

- "A Matter of Fact" (1892)
<https://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/16578>
 "The Ship That Found Herself" (1895)
<https://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/2569>
 ".007" (1897)
<https://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/2569>
 "Wireless" (1902)
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 "With the Night Mail [Aerial Board of Control 1]" (1905)
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 "As Easy as A.B.C. [Aerial Board of Control 2]" (1912)
<https://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/13085>
 "In the Same Boat" (1911)
<https://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/13085>
 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 April (comments by Mark R. Leeper):

When I choose films for this column I try to pick films that match my tastes. I realize not everyone has my taste in films. This month I decided to pick something that is likely to be of better than average interest to most readers. I cannot go too far wrong with a Neil Simon comedy.

THE GOODBYE GIRL is one of Neil Simon's best romantic comedies. Paula McFadden is having what could be the worst day of her life. She does not get a dancing job she desperately needed. She gets home to her apartment and to her precocious ten-year-old daughter only to find her boyfriend has subleased their apartment rented and moved away. Thus begins war words between the two people claiming possession of the same apartment. Central to the story are Eliot's winning over of Paula's daughter Lucy. Together Paula and Lucy make a separate peace.

Neil Simon likes to people his stories with quirky characters and then lead them into ironic conflicts that seem even weirder the closer you get. His most popular play, THE ODD COUPLE introduced two quirky characters, his popular Felix Ungar and Oscar Madison.

[THE GOODBYE GIRL, Thursday, April 23, 10:00 PM]

[-mrl]

SALVATION LOST by **Peter F. Hamilton** (copyright 2019, Del Rey, 494pp, ASIN B07NCRHWPM) (book review by Joe Karpierz):

SALVATION LOST is the second book in British writer Peter F. Hamilton's "Salvation Sequence". To review just a bit, SALVATION, the first book in the series, shows a utopian human society all over the galaxy. Essentially instantaneous transportation between star systems. Prosperity. Peace. Yes, there's still crime, there's still greed, because no society is perfect (as we find out about this one). But if there's one thing that's true, it's that the setting of the Salvation Sequence is a true post-scarcity society. But more about that later.

SALVATION introduced a race of beings called the Olyix. They were benevolent, friendly. They traded technology--specifically k- cells, a sort of medical swiss army knife--in exchange for having some of their needs filled so they could continue on their journey to ... wherever they were going. At the end of SALVATION, we learned a dark secret about the Olyix; they weren't who they seemed to be.

It turns out that the Olyix were the bad guys in this story. They are on a religious pilgrimage to the end of the universe to meet their god, and they are intent on taking every race they can find with them. And thus, SALVATION LOST turns into one heck of an alien invasion story, a story of how the human race is brought to its knees but is still fighting back in every way it knows how. And it's losing the battle.

SALVATION LOST is a very typical Hamilton book. Grand in scope. Cosmic ideas. Alien threats. Heroes. Villains. Grand consequences for the characters and for humanity. The stakes get higher and higher as the danger gets higher and higher. I love this kind of stuff. This is the kind of stuff that I grew up on. Yet, Hamilton updates the story for the 21st century, because he knows his readers have more sophisticated and updated tastes than those from the 40s and 50s. His ability to merge the old with the new make his novels interesting and exciting. As is also usual with a Hamilton novel, the story involved multiple characters in multiple locations with multiple timelines, and yet he is able to tie them all together so that the reader can see how everything fits.

If there is a beef with Hamilton's novels--and it's not one of my beefs, certainly--is the lack of what we might call realism in

the sense that a post-scarcity society might be a bit difficult to envision. Readers may like the idea of that kind of society, but it's not something we're likely to encounter. At least one character is so wealthy and spoiled that it's hard to believe that she exists. And while there are characters that are taking on dubious jobs to gain cash, one never gets the impression that they're that hard up for cash.

Still, there is a segment of the reading population that lives for this kind of stuff, and I'm one of them. I've yet to read a Hamilton book that I don't like, and I include this one. I'm looking forward to the conclusion of the story, SAINTS OF SALVATION, later in 2020. [-jak]

Retro Hugo Awards (letter of comment by Jack Bohn):

In response to [Evelyn's comments on films eligible for the Retro Hugo Awards this year](#) in the 03/06/20 issue of the MT VOID, Jack Bohn writes:

Of the Oscar-nominated shorts, I'd recommend the George Pal Puppetoon "And to Think I Saw It on Mulberry Street." There's also an overlooked Raggedy Ann cartoon "Suddenly It's Spring."

[BETWEEN TWO WORLDS] One of the ones I was thinking of. I've seen it and 1930's OUTWARD BOUND, of which it is a remake. I suppose I should see THEY CAME TO A CITY and HALFWAY HOUSE for a complete comparison.

[THE CANTERVILLE GHOST] The other one I was thinking of. I'm surprised to see this came out before MEET ME IN ST. LOUIS, the character Margaret O'Brien plays here seems a slightly toned down version of the sorta Wednesday Addams prototype she played there. I wonder why this isn't better known. Perhaps it would be better if the full price of an act of bravery had been paid. We have the one ghost, and there's a time in the celebration at the end where Robert Young's character could realize he's become one, too. But, as wartime propaganda, perhaps they don't want to point out that soldiers are likely to die.

[THE PHANTOM] Is this the serial? You have it as a short form.

I notice you haven't listed THE MUMMY'S GHOST and THE MUMMY'S CURSE, not that they'd be nominated.

Evelyn responds:

Yes, THE PHANTOM is the serial; it somehow got misplaced. And I have no idea how THE MUMMY'S GHOST and THE MUMMY'S CURSE fell off the list--those are probably the two I am most familiar with, having seen each probably a dozen times in the last two decades. [-ecl]

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

I have been listening to THE LIFE AND WRITINGS OF C. S. LEWIS from the Great Courses (lecturer Louis Markos), and my one warning about this course would be that Markos is clearly a "true believer" who seems to think that all of Lewis's theology/philosophy is not just true, but *obviously* true.

For example, he talks about how many people think that Lewis is a misogynist in not seeing women as equal, but really Lewis is a proto-feminist in seeing men and women as complementary. Of course, he also thinks this complementarity should occur in a hierarchical society, by which he means a patriarchal society. Basically, Lewis's hierarchy (in THAT HIDEOUS STRENGTH) works for the same reason Robert A. Heinlein's society in STARSHIP TROOPERS works--because he wrote it that way. (Lewis's N.I.C.E., which fails for the same reason, seems patterned a bit after H. G. Wells's "Wings Over the World", though it is possible that this is more a common trope than a direct homage.)

Markos also seems okay with the idea that Ransom can kill Weston in PERELANDRA, even though Ransom is a Christian and is not supposed to kill, because Weston has become pure evil and so is not really human anymore (or alternatively has been taken over by a demon and is not really human anymore). I hope anyone who has seen the film "The Eternal Jew" sees immediately where this can lead. (The 1940 film pre-dates Lewis's 1943 book, but in fairness to Lewis, he probably had not seen the film, and knowledge of the true situation under the Nazis was not widely known in 1943.)

A couple of Markos's comments on THE LAST BATTLE were particularly interesting.

Lewis writes talks about how Aslan judged everyone who came before him, sending them either to Aslan's left (into darkness) or Aslan's right (into light). Markos says this is a reference to Matthew 25:33-34: "And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." However, this separation reminded me of the selection at Auschwitz, which (ironically?) was the reverse: with the guards' right being death and their left being life.

(Obviously, left and right were reversed from the point of view of the prisoners, which is how it is usually expressed, with left as death and right as life.)

At one point, our heroes go through a door into a stable, but find themselves in the outside of another world. They say, "It seems then, ... that the Stable seen from within and the Stable seen from without are two different places. ... Its inside is bigger than its outside. ... In our world too, a Stable once had something inside it that was bigger than our whole world." This was written in 1956, and may have provided the original inspiration for the Tardis in "Doctor Who", which began broadcasting in 1963.

And when I read THE LAST BATTLE to look into these, I came across another couple of things to mention. Lewis writes the following' "If the Beasts asked night after night to see Aslan, and no Aslan was brought out, surely even the simplest of them would get suspicious." This would certainly seem to argue against faith in the unseen (and unseeable), though it is hard to believe that Lewis intended this.

At the end of Narnia, a horn is blown and Lewis writes, "Immediately the sky became full of shooting stars. Even one shooting star is a fine thing to see; but these were dozens, and then scores, and then hundreds, till it was like silver rain: and it went on and on." Contrast this with Arthur C. Clarke's description of the end: "Overhead, without any fuss, the stars were going out." ["The Nine Billion Names of God"]

Lewis also has Emeth relate, "But the Glorious One bent down his golden head and touched my forehead with his tongue and said, Son, thou art welcome. But I said, Alas, Lord, I am no son of thine but the servant of Tash. He answered, Child, all the service thou hast done to Tash, I account as service done to me. Then by reasons of my great desire for wisdom and understanding, I overcame my fear and questioned the Glorious One and said, Lord, is it then true, as the Ape said, that thou and Tash are one? The Lion growled so that the earth shook (but his wrath was not against me) and said, It is false. Not because he and I are one, but because we are opposites, I take to me the services which thou hast done to him. For I and he are of such different kinds that no service which is vile can be done to me, and none which is not vile can be done to him. Therefore if any man swear by Tash and keep his oath for the oath's sake, it is by me that he has truly sworn, though he know it not, and it is I who reward him."

This would seem to endorse the Catholic theology of salvation by works, rather than the Protestant salvation by grace, yet the Narnia books are much loved by Protestants, and particularly by evangelicals. [-ecl]

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Quote of the Week:

People freaking out about a week of at-home quarantine
is why generation ships to the stars aren't the slam
dunk some people think they are.

--John Scalzi

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