

MT VOID 03/29/19 -- Vol. 37, No. 39, Whole Number 2060

#####

Mt. Holz Science Fiction Society
03/29/19 -- Vol. 37, No. 39, Whole Number 2060

Table of Contents

[Science Fiction \(and Other\) Discussion Groups, Films, Lectures, etc. \(NJ\)](#)

[My Picks for Turner Classic Movies for April](#) (comments by Mark R. Leeper)

[LOST & FOUND](#) (film review by Mark R. Leeper)

[Measles](#) (letters of comment by Kevin R. Scott Dorsey, Dorothy J. Heydt, Jay E. Morris, Tim Merrigan, Keith F. Lynch, and Radovan Garabik)

[This Week's Reading](#) (UNCLE TOM'S CABIN) (book comments by Evelyn C. Leeper)

[Quote of the Week](#)

Co-Editor: Mark Leeper, mleeper@optonline.net

Co-Editor: Evelyn Leeper, eleeper@optonline.net

Back issues at http://leepers.us/mtvoid/back_issues.htm

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, send mail to mtvoid-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

To unsubscribe, send mail to mtvoid-unsubscribe@yahoogroups.com

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

April 11, 2019: THE CONGRESS & The Futurological Congress by Stanislaw Lem, Middletown Public Library, 5:30PM

<https://www.hoopladigital.com/title/12015465>

<https://tinyurl.com/Lem-Congress-archive>

<https://tinyurl.com/Lem-Congress-html>

May 9, 2019: TBD, Middletown Public Library, 5:30PM

May 23, 2019: DIASPORA by Greg Egan

July 25, 2019: THE STRANGE CASE OF DR. JEKYLL AND MR. HYDE

by Robert Louis Stevenson (1886)

September 26, 2019: TBD from Europe/Latin America/Africa/Canada

November 21, 2019: THE SLEEPER WAKES by H. G. Wells (1910)

January 23, 2020: TBD from Europe/Latin America/Africa/Canada

March 26, 2020: TBD by Edgar Rice Burroughs

May 28, 2020: TBD from Europe/Latin America/Africa/Canada

July 23, 2020: TBD by Jules Verne

September 24, 2020: TBD from Europe/Latin America/Africa/Canada

November 19, 2020: Rudyard Kipling:

"A Matter of Fact" (1892)

"The Ship That Found Herself" (1895)

".007" (1897)

"Wireless" (1902)

"With the Night Mail [Aerial Board of Control 1]" (1905)

"As Easy as A.B.C. [Aerial Board of Control 2]" (1912)

"In the Same Boat" (1911)

Northern New Jersey events are listed at:

<http://www.sfsnnj.com/news.html>

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

April is particularly good on TCM this year. (All films are in the Eastern Time)

THINGS TO COME (1936) was a remarkable view of the future from the point of view of H. G. Wells who was, of course, the visionary of who wrote WAR OF THE WORLDS and THE TIME MACHINE. Producer Alexander Korda wanted to produce a science fiction film with Wells's visions. Wells had written a thick philosophy book called THE SHAPE OF THINGS TO COME. For Korda he adapted ideas from the book into a screenplay. It maps the future into five chapters.

The first chapter was England of its near future at war bombed by an armada of planes. (It is claimed that Adolf Hitler saw the special effects of being pounded to dust and excitedly told the Luftwaffe that being able to do such destruction was to be their goal.)

The second chapter was twenty years of civilization falling apart as the war drags on and on and on.

The third chapter showed England reduced to medieval conditions with technology broken down and city-states ruled by feudal bosses.

The forth chapter shows England reconstructing under rule of benevolent engineers. (And you should see what they do to the environment.) The fourth chapter is the most impressive in the film as we see mammoth super-machinery operated by comparatively tiny workers.

The final chapter shows England ready to make the jump into space.

Most of the special effects are done with model work that still looks futuristic today. Most existing copies of the film have very poor sound quality and it is difficult to understand the actors, But TCM has a good copy. The musical score has become a classic piece of orchestral concept music.

[THINGS TO COME, Saturday, APRIL 27 @ 12:00 PM (ET)]

Ted Turner owns and runs three movie channels including, of course, Turner Classic Movies. He all too rarely produces his own media to broadcast. These are generally westerns or about Civil War battles. IRONCLADS was a story that culminated in the battle of the Monitor and the Merrimac. Eventually Turner got around to dramatizing the Battle of Gettysburg, probably the most important battle ever fought in the Americas.

Don't quote me, but I think to save money he offered historical re-enactors a chance to play the armies. They would get something nominal like lunch in return for being in the movie. But what really was their reward was that they were experts on Civil War history who were getting an opportunity to show off their knowledge. The result was a film that was very faithful to history and one of the best war films ever made. It had a very good cast with Martin Sheen as Robert E. Lee and Jeff Daniels as Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain. It is based on the Pulitzer Prize winning novel THE KILLER ANGELS by Michael Shaara.

[GETTYSBURG, Tuesday, APRIL 16 @ 09:45 PM (ET)]

I would also pick GETTYSBURG as the best film of the month.

[-mrl]

LOST & FOUND (film review by Mark R. Leeper):

CAPSULE: Seven stories of discovery and loss show us a variety of Irish locals who live in and around a railway lost and found office managed by a clerk in his first day on the job. Someone comments on what strange things get left behind on trains. The stories are based on actual incidents, though perhaps not in so dense and hectic a day. Liam O Mochain stars as the office clerk in addition to writing, directing, and producing. Directed by: Liam O Mochain; written by: Liam O Mochain. Rating: high +1 (-4 to +4) or 6/10

LOST & FOUND is a gentle Irish comedy and drama of seven inter-connected stories that begin at a lost and found office for the Irish Railway. Several of the characters are forced to make life decisions involving losing or finding things. The stories all are about finding or losing something. This is one of those films that show us how quaint and likeable the people are in some place the viewer never expects to visit. Liam O Mochain stars, writes, and directs. The film was obviously shot on a very limited budget, though not as limited as the viewer might guess.

It is Daniel's first day in his new weekday job. He is working at the lost and found department of the local station. The bad part of the job is the long list of officious rules he has to follow or enforce upon the colorful locals who come in looking for strange lost goods. Somewhat better though still often a headache is the remarkable procession of eccentrics locals come trooping in with peculiar needs. Soon the focus of the camera is a wider range of eccentrics. LOST & FOUND was filmed over several years, one of the stories at a time, though some characters show up in multiple stories. The found items include a wedding ring, a prosthetic foot, and a cute baby in desperate need of a changing. Another person, who may or may not be a scammer, spends his day losing everything he carries, one at a time on a find-an-item-lose-another basis. The stories are not really drivingly compelling, but they are pleasant enough that one willingly spends an hour or so in their company.

Mochain seasons his story with a jazz trumpet accompaniment in an Irish style. Not all of the stories tie up the loose ends

I rate LOST & FOUND a high +1 on the -4 to +4 scale or 6/10. Be informed that finding this film on the Internet may be difficult because of so many other films that used the same title.

Film Credits: <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt7085054/reference>

What others are saying: https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/lost_and_found_2019

[-mrl]

Measles (letters of comment by Kevin R, Scott Dorsey, Dorothy J. Heydt, Jay E. Morris, Tim Merrigan, Keith F. Lynch, and Radovan Garabik):

In response to [Mark's comments on measles](#) in the 03/22/19 issue of the MT VOID, Kevin R writes:

Choice is good, but complicated.

One does not have a choice about whether one has to pay taxes to fund government schools. You might have the ability to home-school your children, or send them to a private school. Some parents have no effective choice to do that, and so are compelled by a combination of the mandatory attendance laws and a lack of resources to send their children to government (public) schools. If the state is going to set up the system in that way, it has a duty to make sure those schools are not hot spots for epidemics. If the schools were private, and one had the funds for tuition(*), parents could choose ones that do not require vaccination or ones that do, per their beliefs. Monopolies--or near-monopolies--will often result in less choice than markets with a variety of providers. Sending possible disease carriers into schools other kids are forced to use shouldn't be one of them.

I don't think it's moral to let your kids be "Rubella Rudy" and "Mumps Mary" for their school and neighborhood friends, even if that is legal.

* Parents opting out of government schools could be provided with a grant to be used for home schooling, online school, or private school. "Vouchers" are controversial, of course, and online school isn't a good fit for many children. [-kr]

Scott Dorsey adds:

Someone wrote into our local paper recently with an editorial about how children should be punished for getting these diseases rather than be vaccinated. The author took the view that children got these diseases from disreputable and unpleasant sick people and that they should be punished for associating with such folk.

Where do people get these crazy ideas? [-sd]

Dorothy J. Heydt responds:

Was that a rhetorical question? Because in the specific case of anti-measles-vaxxers, we know exactly how it started. I forget the guy's name [Andrew Wakefield], but he was a British doctor who had developed his own measles vaccine, only to discover there was already on the market. So he launched a campaign to tell everyone that the one on the market was no good, wouldn't prevent measles, would give you autism, yadda yadda, only his vaccine worked.

And those who were credulous enough to believe him went from believing that *that* vaccine was no good to believing that *his* measles vaccine was no good either, to believing the same of all vaccines.

So they wouldn't buy his vaccine either.

He also got sued, and bounced out of the British Medical Association.

This morning's "Kevin and Kell" reflects the fact that some teenagers have been going and surreptitiously vaccinated in defiance of their parents' stupidity.

<https://www.kevinandkell.com/>

That's the default link for "today's strip," "today" being Monday, 3/25/2019. If you search for that link after today, you'll get another strip (possibly on the same topic), and can hit the back- arrow under the last panel to see the one I'm talking about. [-djh]

Scott responds:

I got that idea. The idea I was asking about was how anyone would get the notion that threatening children with beatings would prevent them from getting sick. [-sd]

Dorothy answers:

Hm. I missed that part. Where did he, or someone else, say that?

Now, if he was trying to keep children away from other children who had (or might have) a contagious disease, I'm familiar with *that* idea. My mother was a Registered Nurse (my daughter has a picture of her on her wall, taken the day she was capped), and what she was taught at nursing school in the early 1930s was that if children didn't catch the various "childhood diseases" in their childhood, they'd never catch them.

So all through my childhood, my mother carefully kept me away from any kid who had one of the childhood diseases. (I can still remember talking to an acquaintance of mine (daughter of my parents' friends) from the door of her bedroom, forbidden to step any closer because she had whooping cough.

And the result was that I caught red measles at eighteen and chicken pox at nineteen, at which ages they were a lot worse than they would have been at five or six.

There were no vaccines back then except for smallpox.

I can remember getting injections of the Salk polio vaccine as a young adult, and when the Sabin oral vaccine came out, the University set up stations at all its major entrances. Show them your reg card, they'd give you a sugar cube with one of the two Sabin vaccines soaked into it; come back tomorrow, and they'd be giving out the other one.

By the time I was engaged to be married, the German measles vaccine had come in and I went and got it. MMR came soon after.

Both our children got every vaccine they could get as soon as they reached the age for it. My daughter has made sure her son got the same. We, of course, are the people the pediatrician sees, because daughter and son-in-law work full-time. I strongly suspect my son and daughter-in-law also keep their son (just turned one) fully immunized for his age. [-djh]

Jay E. Morris suggests:

In Scott's reply to Kevrob he mentioned "Someone wrote into our local paper recently with an editorial about how children should be punished for getting these diseases rather than be vaccinated. The author took the view that children got these diseases from disreputable and unpleasant sick people and that they should be punished for associating with such folk."

You replied but I think you may have zeroed in on just the last line of the message. "Where do people get these crazy ideas?" [-jem]

Kevin replies:

The wrong members of the families are being threatened. :-)

I don't really think threats of violence are the way to go, here. [-kr]

Evelyn adds:

ObSF: I was reminded of EREWHON by Samuel Butler, where criminals are considered ill and put in hospitals to be cured, while sick people are considered criminals and sent to prison. [-ecl]

Tim Merrigan writes:

Why is this bringing to mind Edison's and Tesla's fight over AC or DC? [-tm]

But Keith F. Lynch says:

I don't know. Few people concluded that both kinds of electricity were bad, and decided to do without. [-kfl]

And Radovan Garabik suggests:

Well, in all fairness, there is a clear connection between autism and vaccination. Just consider that Pasteur was an autist (though it has been called an "excentric professor" those times), Koch was an autist, etc. Thus, autism caused vaccination. [source: SMBC] [-rg]

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

The next book in the Teaching Company course on American classics was UNCLE TOM'S CABIN by Harriet Beecher Stowe (ISBN 978-1-532- 86906-8), which the professor calls "the unread classic." This may be because it contains some unpleasant truths, and I am not referring only to its depiction of slavery. Stowe depicts the self-delusion of both (or rather, all) sides.

The "kind" slave-holder says things like, "If folks want to keep their slaves from running away, treat 'em well--that's my doctrine." But then we see how meaningless and ineffective this is: when the "kind" master dies unexpectedly, his slaves end up sold to pay off his debts, or because his heirs don't want more slaves, or any number of reasons out of his control. Also out of his control is whether their new masters will be "kind" so naturally the only safety for a slave is to escape to freedom (Canada, given the Fugitive Slave Act).

Then there is Senator Bird, who thinks the Fugitive Slave Act perfectly reasonable in theory, but "the magic of the real presence of distress--the imploring human eye, the frail, trembling human hand, the despairing [sic] appeal of human agony,--these he had never tried." When presented with the reality of what the Fugitive Slave Act meant, he could not support it in practice.

(This natural tendency shows up in many ways. Steven Pinker's philosophy is strictly utilitarian, yet he expends a lot of money on caring for his mother who is in the advanced stages of Alzheimer's. As he responded to a question about this, "It's different when it's your mother.")

St. Clare hits the mark on the hypocrisy of Northerners, though, when Ophelia objects to Eva hugging Tom. St. Clare says, "You loathe [Africans] as you would a snake or a toad, yet you are indignant at their wrongs. You would not have them abused, but you don't want to have anything to do with them yourselves. You would send them to Africa, out of your sight and smell, and then send a missionary or two to do up all the self-denial of elevating them compendiously. Isn't that it?" And Ophelia is forced to admit this, and agrees with Sy. Clare later when he says, "We are the more *obvious* oppressors of the negro, but the unchristian prejudice of the North is an oppressor almost equally severe."

But, alas, St. Clare, while talking of oppressors, is also a victim of inertia. His excuse is that "the whole framework of society, both in Europe and America, is made up of various things which will not stand the scrutiny of any very ideal standard of morality," and later, "in a community so organized, what can a man of honorable and humane feelings do, but shut his eyes all he can, and harden his heart?" Because he cannot cure all the evils of the world, he concludes he needn't try to cure any. Na he asks Ophelia, "Are you such a sweet innocent as to suppose nobody in this world ever does what they don't think is right? Don't you, or didn't you ever, do anything that you did not think quite right?"

But another reason Stowe is not read is that she was a product of her time, and the book is full of stereotypes. For example, she describes "the African" as "naturally patient, timid, and enterprising," as having the "soft, impressible nature of his kindly race, ever yearning toward the simple and childlike," of "their gentleness, their lowly docility of heart, their aptitude to repose on a superior mind and rest on a higher power, their childlike simplicity of affection, and facility of forgiveness." And in her closing remarks, Stowe writes, "I trust that the development of Africa is to be essentially a Christian one. If not a dominant and commanding race, they are at least an affectionate, magnanimous, and forgiving one." Her belief that African would become basically a Christian continent seemed to ignore the spread of Islam; the two religions each have about 40% to 45% of the continent. Her belief that becoming a Christian continent would make it close to a paradise on earth seems to ignore the history of Christian nations elsewhere. Even Stowe admits that what is preached in churches is not Christianity: "Is that which can bend and turn, and descend and ascend, to fit every crooked phase of selfish, worldly society, religion?" Why she thinks this would change is unclear.

Then again, she writes, "The principle of reliance and unquestioning faith ... is more a native element in this race than in any other, and it has often been found among them that a stray seed of truth, borne on some breeze of accident into hearts the most ignorant, has sprung up into fruit, whose abundance has shamed that of higher and more skilful culture," implying a level of Christianity not found elsewhere. Was she the first to postulate the "magical Negro" described by Spike Lee, or perhaps more accurately, the "numinous Negro" of Richard Brookhiser? Certainly Uncle Tom seems to be able to give other people faith, although that also came with acceptance of their lot in this life because after all, they would be rewarded in the next.

(She also writes about the Haitian Revolution that "the race that formed the Haytiens [sic] was a worn-out, effeminate one, and, of course, the subject race will be centuries rising to anything." I think she means here that the white French were the worn-out race and apparently does not count the slaves as Haitians), but one reason the "subject race" would take centuries was that the "white" nations put onerous financial burdens on them as a condition of national recognition.) [-ecl]

Mark Leeper
mleeper@optonline.net

Quote of the Week:

California is a fine place to live--if you happen to
be an orange.

--Fred Allen

Tweet

Go to [our home page](#)