China Syndrome (1979)
 9:30 PM Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind (2004)

WEDNESDAY, February 14

2:00 AM Network (1976)
 4:15 AM Princess O'Rourke (1943)
 3:45 PM Rebecca (1940)

THURSDAY, February 15

4:00 PM A Guy Named Joe (1943)
 6:15 PM Here Comes Mr. Jordan (1941)

FRIDAY, February 16

9:15 AM Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde (1941)

SATURDAY, February 17

12:30 AM Raging Bull (1980)
 2:30 AM Being There (1979)

SUNDAY, February 18

10:15 PM Adaptation (2002)

MONDAY, February 19

12:00 PM Triplets of Belleville (2003)

TUESDAY, February 20

9:00 AM Night and Day (1946)
 11:15 AM The Enchanted Cottage (1945)
 10:30 PM Spellbound (1945)

WEDNESDAY, February 21

3:00 PM For All Mankind (1989)

THURSDAY, February 22

12:00 PM Kismet (1944)
 4:00 PM Rudyard Kipling's Jungle Book (1942)
 6:00 PM King Solomon's Mines (1950)

FRIDAY, February 23
 12:00 AM Phantom of the Opera (1943)
 2:00 AM The Picture of Dorian Gray (1945)
 4:00 AM Cries and Whispers (1972)

MONDAY, February 26
 2:45 PM Forbidden Planet (1956)
 4:30 PM Topper Returns (1941)
 6:15 PM Them! (1954)
 8:00 PM Fantastic Voyage (1966)
 10:00 PM Blithe Spirit (1945)
 11:45 PM 2001: A Space Odyssey (1968)

TUESDAY, February 27
 2:30 AM Destination Moon (1950)
 4:15 AM Tom Thumb (1958)
 6:00 AM Woman In The Dunes (1964)

WEDNESDAY, February 28
 11:00 AM The Hunchback of Notre Dame (1939)

THURSDAY, February 29
 6:15 PM Midnight in Paris (2011)

THESE FRAGILE GRACES, THIS FUGITIVE HEART by **Izzy Wasserstein** (publication date March 12, 2024, Tachyon Publications, ASIN: B0CRK848SH) (book review by Joe Karpierz):

There have been numerous stories throughout the history of science fiction that take place in locations that are in the remains of once prosperous and populous cities. The reasons these cities are a shambles, shadows of their former selves, are irrelevant to the story. **THESE FRAGILE GRACES, THIS FUGITIVE HEART** is a novella that takes place in a portion of Kansas City that has been abandoned by the city government. There is little or no police presence, no supported infrastructure, everything is rundown. There is a portion of Kansas City that is well protected and taken care of, but the location of the story here has been left on its own.

Dora, a transgender former security expert, is living in self-imposed exile from the commune she used to inhabit with her girlfriend Kay. Things were becoming more dangerous there, and things were happening that Dora couldn't explain. She wanted to tighten up security, make the place safer for residents of the commune. The changes were controversial and voted down, so she left, abandoning Kay and the rest of the commune. As the story opens, Dora is returning to the commune to investigate the apparent murder by drug overdose of Kay. Her return to the commune is met with suspicion and resistance, since she burned more than a few bridges when she left. While it's apparent that just maybe Dora was right about the changes she wanted to implement to the commune's security procedures, those arguments have to be put aside so that Dora can find out just what happened to Kay and maybe prevent it from happening to someone else.

Kay's investigation opens the door to a number of other incidents, including people disappearing, a new drug circulating around the abandoned parts of Kansas City, and a war between two corporations, one of which employs her father, who refuses to recognize the transitioned Dora as his daughter. During her investigation she is attacked--by clones of herself from her pre-transition past. Dora manages to take one of these clones under her wing and convince them to help her get to the bottom of just what is going on.

THESE FRAGILE GRACES, THIS FUGITIVE HEART is a noir techno-thriller, with Dora playing the part of the obsessed, insomniac private investigator trying to solve a complex puzzle. The difference is, of course, that this is a science fiction story with many of the trappings that accompany the genre. But it's much more than that. It raises questions of identity--so, you are transgender and you meet a clone of yourself, and how do you handle that situation anyway, especially if only for a little while the emotional situation results in physical needs?--belonging, and family. It's well written with terrific dialog and tells a great story. As with most stories, this one is probably not for everyone, but if you do take a chance on it I think you won't be disappointed. And, once again, I've encountered a writer that I haven't known previously but certainly look forward to reading more from. It seems that my to be read stack will continue to get larger, and there's no end in sight. [-jak]

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

LIVES OF THE WIVES: FIVE LITERARY MARRIAGES by Carmela Ciuraru (Harper Collins, ISBN 978-0-062-35691-8) sounded promising: a look at five marriages in which both parties had artistic aims, and yet it seems that the wife was always the one to

sacrifice. Whether one can extrapolate to all literary marriages is questionable, but that was not my problem. Rather, Ciuraru set herself so many rules for choosing her subjects that as far as I was concerned she might as well have been writing fiction. She did not want to write about any living people, nor did she want to choose any overly familiar subjects (which apparently eliminated Hemingway and his four wives). So her choices were Kenneth Tynan and Elaine Dundy, Roald Dahl and Patricia Neal, Kingsley Amis and Elizabeth Jane Howard, Alberto Moravia and Else Morante, and Una Troubridge and Radclyffe Hall. Of those, the only couple whose work was familiar enough to me to make their story meaningful was Roald Dahl and Patricia Neal, and there seemed nothing exceptional about it (other than his racism and anti-semitism). I suppose that this book was aimed either at more literary readers, or those who are looking at the institution of marriage and its effects. [-ecl]

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Quote of the Week:

I have six locks on my door all in a row. When I go out,
I lock every other one. I figure no matter how long
somebody stands there picking the locks, they are always
locking three.

--Elayne Boosler

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