

MRINDIA

DRINK TANK

So, a brief layoff from The Drink Tank was used to finish up Journey Planet's biggest issue to date. It was a big job, a lot of layout, a lot of art finding, a lot of fiddling. It was a lot of fun, too! I did catch up on my viewing for 52 Weeks though. I was way behind, but I am not only caught up, but also ahead enough that getting back to weekly shouldn't be a problem.

And yes, that is another awesome cover from Mo Starkey! I just love her stuff!!!

There's a lot going on in preparation for WorldCon. I'm actually not on staff, which means a bit more time to do teh stuff I love about WorldCons: partying, paneling, and going out for meals. I've never been into Chicago itself, only to the airport and suburbs, so there'll be a lot of first time stuff, especially with the museums and the like. And, as has been teh case, preparing for the Hugos pre-party. SO MUCH FUN!

I'm also planning on some sweet time playin' around on the Train! It's a 51 hour trip, more if you include the inevitable delays, and I'm planning on completing at least one issue of The Drink Tank, one Claims Department, and two episodes (both sides of an audio tape) of #HardCopyPodcast. What I'll do with the other 42 hours is hard to say!

Linda and I enjoyed ourselves greatly at Yosemite this last weekend. I love Yosemite, and the fact that they are plannign on tearing down one of the most important places to me personally in teh entire park meant that I had to go.

It's called Stonemans Bridge.

You see, when I was a kid, 10 or 12 or so, the bridge was a place where people, mostly teenagers, would jump off the bridge into the deep water below it. I, at the time, was a coward. That's not quite true, I was a stupid rock scrambler and took some chances, even back then, that were VERY stupid. I wouldn't jump, and once even stepped up and tried to jump, but I couldn't make myself take the leap. I was scared, plain and simple, and I wouldn't jump.

My Dad, Pops, he was a daredevil and jumped off a bunch of times. The bridge isn't that high, maybe 16 feet off the water, which is probably 10 or 12 feet deep below, with a sandy bottom. My dad, having jumped off several times, and several of my friends had jumped off as well. I felt rather weak and small for not jumping, and I also felt like I was being left out of something awesome because everyone looked like they were having fun!

So, like I always do when there is something I think would be cool, I walked from the shore, where I had been relaxing on a lawn chair, walked with purpose and ended up on the bridge, then without hardly thinking about it, I flipped forward and into the water.

Not just jumped, but flipped. If something is worth just plain doing, why just plain do it?

That was me proving something to myself, and when I heard that they were planning on tear it down, along with two other bridges that are important to me and have some serious cultural significance to the park, I had to go to them at least one more time. I'm planning on getting involved with efforts to save them, or perhaps to move them to another site, but they should be saved.

Maybe it's just my nostalgia showing...

So, this issue has Mo Starkey on teh cover, Taral Wayne on the difficulty of staying updating, Diane on a new novel PYR sent, letters and me on Mr. India..

So let's stop expositioning, shall we?



A black and white photograph of a hand holding a pen, writing in a spiral-bound notebook. The notebook is open, and the pages are filled with handwritten text. The lighting is soft, and the focus is on the hand and the pen tip.

I've Nothing to Say, But I'll Still Say It, FA Journal 226, 7 July 2012 by Taral Wayne

Oh, crap. A week has gone by since I last posted. It seems more like about four days ago ... That probably means that the next 20 years of my life will be over in about six weeks, and I'm so not ready for that.

I've been posting major epics on FurAffinity of late, and while the response has been gratifying, I recall getting a larger volume of comments back when my journals were short and furry-related. Am I doing something wrong? Should I return to pithy little remarks about "My Little Pony" and guys costumed as top-heavy vixens? Believe me, I would if I could, but I feel as though I've said it all. There's nothing left on which I need to sharpen my sense of the ridiculous.

But a week has gone by, and I have to say something!

Otherwise, there will be no comments for me in the coming week.

Should I ask what the reader's ten favourite animated films are? I've recently seen exactly that on FurAffinity. Unfortunately, I spoke my piece in comments to that artist's journal.

Perhaps I could try to talk the reader into buying or commissioning art. I know one artist over at Deviant Art who does that every single, friggin' day! I kid you not! Although I rather like his art, I'm beginning to hate him. Is he unaware that most of the rest of us are artists too, or does he regard himself above the need to socialize with a mere source of income? Heck... if I wanted a piece of art of his that badly, I'd just rip off his idea and do it myself.

I could complain about the huge number of hermaphrodites, repetitive illustrations of butt-fucking, endless parades of S&M, and the astonishing amount of mind-numbingly unoriginal, imitation Japanese fanart ... but judging from what I see posted to FurAffinity I'm clearly in a minority on this point. (I'm aware, of course, that my art sometimes touches a few sore points as well. Each to his own filth, I say.)

There are no movies I especially want to encourage you to see. Well, actually, no animated movies from the last ten years or so. You've all seen them. If you want a list of movies from a long, long time ago, when people remembered handwriting and dialing a phone number, you could do worse than rent a DVD of "Marty," "Angels In the Outfield," "Angel and the Badman," "Mr. Roberts," or "The Apartment."

I could refer the reader to some URL where there is presumably something of interest to see. But in almost every case when I've followed such a lead, the results were hardly rewarding enough to have bothered. I have nothing I especially want to bring anyone's attention to, anyway.

Or I could puff up some other artist, and demand the reader immediately check out his gallery. Maybe another time, when I have someone specifically in mind and not the same-old-same-old that I always recommend.

The fact is, I really have nothing to say, and it's taken all my skill as a writer to put off admitting it until this point. I suspect, too, most of the readers are as stumped as I am about what to write in their journal. When was the last time I read one that wasn't a complaint about the writer's health, computer system, or lack of money?

So, dear reader, I advise you do what I've done – give up reading journals. Even mine, if next week I can't find something better to write about than this.

London Eye - Toxic City Book I by Tim Lebbon

Reviewed by Diane Osborne

Imagine a scientist that has discovered a way to bootstrap humanity's potential with a virus or drug named Evolve. How far would you go to goad the human race? How much collateral damage is okay? Is your ego naturally occurring or did you experiment with one too many drugs in the chem lab?

London Eye - Toxic City is not a tale exploring the inner workings of a mad scientist, or a sane scientist for that matter.

Tim Lebbon tackles this tale from the point of view of kids. Kids who have lost parents, siblings or any semblance of reality after something happens in London. Horror and reality run amok as they try to figure out what's up. News is censored by the government. No one is allowed in or out of the city. People try, and sometimes succeed. The group of friends step up when a escapee from the city finds them and asks for their help, and find themselves out of their depth.


The tale is well told, full of credible characters and interesting twists and turns. Jack and Emily, Lucy-Anne, Jenna and Sparky could be from any high school, any where, any when. They aren't super-human. They aren't uber gullible or SWAT-strong. They make their way through the countryside and into London, trying to survive long enough to find out the answer to the question: What happened in London and why is the government trying to keep a lid on it? What they find out raises more questions, brings them face to face with danger, hope and an appreciation of each other, flaws and all.

When allies may be enemies, humans more monstrous than mutants and ethics are MIA, instincts keep you alive.

Lebbon has a new nickname in my book: Le Bon Stuff. The scenario he describes is quite horrific and utterly possible. Absolutely enjoyable. Deliciously dark and silky smooth. London Eye is like a steaming cup of hot chocolate laced with LSD or arsenic - no hint of what you drank until it's too late to undo.

Published by Pyr





52 Weeks to Science Fiction Film Literacy - Mr. India

Eventually, I had to write about Bollywood. India cinema dates back a hundred years. In fact, 2012 is the centennial of the release of the first Indian feature film. They went through a silent phase, just like the rest of the world, and then there was the first talkie in 1931 with *Alam Ara*. Sadly, the film is lost now, but it was apparently inspired by *Show Boat*. It was all-singing, all-dancing! This would be the format that is most associated with Bollywood film. Musicals were important for a number of reasons, perhaps the biggest being that there was no established way of distributing and selling music in India so the movies became that form. It worked, it seems.

While Indian cinema is far more than Bollywood, it is Bollywood's combination of style, music and stars that has made it the dominant form of Indian cinema to be exported. In India, they are often called Masala Films. Bollywood films have made huge stars of names like Madhubala and Nargis in the 1940s and 50s, Amitabh Bachchan in the 1960s and 70s, and recent HUGE international stars like Aishwarya Rai. In the 1980s, there was Sridevi.

I remember watching an Indian film review show in the late 1980s (I think it was called *Namaste America*, later I think it was called *Showbiz India*) that dedicated an entire show to Sridevi and I fell in love at that very moment. She was funny, so very funny, and her singing and dancing was incredible.

Well, her dancing. Almost all Bollywood film uses Playback Singers who sing the songs, as the actors will simply lip-synch. Bollywood seldom uses synch sound, putting in sound and dialogue after the initial filming. This is much cheaper, but it can cause an unnatural feeling to the end product.

Sridevi was a big star in the 1980s, having been in a string of hits, including *Tohfa*, *Mawaali*, *Justice Chowdhry*, *Sadma* and *Nagina*.

And then, there was Mr. India.

Anil Kapoor was a big star in the 1980s. He was amazing in a movie called *Mashaal*, which was either the first or second Indian film I ever saw. I think it was *Mashaal* that led me to seeking out other Indian films, starting with Madhubala's *Mahal*, and then *Howrah Bridge*. After that, I would watch one or two Indian films a month, going on bigger jags at times because hey, I like Musicals. Kapoor has had a long and varied career, recently breaking into the International Cinema scene with his turn in *Slumdog Millionaire*. He's a helluva actor, with a great sense of comic timing and something about his that makes you feel like you want him to win, even when he's not the brightest bulb on the tree.

Mr. India was thus armed with two huge stars, and then there was a third - Amrish Puri.

You may not recognize the name, but you'd know that he played a character called Mola Ram in *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom*. He was already a big star in India, and often when an Indian star makes waves outside of India, they'll come back and be bigger stars. This is the case with Amrish Puri.

So, the stage was set for a blockbuster. All you need now is a story.

Science Fiction has been a part of Indian cinema since the 1960s. The greatest of all Indian directors, the VERY non-Bollywood Satyajit Ray, had started and never finished a film called *The Alien*. Spielberg read the script,

supposedly, and turned it into E.T., which I've talked about before. There had been a few science fiction film released in India in the years before Mr. India, some of them pretty successful. Mr. India was following the release of a few American films in India to some success. Notably, the Superman films. These were pretty popular for Western movies, and all together, this was the way to go to create a Blockbuster.

Mr. India is a strange pair of films. Kapoor plays Arun, a down-and-out violinist who is an orphan himself, which leads him to rent a large house for a bunch of orphans. He's constantly broke, has stretched his credit to the limit and is on the edge. He needs to bring in a boarder to make it possible to keep the house. He tries to put an ad in the paper, but instead runs into Seema, a reporter, played by Sridevi, and ends up convincing her that she's renting a quiet apartment over-looking a garden with a view of the beach and not the Orphanage that she's actually buying into. She is annoyed by the kids, and with Arun, but eventually she's won over by the scamps after witnessing how desperate their plight it.

Then there's the bigger story. Mogambo is a Blofeld-like mad man leading a group of soldiers. He tortures and kills people, even ordering his own men to jump into a pit of magma. He often says the phrase "Mogambo khush hua", meaning Mogambo is pleased. It's an awesome bit and even though he has a weird hairstyle that reminded me of a 1930s ice cream blonde, he still feels like a serious bad ass. For some reason, he wants the land that the house sits on, and sends his henchmen to get Arun out of the house.

There's a letter from a family friend that informs Arun that his father had invented something that makes invisibility possible. It is, in fact, the case, and he goes and takes on Mogambo's men. There's a great moment where they figure out that it's Arun's kids are benefitting from the actions of Arun using the device as Mr. India: the defender of the Hindustani! They use a computer, well stock footage of a computer, to figure it out.

That's the basic idea, but it's also just the beginning.

Mr. India has many of the classic signs of Bollywood: a mismatched couple, the contrast between the poor man and the rich woman, the beggar with the heart or gold, and most importantly, the all-powerful bad guy. It's not usually a megalomaniacal mad man, usually it's a king or a family patriarch or the like, but here it's a megalomaniacal mad man.

It also is an impressive formula picture because they used all the strengths of all of their actors and the story perfectly. The most obvious example of this is the role of Seema. Sridevi is AMAZING. She infiltrates Mogambo's organization by playing Miss Hawa Hawaii. She is supposed to be a Hawaiian dancer, even though she totally looks like Carmen Miranda at first. She does a song and dance number where she is hilarious. She's a great physical comedian, and can easily go over the top, and here it works. The contrast of the adorable performance with the violence of the slap by one of Mogambo's henchmen makes it VERY powerful, leading to the introduction of Mr. India as a fighter for good.

She then infiltrates Mogambo's organization in disguise AGAIN by dressing as Charlie Chaplin. She's very funny, and the invisible Mr. India helps her out. She's got amazing physicality and the one thing that Chaplin could



do that so few after him could was the pause in the emotional action. He could be in the middle of a massive pie fight, but stop on a dime and be outside of the action with a completely different action. Sridevi was just about that good at it. She has great awards of her acting, and here it shows.

She then has a great scene with an invisible Arun where she sings the song I Love You. Here, you can see that she's an amazing lip-syncher, and gives a great performance of the song and dancing. She's also VERY sexy here. She's amazing at it, has a lovely style to her dancing, and most entrancing facials. I can see why she was a huge star.

Arun has the songs where he's both the poor violinist and the powerful Superhero. His turns are not nearly as fast as Sridevi's, but he can use his range as well as anyone in the history of film. The scenes where he is frolicking with the other orphans are heart-warming. In the scene where Mogambo's men blow up one of his orphans, he is positively heart-breaking. He's funny, and he goes across the board. He's a bit more subtle than Sridevi is in her performance, but not too subtle; it's still Bollywood after all.

Perhaps it's the performance of Puri as Mogambo that is the most fun. He's got full-on swagger! The way he delivers his lines, even if they were all done in post, is just exceptional. One of the things that being an actor who is used to working without synch sound teaches you is full use of the body. You'll see this especially in actors like Salman Khan or Amitabh Bachchan. They give each line a sort of movement so that when you get the somewhat flat rerecorded sound, there is still a piece of something vibrant there. Puri was a master of this, and especially when he delivers his catch phrase, he's the smuggest bastard you've ever seen. It's a great performance, and it's lived in in references to this day!


Eventually, the henchmen catch up with Arun and kidnap his orphans and Seema and bring them to the Mogambo island of death. Of course, this leads to Arun being found out, but when Mogambo says that he will kill orphans until Mr. India shows up, Arun is unable to prove he's Mr. India because he dropped the device. Eventually he takes on Mogambo himself and saves India by deactivating the tracking on the bombs that Mogambo had launched, sending them back to the island, blowing it up just as Arun, Seema and the orphans make it out alive.

OK, here's the hard stuff about this film. The entire scenario is ridiculous. Mr. India can be seen in red light, which makes for some great moments on Mogambo's Island of Death where the warning lights are going off. There's also the only somewhat racist Dr. Fu Manchu. He's basically an Indian actor with a half a Fu Manchu mustache and glasses. He does shifty eyes a lot. It's the kind of thing you'd see in a lot of Bollywood films of the 1980s. During the Hawa Hawaii number, the background dancers are all in blackface at one point. It's weird.

The representation of the separation of the rich and the corrupt and the poor and noble is an important aspect of the film. One of the scenes we see is Mr. India punishing one of the gangsters who has been replacing a significant portion of the lentils and wheat that are sold in the market with stones. He forces the gangster, who is out on a date with a beautiful woman, to eat the stones, punishing him for all the kids who were dying of malnutrition. This would have been HUGELY popular at the time. India has always been a nation of great poverty contrasted with a powerful upper classes. This has led to unrest at times, and a film using this as a background would touch on that spot very well indeed. There have been many famous films with that as a theme, and this is one which plays it beautifully.

Mr. India was a very successful Bollywood film. It wasn't an award winner. In fact, there were no Film Fare awards in 1987 or 1988, and Mr. India is not the kind of film that the National Film Awards would recognize. It was a box office success, and propelled the stars to greater heights. It occupies a very interesting spot in Indian cinema history, much like Batman (the 1989 version). It is seen as the source for all the Superhero/Science Fiction films that followed, even though it wasn't really the start of either genre. It's a touchstone for the kind of light-hearted films that would typify the 1980s and early 1990s for Bollywood. It was something of a dark period for Bollywood, but it also set the stage for the international explosion that took place in the late 1990s and early 2000s with films like Lagaan. Ironically, Sridevi, one of the biggest stars of the 1980s and early 1990s, left the scene in 1994 to raise her family. She did some TV, but it wasn't until very recently that she returned to films.

Which is good because there's a Mr. India sequel on the horizon!



Letter Graded Mail Sent to Garcia@computerhistory.org by Our Gentle Readers

Dear Chris:

Got some time, and got three issues of The Drink Tank, 317, 318 and 319. Let's see if I can mix them together, squeeze the blend, and out pours a decent loc. Put a little parasol in it, and go for it, great way to start the weekend.

Always good to hae a lloyd Penney-style LoC from the ACTUAL Lloyd Penney!

317...I read about how Baycon may be a shadow of its former self. Looks like Jean and España spent more time at ClockworkAlchemy, the steampunk con. If a local con is a little weak, it's poor form to line up a newer convention on the same weekend. Still, there's only so many weekends in the year.

And a lot of folks floated between the two. It seems that Clockwork was pretty small, and folks at both of them had a good time. I'm just glad we got a visit from Unwoman!

I can imagine the response Bayconites had to your Hugo. You and I know too many people who would have raked you over the coals for that, but more and more, their opinions really don't matter. They are too old and out of it to matter any more.

I was slightly surprised that I got a little flack for bringing it from folks who were mostly not at the con! When I showed up at Fencon last year, I got bugged by a bunch of folks for NOT bringing it! Still, I only wanted to bring it for one day to get photos with folks and it ended up staying an extra day.

Can't come to Kansas City, but most years, there is a group from Toronto who goes to ConQuesT. When you get there, you will see Diane Lacey, Krikor Ajemian and Merle von Thorn, and Diane may have been the one that got you connected for SFContario.

I like Diane a lot! I do have a feeling that she had somethign to do with me getting the SFCOntario gig! I'm also psyched that Jon Slinger, who EVERYBODY knows, will be a guest, too! I also just found out that I'll be GoH at Westercon in 2014!

I am still not sure what happened with DUFF...has anyone talked to John Hertz lately? I haven't received any issues of Vanamonde from him, and that's rare. I wonder if there have been massive changes in his life. Could be... With Hold Over Funds, the next go through for DUFF will mean more money in the kitty.

I talked to him a few weeks ago, but not since. I know he was at Westercon in Seattle a couple of weeks ago.

My loc...I haven't seen many potential candidates for TAFF in 2014. We just decided that if we are lucky enough to go, we would go on our own speed. No regrets, doubt we would have won anyway, but the big prize for us is the London Worldcon itself. I must get those photos to you.

I am pretty sure you'd have won if you'd run, but you're right, it's gonna be a great time. It's lookign like it'll be our second trip to the UK in the space of a year, since we're doing World Fantasy and Paris in 2013!

318...I saw the first two Back To The Future movies in the theatre, and part of the third one on a flight. I think Christopher Lloyd will be a guest at one local fan-run mediacon next month. It would be great to see Michael J. Fox, that busy guy from the Vancouver area, but his health is still fairly iffy. Every so often, I see a DeLorean in the Toronto area. If I recall, these were the cars that were built in New Brunswick, with John DeLorean funding this until he went under. The folks there at least got some jobs out of it...these things are 30 years old now.

There are three DeLoreans here in Santa Clara. I've even ridden in one of them (it's been owned since the mid-1980s by a kid who went to school with me) and they're actually great cars... at least to look at!

319...There was a big book sale at the Globe and Mail a couple of weeks ago, and I got myself a cheap copy of Jo Walton's Among Others. Also picked up Mark Hodder's The Curious Case of the Clockwork Man and An Expedition of the Mountains of the Moon. I would certainly have thought of Lev Grossman's The Magician King in all of this. I picked up a free copy of the Genevieve Valentine book at Reno, and it was great. It did win a couple of awards. I reviewed the book for a couple of zines back then. All great novels, and I will get to the Walton novel shortly. Still have to vote on the Hugos, so I'd better get with it.

I loved the Hodders, and especially the Walton. I've got so much to talk to her about at SF-CONtario! And at WorldCon for that matter! She's class people, and she wrote an absolutely class novel!

As I wrote, tomorrow is Steam on Queen a steampunk street fair in downtown Toronto at historic Campbell House. We are vendors there, and should have a steamy and lucrative time, we hope. I'll see if we can take some pictures for you and Jean.

Hope it was a good time!

All done for the moment, and see you with the next issue.

Yours, Lloyd Penney.

Be seeing you! (Been watching a lot of The Prisoner)

