

# MT VOID 08/31/18 -- Vol. 37, No. 9, Whole Number 2030



Mt. Holz Science Fiction Society  
08/31/18 -- Vol. 37, No. 9, Whole Number 2030

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

- September 13: FISSURE (film) and "And He Built a Crooked House" by Robert A. Heinlein (short story), Middletown Public Library, 5:30 PM  
<https://tinyurl.com/A-Crooked-House>
- September 27: Nebula winners for short fiction:  
 Novella: ALL SYSTEMS RED, Martha Wells (Tor.com Publishing)  
 Novelette: "A Human Stain", Kelly Robson (Tor.com 1/4/17)  
<https://www.tor.com/2017/01/04/a-human-stain/>  
 Short Story: "Welcome to Your Authentic Indian Experience(TM)", Rebecca Roanhorse (Apex 8/17)  
<https://www.apex-magazine.com/welcome-to-your-authentic-indian-experience/>,  
 Old Bridge (NJ) Public Library, 7PM

Northern New Jersey events are listed at:  
<http://www.sfsnj.com/news.html>

## Say Hello to Rufus (comments by Mark R. Leeper):

I was in a store waiting for Evelyn. A man--a complete stranger-- came up to me and announced, "Rufus Lee King."  
 I was not sure what he wanted. I just nodded. Again he repeated "Rufus Lee King."  
 He announced himself one more time. Again he said it. I just nodded this time. "No! Rufus Lee King."  
 Just then a large drop of water hit the bald spot on top my head. I looked at the ceiling and just nodded. [-mrl]

**My Picks for Turner Classic Movies for September** (comments by Mark R. Leeper):

Well, we are just a month away from Halloween month on Turner Classic Movies. Let's hope they have dug up some little known gems for us this year. But in the meantime...

**KING OF HEARTS (1967)**

Is a charming fable set in the closing days of World War I--the Great War--but there was only its size that made the Great War Great. The setting is France. It was not Paris but a small rural town that the Germans have been ordered to retreat. But the war is not over just yet and the German commander will have his revenge. A bomb has been hidden in town, and the town will be in tiny pieces with everybody dead. The townspeople luckily find out the town will be destroyed that night. They flee to safety. But the town is not empty of people. It has an insane asylum and a few of inmates were allowed to escape.

The inmates were unaware of the death that was to come. They find their way to freedom and decide to run the town like they had seen it run. A British unit operating nearby chooses a misfit soldier, Plumpick (Alan Bates), and sends him to the town to find and disarm the bomb (or die in the effort). He is mystified but charmed by the strangeness of the town he was sent to rescue.

When KING OF HEARTS was released its anti-war message was quite popular with college students largely because the Viet Nam war was not, but it really is a beautiful little anti-war fable directed by Philip la Broca with a musical score by George Delerue. [Friday, September 14, 4:00 AM]

**THE LAST WAVE (1977)**

This is one of the most atmospheric and sinister little films I know of. It was one of director Peter Weir first films and it made an international reputation for him as a director. The mood is perfectly modulated to make everyday objects, especially water seem threatening. It almost is as if the water in all the oceans is going to conspire against humankind. Richard Chamberlain is a corporate lawyer who is asked to defend pro bono four aboriginal men accused of murder. But it can be murder if it was done with tribal magic. Meanwhile Chamberlain is having dreams of being sought out by one of the accused men to involve him in the tribal magic. Suffusing the whole film is the mystical belief in the aboriginal Dreamtime and the belief that our world is just a shadow of the Dreamtime. [Friday, September 28, 3:00 AM]

And what is my pick for best film of the month? It is THE MAN WHO WOULD BE KING (1975). Kipling's story is good but the film made from it starring Sean Connery, Michael Caine, and Christopher Plummer makes the story in the film even better. [Saturday, September 8, 10:00 PM] [-mrl]

**THREE IDENTICAL STRANGERS** (film review by Mark R. Leeper):**SPOILERS! SPOILERS! SPOILERS! SPOILERS! SPOILERS! SPOILERS! SPOILERS!**

**CAPSULE:** Three men who never met discover that they were born on the same day and are genetically identical. At first this makes them celebrities all over the world. The odds against that happening by chance are phenomenal. But if it did not happen just by chance, who did it and why did they do it? And what are the psychological effects of having their lives determined for them before they were ever born. It sounds like science fiction, but the story is true. Director: Tim Wardle. Rating: high +2 (-4 to +4) or 8/10

Apparently the whole story had been hushed for decades. But the truth started coming out when Robert went to college. As dramatized in THREE IDENTICAL STRANGERS, before he was even in the dorm "friends" were welcoming back to a college where he had never been before. To make the situation stranger people kept calling him "Eddy." Robert's new roommate insisted that his old roommate was Eddy who had to have been Robert's identical twin. Both Robert and Eddy had the same birthday and physically they seemed to be very similar. The only conclusion was that they were identical twins who nonetheless never were told of the other's existence.

Then came the discovery that the boys were not twins after all. They were triplets. A third boy, David, was a genetic duplicate of the other two. When the press got hold of the story that there were triplets around they were an immediate fascination. The three showed up on talk shows. The public had a thirst for knowing what characteristics the three had in common. And what they did not have in common. They were a perfect laboratory for studying the nature vs. nurture question.

For a while the days were heady. The boys started a restaurant together and people would come for the fun of getting a look at the celebrities. But instead of the triplets being a novelty, they seemed more a source for clinical study. They realized their condition was not a matter of chance but had been the result of deliberate tampering. And the results of this tampering (when they could be obtained) were not always good.

One problem with the film is the assumption that identical twins are indeed identical. People who have lived in close proximity to identical twins usually learn to tell them apart. When we see twins together in this film we can usually tell them

from one another. Their faces may have a slightly different shape or one may have had a recent haircut.

For me the largest problem of the film was that the director is just too vague to pinpoint at what point the original studies became actually evil. If designed properly the studies do not seem on the face of them always wrong. It seems reasonable to do psychological studies look at young children and how their psychology is affected by factors like the order of childbirth, proximity of other children in their neighborhoods, etc. One has to be very careful to be sure no damage is done. The studies in question sound like they could possibly even be innocuous. The studies appeared to be observational observations. The psychological results of the testing were the result of unexpected factors.

This film would be a very good pairing with Michael Powell's PEEPING TOM.

Film Credits: <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt7664504/reference>

What others are saying: [https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/three\\_identical\\_strangers](https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/three_identical_strangers)

[-mrl]

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**PAYING THE PRICE OF PEACE** (letter of comment by Dale Skran):

In response to [Mark's review of PAYING THE PRICE OF PEACE](#) in the 08/24/18 issue of the MT VOID, Dale Skran writes:

When the filmmaker says things like:

In its coverage of the anti-war movement the film says that in the years from 1950 to 2000 the United States has

-- overthrown 60 democratically elected governments

-- dropped bombs on 30 nations

-- attempted the assassination of 60 foreign leaders

This \*sounds\* impressive, but one wonders about the source. I'm not going to waste time disputing "bombs on 30 nations." This might even be conservative. But has the U.S. really overthrown 60 democratically elected governments? Here is one web site () that attempts to make claims similar to this film. However, when I look at the list the first thing that jumps out is that few of these countries appear to be "democratically elected" in any real fashion. Certainly some have the form of a democracy, but a one party state that holds elections is not my idea of a "democracy." Some of the states--France, for example--are in fact democratically run, but although it is possible a faction of the CIA did seek to overthrow DeGaulle in 1965, it is far from clear that this was the policy of the U.S. government.

Similar concerns can be raised about the supposed 60 attempted assassinations of foreign leaders. The word "attempted" appears here possibly because most of the attempts failed. It is also unclear how many of the 60 attempts were focused on Castro, since we know the CIA attempted--and failed--to kill Castro many times. The phrase "foreign leaders" suggests that the U.S. was targeting politicians. Was Che Guevara a "politician? Was "Papa Doc" merely a politician? The restriction of time to 1950 through 2000 is curious, because post 2000 the U.S. has assassinated a host of "foreign leaders" starting with Bin Laden. I think it is safe to say that on 9/12, a lot of Americans came to the conclusion that the U.S. government had carried out too few assassinations rather than too many. [-dls]

Mark responds:

I wrote that part of the review in the mind of the filmmaker. I should have a disclaimer. [-mrl]

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**Hugo Awards** (letters of comment by Paul Dormer and John Purcell):

In response to [Evelyn's comments on the Hugo Awards](#) in the 08/24/18 issue of the MT VOID, Paul Dormer writes:

[Evelyn wrote,] "N. K. Jemisin's three consecutive Hugo Awards for the three books in her trilogy is a first, and noteworthy enough that CNN television reported it."

"It even made the editorial section of The Guardian in the UK: ." [-pd]

John Purcell writes:

[It] really was unique that CNN reported on N. K. Jemisin's three-peat in winning the Best Novel Hugo Awards in 2016,

2017, and 2018. This is a remarkable first-ever occurrence, and each book is definitely worthy of this award. I plan on recommending her work to students who might enjoy her work. Every year there are always a dozen or so students in my classes who are science fiction and fantasy readers, and I like to give them ideas of who and what to try next. Jemisin is definitely one of the bright spots in the field today. [-jp]

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**Monster Movies** (letter of comment by John Purcell):

In response to [Mark's comments on monster movies](#) in the 08/24/18 issue of the MT VOID, John Purcell writes:

Well, it's been a little bit of time since I last wrote to you folks, and your latest issue sparked some memories with the comments about watching Monster Movies on television in your much younger days.

I, too, loved watching those on television back in the day; still do. Whenever a movie like THE MONSTER THAT CHALLENGED THE WORLD (1957) or THE BEAST FROM 20,000 FATHOMS (1953) would air, I would dutifully stay up late at night to watch them. Usually these would be on one of the two local Minneapolis television stations that would show them starting at something like 10:30 PM on a Saturday night after the late night news program would wrap. If I remember correctly--and I probably don't because it has been at least forty to fifty years since KSTP-TV and WCCO-TV (channels 5 and 4, respectively) broadcast these celluloid gems on a regular basis. In fact, a quick Google search reveals that KSTP had a show called "Horror Incorporated" (my favorite of the bunch) that started at midnight Saturdays and ran double-feature horror/sci-fi/monster movies until four in the morning. Naturally I would stay up all night to watch them. Gad, but those were great! Oh, my word, but this opening segment from Mark brings back great memories.

As for THE MONSTER THAT CHALLENGED THE WORLD, you really should have left that alone, lying in the dustbin of forgotten films. Frankly, I am astonished at how much space you devoted to writing about this, this ... er ... movie(?). To be honest, having gigantic prehistoric mollusks ravaging Southern California is a definite novelty and hilarious as hell, but that really is about all this film has to offer besides the obvious raucous derisive laughter as viewers heckle the living bejeezus out of it. If you're a fan of gawd-awful skiffy and monster flicks like me, "The Monster that Challenged the World" falls in the category of Deserving Obscurity. Still, we must acknowledge our debt of gratitude to all the producers, directors, wannabe actors/actresses, and pseudonymous writers who created these low- budget non-masterpieces. Without them, imagine how boring SF convention film rooms would be. [-jp]

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**THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF EVERYTHING** (letter of comment by Gary Labowitz):

In response to [Joe Karpierz's review of THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF EVERYTHING](#) in the 08/10/18 issue of the MT VOID, Gary Labowitz writes:

I just quickly browse these ... they don't hit me like they would have forty years ago, or maybe even more. But I'm glad they show up so regularly, and a quick parsing caught my eye. Typographic trickery, eh? Well, one of my very favorite novels was and still is THE DEMOLISHED MAN. So, e e cummings be damned; I'll stick to Bester. [-gb]

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

I recently re-read CATSEYE by Andre Norton. This was one of the first science fiction books I can remember reading, and certainly owning, though I cannot remember how I came to own it. The other books I can remember from junior high an earlier are THE MYSTERIOUS ISLAND by Jules Verne, the "Lucky Starr" books by Paul French (Isaac Asimov), CONQUEST OF EARTH by Manly Banister, and STAR OF THE UNBORN by Franz Werfel.

At any rate, pulling this book out again reminds me why I always knew that Andre Norton was a woman: the back cover blurb refers to he with female pronouns. So for years I thought Andre was a girl's name. Re-reading it, I would say it stands up reasonably well as a young adult novel (as best as I can judge). Oddly enough, back then I did not go on to read other Andre Norton books. In fact, I cannot remember reading any until LEOPARD IN EXILE until 2002, and THE TIME TRADERS last year.

Trivia: What characteristic do Andre Norton's books have that is not possessed by those of any other science fiction author? (Or possibly any other author at all.) Hint: It has nothing to do with the contents. [-ecl]

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Quote of the Week:

People in general are equally horrified at hearing the  
Christian religion doubted, and at seeing it practiced.  
--Samuel Butler

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