



Table of Contents

- Mark's Picks for Turner Classic Movies for May
Middletown (NJ) Public Library Science Fiction Discussion Group
Free E-Books from NASA and the Hubble Telescope
James Webb Space Telescope Finds Sign of Possible Exoplanet Life
Translations
Rashomon-type Stories
This Week's Reading
Quote of the Week

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The latest issue is at http://www.leepers.us/mtvoid/latest.htm.
An index with links to the issues of the MT VOID since 1986 is at http://leepers.us/mtvoid/back_issues.htm.

Middletown (NJ) Public Library Science Fiction Discussion Group:

May 1 AELITA: QUEEN OF MARS (1924) & novel by Alexei Tolstoy (1923)
https://tinyurl.com/haopla-Aelita

Mark's Picks for Turner Classic Movies for May (comments by Mark R. Leeper and Evelyn C. Leeper):

Two For One: "A new limited series airing for thirteen consecutive Saturday evenings beginning April 6th at 8PM EDT ... will explore the history, artform and allure of the double feature, a staple of moviegoing for decades. Join TCM host Ben Mankiewicz each Saturday evening as he sits down with a different filmmaker who has carefully curated a double bill of films to share. From comforting combinations to surprising and thought-provoking duos, we will showcase how these films connect, entertain, and speak to each other and the viewer."

The stand-out May double feature (and indeed, the stand-out films for May) are the two chosen by Spike Lee for May 4: A FACE IN THE CROWD (1957) and ACE IN THE HOLE (1951).

A FACE IN THE CROWD tells the story of "Lonesome Rhodes" from being a no-account bum to being one of the most powerful and most dangerous men in America. A FACE IN THE CROWD features Andy Griffith in one of his almost-serious roles. In this 1957 political drama Andy Griffith (in one of his almost-serious roles) plays Lonesome Rhodes, a bum in a drunk tank who gets a chance to perform on the radio. He is amazingly popular with his listeners and soon he is a media sensation. As his popularity builds across the country and soon he becomes aware of the political influence he has over his audience and he makes himself one of the most powerful and most dangerous men in the country. The film is an entertaining essay in how the public can be swayed and controlled. This is a powerful film that is timelier today than when it was made in 1957. It also features Patricia Neal and Walter Matthau, and was directed by the great (and controversial) Elia Kazan from a screenplay by Budd Schulberg.

Both actor Kirk Douglas and director/writer Billy Wilder were known in 1951 for films in which they showed a cynical view of human nature. In ACE IN THE HOLE (a.k.a. THE BIG CARNIVAL) we have the double whammy of both. This is a neatly written story about politics and how the news media can be manipulated to control a reaction from the public. Douglas plays Chuck Tatum, a very talented newsman who nonetheless has been thrown off all the major newspapers for drinking and/or sex. Now his huge talent has landed him alone and penniless with a broken- down car driving through Albuquerque where he wheelless his way onto the local newspaper. He is waiting for an even a medium interest story he can build up to national news. But it seems like it will never come.

Flash to a year later and the biggest story for him to cover, with a cub reporter, is a rattlesnake hunt. It is not exactly a "stop the presses story. But on the way he stops for gasoline. He sends the cub reporter in and the boy come back out saying there is a woman inside praying with all her might. Tatum realizes there is a big exploitable story here someplace. The woman's son was in the cave looking for Indian relics and was caught in a cave-in he cannot pull himself out. Tatum realizes this is a story with real exploitation value and decides that this situation has the potential to be made into a story that will be front-page news all across the country. With Tatum's help people from miles around flock to the site where a rescue will take place. The film can be read as a cynical comedy.

[A FACE IN THE CROWD (1957), Saturday, May 2, 8:00 PM]
[ACE IN THE HOLE (1951), Saturday, May 2, ???? PM]

[-mrl/ecl]

And some comments on some other films:

May 1 seems to be a day of science fiction (see below).

May 20 is ancient epics (see below). LAND OF THE PHARAHOHS is of special interest to engineers.

[-ecl]

Other films of interest include:

WEDNESDAY, May 1
6:00 AM From the Earth to the Moon (1958)
7:45 AM The Snow Devils (1965)
9:30 AM The Green Slime (1969)
11:15 AM Moon Zero Two (1969)
1:15 PM Countdown (1968)
3:00 PM Toward The Unknown (1956)
5:00 PM Plan 9 from Outer Space (1959)
6:30 PM The Thing from Another World (1951)

FRIDAY, May 3
12:30 PM The Unholy Three (1930)
1:45 PM The Mind Reader (1933)
8:00 PM Dead Men Don't Wear Plaid (1982)

SATURDAY, May 4
8:24 AM The Walking Dead (1936)
1:45 PM Angels in the Outfield (1951)
8:00 PM A Face in the Crowd (1957)
10:15 PM Ace in the Hole (1951)

MONDAY, May 6
11:30 PM Yellowface: Asian Whitewashing and Racism in Hollywood (2019)

WEDNESDAY, May 8
12:30 AM Forbidden Planet (1956)

SATURDAY, May 11
6:00 AM Rudyard Kipling's Jungle Book (1942)
8:26 AM Attack of the 50 Foot Woman (1958)
8:00 PM The Fisher King (1991)
10:30 PM Synecdoche, New York (2008)

WEDNESDAY, May 15
2:15 PM A Guy Named Joe (1943)
8:00 PM Gigi (1958)

SUNDAY, May 19
8:00 PM The Muppets Take Manhattan (1984)

MONDAY, May 20
8:30 AM The Last Days of Pompeii (1935)
10:15 AM The Slave (1962)
12:15 PM Land of the Pharaohs (1955)
2:15 PM The Silver Chalice (1954)
4:45 PM Quo Vadis (1951)

WEDNESDAY, May 22
12:15 AM Donkey Skin (1970)
2:00 AM The Glass Slipper (1955)
3:45 AM Brigadoon (1954)
5:45 AM The Thief of Bagdad (1940)
7:45 AM Lord of the Flies (1963)
9:45 PM Harvey (1950)

TUESDAY, May 28
6:15 AM Mummy's Boys (1936)
7:30 AM My Demon Lover (1987)
9:00 AM The Smiling Ghost (1941)
10:30 AM Singapore Woman (1941)
11:45 AM The Reptile (1966)
1:30 PM Death Curse of Tartu (1966)
6:00 PM Sphinx (1981)
10:00 PM King Kong (1933)

WEDNESDAY, May 29
12:00 AM Metropolis (1926)
2:45 AM Modern Times (1936)
4:15 AM Eraserhead (1977)
6:00 AM Beauty and the Beast (1946)

Free E-Books from NASA and the Hubble Telescope (comments by Evelyn C. Leeper):

NASA has released a Hubble Focus: The Dark Universe, a free e-book that explores what the Hubble mission has taught scientists about dark matter and dark energy--and how those lessons are shaking up long-standing theories. This and many other free NASA e-books about and from the Hubble Telescope are available in EPUB and PDF formats at https://science.nasa.gov/mission/hubble/multimedia/e-books/. (EPUB can be converted to MOBI using Calibre or others programs.) [-ecl]

James Webb Space Telescope Finds Sign of Possible Exoplanet Life (letter of comment by Gregory Frederick):

Gregory Frederick writes:

The James Webb Space Telescope finds a molecule in the atmosphere of a (assumed) giant water world 120 light years away which can only be produced on Earth by living organisms. This is very tentative info at this time since more transits of that planet around its star are needed to confirm this. It also discovered water vapor in that atmosphere too.

https://www.popularmechanics.com/space/deep-space/a45156012/jwst-sees-signs-of-alien-life-molecule-exoplanet/

[-gf]

Translations (letters of comment by Gary McGath and Hal Heydt):

In response to Evelyn's comments on translations in the 04/19/24 issue of the MT VOID, Gary McGath writes:

[Evelyn wrote,] "... in Spanish both "ape" and "monkey" are called "mono". [-ecl]

German and French also use the same word for monkey and ape. This causes problems in "Discworld" translations, where the Librarian (an orangutan) will get violently offended if you call him a monkey. [-gmg]

And Hal Heydt writes:

As for translations.... Dorothy was quite pleased with the German translation of her short-short "Things Come in Threes" (published in the first volume of MZB's "Sword and Sorceress" series). At the end, as Cynthia is looking down at the chaos of the three demons going through the Roman army, the translation rendered "chaos" as "tohuabohu". That's one of the very rare German borrowing from Hebrew and it's the "without form and void" from the Bible. A fitting match to the Greek concept of "chaos". [-hh]

"Rashomon-type" Stories (letter of comment by Peter Trei):

In response to Evelyn's comments on "Rashomon-type" books in the 04/12/24 issue of the MT VOID, Peter Trei writes:

[Evelyn wrote,] "There seems to be a recent increase in "Rashomon"-type books. By that I mean books that tell the story told in a famous work from a different point of view." [-ecl]

Larry Niven (with Fred Lerner) Rashomons most of his own "Known Space" stories in the '...of Worlds' books. [-pt]

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

The Guys at "Classical Stuff You Should Know" have gotten to Richard III in their seemingly endless history of the Plantagenets (sixteen episodes so far, by my count), and the next episode will presumably cover Richard's short reign and thus end the series. So it is time to plug TO PROVE A VILLAIN edited by Taylor Littleton and Robert R. Rea (MacMillan, ISBN 978-0-023-71360-6). This is, I believe, the go-to source for those of us who do not have access to the British Library and various monkish archives. It contains the full texts of William Shakespeare's RICHARD III and Josephine Tey's THE DAUGHTER OF TIME, as well as extracts from:

- Shakespeare's "HENRY VI, PART 3)"
Sir Thomas More's "The History of King Richard the III"
Polydore Vergil's "English History"
the Abbey of Croyland's "Chronicle"
John Dolamn, Francis Seager, and Thomas Churchyard's "A Mirror for Magistrates"
Raphael Holinshed's "Chronicles"
Sir Francis Bacon's "History of the Reign of the Henry VII"
Horace Walpole's "Historic Doubts on the Life and Reign of King Richard the Third"
Charles Dickens's "A Child's History of England"
Clements R. Markham's "Richard III: A Doubtful Verdict Reviewed"
J. Dover Wilson's "A Note on Richard III"
A. R. Meyers's "The Character of Richard III"

People who have read THE DAUGHTER OF TIME will find a lot of familiar arguments in Markham's article (and vice versa). I suspect it was one of Tey's main sources.

I have written extensive comments about the whole Richard III controversy in the MT VOID (09/19/16 and 08/04/23), which can be found at http://leepers.us/evelyn/reviews/churchill.htm#englishspeaking beginning with Winston Churchill's comments, which are not included in TO PROVE A VILLAIN, quite possibly for copyright reasons. [-ecl]

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Quote of the Week:

The future isn't what it used to be.
--Yogi Berra

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