

# MT VOID 04/26/19 -- Vol. 37, No. 43, Whole Number 2064



Mt. Holz Science Fiction Society  
04/26/19 -- Vol. 37, No. 43, Whole Number 2064

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

May 9, 2019: THE BEAST FROM 20,000 FATHOMS (1953) & "The Fog Horn"  
 by Ray Bradbury (THE GOLDEN APPLES OF THE SUN, Ray Bradbury;  
[http://www.grammarpunk.com/lit/gp/THE\\_FOG\\_HORN.pdf](http://www.grammarpunk.com/lit/gp/THE_FOG_HORN.pdf);  
<https://archive.org/stream/TheFogHorn/TheFogHorn.txt>)  
 Middletown Public Library, 5:30PM  
 May 23, 2019: WE by Eugene Zamiatin (postponed from last meeting)  
 and DIASPORA by Greg Egan, Old Bridge Public Library, 7PM  
 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,  
 Old Bridge Public Library, 7PM  
 November 21, 2019: THE SLEEPER WAKES by H. G. Wells (1910),  
 Old Bridge Public Library, 7PM  
 January 23, 2020: TBD from Europe/Latin America/Africa/Canada,  
 Old Bridge Public Library, 7PM  
 March 26, 2020: TBD by Edgar Rice Burroughs, Old Bridge Public  
 Library, 7PM  
 May 28, 2020: TBD from Europe/Latin America/Africa/Canada,  
 Old Bridge Public Library, 7PM  
 July 23, 2020: TBD by Jules Verne  
 September 24, 2020: TBD from Europe/Latin America/Africa/Canada,  
 Old Bridge Public Library, 7PM  
 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)  
 Old Bridge Public Library, 7PM

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

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

NIGHTMARE ALLEY is one of my favorite films noir. Tyrone Power had played pretty boy roles like Zorro before he went into the military. But he knew he had to become a better actor or his good looks would not get him much farther than they already had. He chose the role of Stanton Carlyle, the carnival barker at a sleazy carnival. There he is fascinated by the geek, the drunk who bit the heads off of live chickens for half a bottle of whisky a day. That is done off camera. Stan wants to use his natural charisma to work his way as a top con man. Stan and his friends are all sacrificed to Stan's ambition. Stan figures how they can all be useful to him. This is a very dark and grim film noir film. Audiences were freaked out by the theme on the film's first release. It is now considered one of the best and most creepy film noir films. I think that I recommend this film whenever it comes up. Catch it. [NIGHTMARE ALLEY, Saturday, May 4 @ 12:00 AM (ET)]

Back when I was in college I agreed with other film lovers that the two best American political thrillers were delivered as a one-two punch by director John Frankenheimer. The first was THE MANCHURIAN CANDIDATE (1962), based on the novel by Richard Condon, and the second was SEVEN DAYS IN MAY (1964), based on the novel by Fletcher Knebel and Charles W. Bailey II. The former will be on TCM in May. It concerns a nefarious plot by China and the Soviets to steal the United States by brainwashing and exploiting the political animosities of Democrats and Republicans (parties never mentioned by name). Also there is a presidential candidate who will remind some of current-day politicians. Frank Sinatra stars with Janet Leigh. [THE MANCHURIAN CANDIDATE, Saturday, May 18 @ 05:45 PM (ET)]

My wife sends along the schedule of two TCM mini film series.

May 16 Thursday

6:00 AM Devil-Doll, The (1936)  
7:30 AM Attack of the Puppet People (1958)  
9:00 AM 7th Voyage of Sinbad, The (1958)  
10:30 AM Tom Thumb (1958)

May 31 Friday

7:00 AM Most Dangerous Game, The (1932)  
8:30 AM Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde (1932)  
10:15 AM Vampire Bat, The (1933)  
11:30 AM Mark of the Vampire (1935)  
12:45 PM Mad Love (1935)  
2:00 PM Devil-Doll, The (1936)  
3:30 PM Walking Dead, The (1936)  
4:45 PM Return of Doctor X, The (1939)  
6:00 PM Hunchback of Notre Dame, The (1939)

[-mrl]

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

I have been reading REVISITING THE HUGOS, which formed the basis for AN INFORMAL HISTORY OF THE HUGOS: A PERSONAL LOOK BACK AT THE HUGO AWARDS, 1953-2000 by Jo Walton (ISBN 978-0-765-37908-5), and while I can see where she is coming from with the fiction, she was way off base on Dramatic Presentations.

For example, for the 1963 Hugo (for works from 1962), "No Award" won, beating BURN, WITCH, BURN (a.k.a. NIGHT OF THE EAGLE); THE DAY THE EARTH CAUGHT FIRE; LAST YEAR AT MARIENBAD; and "The Twilight Zone". Walton writes, "I love you, voters of 1963! Remember, we could still do this when faced with dramatic presentation categories that are all rubbish." One can certainly argue that at least a couple of these were not rubbish, but Walton also fails to do what she did with the Best Novel category: look at what else was eligible. (Actually, I wonder at the eligibility of these; several were 1961 films.) Other possible nominees among 1962 films would have been CARNIVAL OF SOULS, "La Jet'e", THE MANCHURIAN CANDIDATE, and "An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge" (shown on "The Twilight Zone" but not truly part of that series). Surely THE MANCHURIAN CANDIDATE, at least, is not rubbish.

[Walton's comments about this category were dropped from the book.]

Walton's bias against Dramatic Presentations is even more obvious in 1964. She writes, "Look what there isn't! Not just no award, no dramatic presentation category at all! I expect the oracles told them that somebody was about to be born who would be pleased to hear it. Or maybe the genre films were all rubbish that year, like a lot of other years."

Let's look at that "rubbish" year: THE BIRDS, THE HAUNTING, JASON AND THE ARGONAUTS, and Orson Welles's version of THE TRIAL are not considered rubbish by most critics. From more traditional fare, there was BLACK SABBATH, KISS OF THE VAMPIRE, and SWORD OF LANCELOT. And both "The Outer Limits" and "The Twilight

Zone" were on television that year. Whatever the reason for no category, it was not because "the genre films were all rubbish that year."

[In the book, references to the Dramatic Presentation category for this year were dropped entirely.]

For 1965 (films from 1964), though, she still writes, "I don't think it's worth having a category with so few possible entrants, but at least in 1965 they gave it to a worthy winner [DR. STRANGELOVE]." The other nominee was 7 FACES OF DR. LAO, but other "possible entrants" would have included FIRST MEN IN THE MOON, LAST MAN ON EARTH, MARY POPPINS, ROBINSON CRUSOE ON MARS, and SEVEN DAYS IN MAY, as well as "The Outer Limits" (including "Demon with a Glass Hand."

For 1966 (films from 1965), she dismisses by implication ALPHAVILLE, "Dark Intruder", "Theatre 625: 1984", SHE, and "The War Game".

For 1968, she writes of the Dramatic Presentation category, "... a category ought to have lots of worthy nominees to be worth having." Oddly, she doesn't say anything about applying this to the Professional Magazine category, which arguably has only a half- dozen candidates that are even eligible.

Even in the novel category is a comment that ranks close to Robert Silverberg's comment on the theory that James Tiptree, Jr., was female; [I find it] "absurd, because there is to me something ineluctably masculine" about Tiptree (later revealed to be a penname for Alice Sheldon). In discussing SYLVA by Vercors, Walton writes, "[It is] a novel translated from French. I am astonished. I mean, okay, this happened the year before I was born and things were different then, but can you imagine seeing a translated novel on the Hugo ballot today? Wow." She wrote this at the end of 2010. In 2015, less than five years later, Cixin Liu's THE THREE- BODY PROBLEM not only made the ballot, but won the Hugo for Best Novel. And in 2017, his DEATH'S END was also on the ballot. (Okay, maybe this is less like Silverberg and more like Isaac Asimov publishing AN EASY INTRODUCTION TO THE SLIDE RULE right before pocket electronic calculators hit the market.)

[This was corrected in a footnote in the book.]

Don't get me wrong--the book is worth reading and a useful look at the Hugos over the years. But it's worth noting that Walton's comments on Dramatic Presentations were toned down somewhat from her original columns, and I suspect it was not because she had a sudden epiphany on the quality of eligible films. Was it to give more emphasis to the fiction categories? Was it because her comments were likely to alienate some of her readers, either because she seemed to totally dismiss Dramatic Presentations as a valid category(\*), or because she seemed to dismiss any science fiction or fantasy film as rubbish?

[\*] One argument for getting rid of the category (now categories) is that the recipients and indeed almost all the finalists have no interest in the award, cannot be bothered to show up for the ceremony, and one suspects only send a thank-you speech because Craig Miller convinces them to do so. I'm not sure this is a reasonable argument. [-ecl]

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Quote of the Week:

Like the ski resort full of girls hunting for husbands  
and husbands hunting for girls, the situation is not as  
symmetrical as it might seem.

--Alan MacKay

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