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Middletown (NJ) Public Library Science Fiction Discussion Group: April 14 (Thu): ON THE BEACH by Nevil Shute, Middletown (NJ) Public Announcement of Middletown (NJ) science fiction discussion group:

June 6: INCEPTION (2010) & short story "The Circular Ruins" (1940)
by Jorge Luis Borges
https://books.google.com/books?id=1PrJqQRILaoC&pg=PA7

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

For the 80th anniversary of the \_Day landings, how could we not recommend Turner's D-Day marathon: 24 hours, 11 films about D-Day?

THURSDAY, June 6
6:00 AM Code Name: Emerald (1985): A spy tries to get information about D-Day plans.
8:00 AM The Americanization of Emily (1964): A British war widow falls for an American sailor.
10:00 AM George Stevens: A Filmmaker's Journey (1984): Biography of one of the directors who filmed combat footage during WWII.
12:00 PM 36 Hours (1964): Nazis use subterfuge to try to convince an American that the war is over.
2:00 PM Red Ball Express (1952): Focuses on racial integration in one platoon.
3:30 PM D-Day the Sixth of June (1956): Love triangle set in Britain before the Normandy invasion.
5:30 PM George Stevens: D-Day to Berlin (1994): Documentary covering the push from D-Day to Berlin.
6:30 PM Overlord (1975): A soldier trains for D-Day.
8:00 PM Saving Private Ryan (1998): Surely everyone knows the plot of this one.
11:00 PM The Longest Day (1962): The major film about D-Day with the usual epic scale and dozens of stars.
2:15 AM Eye of the Needle (1981): A German spy tries to leave Britain with information about D-Day.
4:15 AM I See a Dark Stranger (1946): A Irish woman becomes a Nazi spy.

If you aren't up to seeing them all, the most important ones to see would be SAVING PRIVATE RYAN and THE LONGEST DAY. Of SAVING PRIVATE RYAN, Mark wrote at the time, "This is perhaps the most realistic and at the same time perhaps the most violent war film ever made. Eight men are sent on a mission of mercy in the week following the Normandy Invasion. Along the way we see the invasion of Europe from the perspective of a grunt soldier. It is not a pleasant sight. This is an answer to every war movie that ever made battle look glorious. Rating: 9 (0 to 10), +3 (-4 to +4)".

Before SAVING PRIVATE RYAN came out, THE LONGEST DAY was considered the definitive D-Day film, and in some sense it still is. While SAVING PRIVATE RYAN covers D-Day, a lot of time is spent on the (fictional) story of trying to find the fifth brother from a family after the first four have been killed in combat that day. THE LONGEST DAY, on the other hand, is strictly about the D-Day invasion and sticks pretty much to the facts. Yes, the dialogue is not necessarily exactly what was said, and some some incidents might be fictionalized, but it doesn't invent an entire story line.

For documentaries, "George Stevens: D-Day to Berlin" is more D-Day-specific than the more general Stevens biography..

On the other hand, if you've already seen those, try sampling some of the lesser-known ones.

["George Stevens: D-Day to Berlin" (1994), Thursday, June 6, 5:30 PM]
[SAVING PRIVATE RYAN (1998), Thursday, June 6, 8:00 PM]
[THE LONGEST DAY (1962), Thursday, June 6, 11:00 PM]

[-mrl/ecf]

Other films of interest include:

SATURDAY, June 1
1:45 PM The Bad Seed (1956)
4:15 PM The Boy with Green Hair (1948)
MONDAY, June 3
4:00 PM Ben-Hur (1959)
WEDNESDAY, June 5
7:00 AM Cat People (1942)
8:15 AM The Picture of Dorian Gray (1945)
THURSDAY, June 6
6:00 AM Code Name: Emerald (1985)
8:00 AM The Americanization of Emily (1964)
10:00 AM George Stevens: A Filmmaker's Journey (1984)
12:00 PM 36 Hours (1964)
2:00 PM Red Ball Express (1952)
3:30 PM D-Day the Sixth of June (1956)
5:30 PM George Stevens: D-Day to Berlin (1994)
6:30 PM Overlord (1975)
8:00 PM Saving Private Ryan (1998)
11:00 PM The Longest Day (1962)
2:15 AM Eye of the Needle (1981)
4:15 AM I See a Dark Stranger (1946)
FRIDAY, June 7
4:15 AM I See a Dark Stranger (1946)
SUNDAY, June 9
12:15 AM Never Open the Door (1952)
10:00 AM Never Open the Door (1952)
MONDAY, June 10
8:00 PM Psycho (1960)
MONDAY, June 17
4:15 AM Judex (1963)
10:00 PM Superman: The Movie (1978)
FRIDAY, June 21
6:15 PM The Strangler (1964)
SUNDAY, June 23
8:15 AM Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde (1932)
MONDAY, June 24
8:15 AM Watership Down (1978)
10:00 AM The Thing From Another World (1951)
8:00 PM The Hunchback of Notre Dame (1939)
TUESDAY, June 25
1:30 PM Brigadoon (1954)
WEDNESDAY, June 26
6:00 AM The Story of Mankind (1957)
2:45 PM The Beast with Five Fingers (1946)
4:15 PM You'll Find Out (1940)
6:00 PM M (1931)
THURSDAY, June 27
6:00 AM Dracula A.D. 1972 (1972)
7:45 AM The Satanic Rites of Dracula (1973)
9:30 AM It's Alive (1974)
11:15 AM From Beyond the Grave (1973)
1:00 PM Equinox (1970)
2:30 PM The Shout (1978)

[-ecf]

THE SOUL OF BATTLE by Victor Davis Hanson (book review by Gregory Frederick):

Victor Davis Hanson's THE SOUL OF BATTLE is a compelling historical analysis that explores the profound and transformative nature of military leadership in times of great moral crisis. Hanson, a respected historian and classicist, delves into the lives and campaigns of three extraordinary generals--Epaminondas of Thebes, William Tecumseh Sherman of the United States, and George Patton of World War II fame. Through these case studies, Hanson examines how these leaders, driven by a deep sense of moral duty and strategic brilliance, led armies that not only achieved remarkable military victories but also brought about significant societal change.

Hanson's narrative is meticulously structured, dividing the book into three main sections, each dedicated to one of the featured generals. This tripartite framework allows for an in-depth exploration of each leader's unique context, strategies, and impact. Hanson skillfully intertwines detailed historical accounts with broader thematic reflections, creating a narrative that is both informative and thought-provoking.

The first section on Epaminondas introduces readers to a relatively lesser-known figure in Western history. Hanson portrays Epaminondas as a visionary leader whose innovative tactics at the Battle of Leuctra not only defeated the Spartan army but also shattered their hegemony in ancient Greece. Hanson's analysis highlights how Epaminondas's leadership was driven by a profound belief in the liberation of the Helots (Spartan serfs), showcasing a blend of military genius and moral purpose.

The second part of the book shifts to the American Civil War, focusing on Sherman's infamous "March to the Sea." Hanson presents Sherman as a complex figure whose harsh tactics were aimed at breaking the Confederacy's will to fight and hastening the end of the war. Through a detailed recounting of Sherman's campaigns, Hanson underscores the general's strategic foresight and his belief in the moral imperative to end slavery, arguing that his ruthlessness was a necessary evil in the quest for a just peace.

The final section on George Patton offers a nuanced portrait of the controversial World War II general. Hanson depicts Patton as a warrior-scholar, whose aggressive and bold tactics were crucial in the Allied victories in North Africa and Europe. While acknowledging Patton's flaws and often abrasive personality, Hanson emphasizes his relentless pursuit of excellence and his unwavering commitment to the defeat of Nazi tyranny. Patton's aggressive style of out-flanking the enemy and pursuing them as they retreated saved many lives on both sides and could have ended the war in 1944 if he was allowed to do things his way.

One of the book's central themes is the idea that true military greatness is not just about tactical prowess, but also about a deep moral vision. Hanson argues that Epaminondas, Sherman, and Patton were united by their ability to see beyond the immediate battlefield to the broader implications of their actions for society. This perspective challenges readers to consider the ethical dimensions of military leadership and the ways in which warfare can be a catalyst for positive change.

THE SOUL OF BATTLE is a thought-provoking and richly detailed examination of military leadership and its broader implications. Hanson's book offers valuable insights into the soul of battle and the enduring impact of visionary leadership in times of moral crisis; it is a great read. [-gf]

Choices (letter of comment by Norman Salt):

In response to Evelyn's comments on supermarket choices in the 05/24/24 issue of the MT VOID, Norman Salt writes:

Choices. People need and like to have choices. However, too many choice backfires because it causes frustration and then people give up and purchase nothing. [-ns]

Evelyn responds:

True. The best depiction of this is Russian defector Vladimir Ivanoff (Robin Williams) in the coffee aisle in MOSCOW ON THE HUDSON. [-ecf]

Which Side of History? (letter of comment by Charles S. Harris):

In response to Gary McGath's comments on history in the 05/24/24 issue of the MT VOID, Charles S. Harris writes:

Gary McGath asks, "How long does it take to determine someone is on the right or wrong side of history? Trends can be reversed [...]. Was Augustus Caesar on the right side of history? [...] Was Lenin? [-gmg]

I'll add: Was Jane Roe (of Roe v. Wade)?

Oh, wait, she later changed sides. [-csh]

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

I listen to a lot of radio adaptations of books and stories, in particular the BBC adaptations of Agatha Christie's Hercule Poirot and Miss Marple novels, the BBC adaptations of all of Doyle's Sherlock Holmes stories (and some new ones) starring Clive Merrison and Michael Williams, and Raymond Chandler's Philip Marlowe stories. And one thing I have noticed is how an adaptation can improve a story, or it can detract from it.

For example, in the radio version of Agatha Christie's "The Adventure of the Christmas Pudding", we hear the cook say that in keeping with tradition everyone in the house stirred the pudding. Person X say to Person Y that they (X) had put the jewel in the pudding during that "ceremony", and the cook say that they served the New Year's pudding, because the Christmas pudding accidentally got dropped on Christmas morning. But how did X manage to make sure the jewel got from the pot into the New Year's pudding? The book makes clear that X put the jewel into the pudding after it was in the mold.

Conversely, in Arthur Conan Doyle's "The Adventure of the Priory School", Holmes says that they had convinced the murderer to keep silent about someone else's involvement. But it's clear that he is going to hang; what inducement could they give him? In the radio version, Holmes adds that they have promised to take care of his family in exchange for his silence. [-ecf]

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Quote of the Week:

If I were a medical man, I should prescribe a holiday
to any patient who considered his work important.
--Bertrand Russell

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