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TOPIC:

- September 5: THE HUNGER GAMES (2012) & novel by Susan Collins
October 10 (not October 3): TBA
November 7: Halloween Horror fest: THE METAMORPHOSIS & novella by Franz Kafka
December 5: Xmas double feature TBA

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

We have two recommendations this month.

7 FACES OF DR. LAO (1964) is based on the 1935 book THE CIRCUS OF DR. LAO by Charles G. Finney. The book won the National Book Award for Most Original Book; the film adaptation by Charles Beaumont does depart from the book in many ways, but it still a very good film.

BIGGER THAN LIFE (1956) is at the opposite end of the spectrum of the fantastic. While THE 7 FACES OF DR. LAO is a Western comedy-fantasy with truly fantastical beings, BIGGER THAN LIFE is a film "ripped from tomorrow's headlines"--actually, from a fact article by Berton Rouche titled "Ten Feet Tall" which appeared in the New Yorker.

[7 FACES OF DR. LAO, Monday, September 9, 8:00AM]
[BIGGER THAN LIFE, Tuesday, September 3, 8:00PM]

And of course, there's the complete set of Val Lewton's nine horror films, plus the documentary "Val Lewton: The Man in the Shadows", on Friday the 13th.

[-mrl/eccl]

Other films of interest include:

SATURDAY, September 7
10:07 AM Tarzan and the Mermaids (1948)

THURSDAY, September 12
8:00 PM 2001: A Space Odyssey (1968)

FRIDAY, September 13
12:45 AM Logan's Run (1975)
3:00 AM Demon Seed (1977)
4:45 AM Brainstorm (1983)
6:45 AM The Seventh Victim (1943)
8:00 AM Cat People (1942)
9:15 AM The Curse of the Cat People (1944)
10:30 AM Bedlam (1946)
12:00 PM Isle of the Dead (1945)
1:15 PM The Ghost Ship (1943)
2:30 PM I Walked with a Zombie (1943)
3:45 PM The Leopard Man (1943)
5:00 PM The Body Snatcher (1945)
6:30 PM Martin Scorsese Presents, Val Lewton: The Man in the Shadows (2007)

SATURDAY, September 14
10:08 AM Tarzan's New York Adventure (1942)

SUNDAY, September 15
6:00 AM Cabin in the Sky (1943)
11:30 AM Oliver Twist (1948)

MONDAY, September 16
8:00 PM To Have and Have Not (1944)
10:00 PM The Big Sleep (1946)

TUESDAY, September 17
12:00 AM Dark Passage (1947)
2:00 AM Key Largo (1948)
4:00 AM Bacall on Bogart (1988)

WEDNESDAY, September 18
12:00 AM Jungle Book (1942)
10:45 AM The Enchanted Cottage (1945)
12:30 PM The Woman in White (1948)

THURSDAY, September 19
9:00 AM Tarzan's Savage Fury (1952)
10:00 PM Modern Times (1936)

FRIDAY, September 20
1:15 AM Metropolis (1926)
4:00 AM Westworld (1973)

SATURDAY, September 21
10:07 AM Tarzan's Desert Mystery (1943)
4:00 PM Soylent Green (1973)

SUNDAY, September 22
8:00 PM The Seven-Per-Cent Solution (1976)

MONDAY, September 23
6:00 AM A Midsummer Night's Dream (1935)

TUESDAY, September 24
2:15 PM The Seventh Victim (1943)
8:00 PM The Milagro Beanfield War (1988)

WEDNESDAY, September 25
10:15 AM Them! (1954)

THURSDAY, September 26
1:30 AM What Ever Happened to Baby Jane? (1962)

SATURDAY, September 28
10:08 AM Tarzan's Revenge (1938)

MONDAY, September 30
12:15 AM The Enchanted Cottage (1924)

Mayoral Candidate Vows to Let an AI Bot Run Wyoming's Capital City

https://www.washingtonpost.com/technology/2024/08/19/artificial-intelligence-mayor-cheyenne-vic/
https://wapo.st/3yNaHK2

Mayoral candidate vows to let VIC, an AI bot, run Wyoming's capital city

Mayoral candidate Victor Miller, a bespectacled librarian with an AI obsession, stood between an American flag and a Wyoming flag, preaching what he sees as the untapped potential of artificial intelligence in government.

AI would be objective. It wouldn't make mistakes. It would read hundreds of pages of municipal minutiae quickly and understand them. It would, he said, be good for democracy.

Miller made this pitch at a county library in Wyoming's capital on a recent summer Friday, with a few friends and family filling otherwise empty rows of chairs. Before the sparse audience, he vowed to run the city of Cheyenne exclusively with an AI bot he calls "VIC" for "Virtual Integrated Citizen."

AI experts say the pledge is a first for U.S. campaigns and marks a new front in the rapid emergence of the technology. Its implications have stoked alarm among officials and even tech companies.

...

The day before, Miller had scrambled to get VIC working after OpenAI, the technology company behind generative-AI tools like ChatGPT, shut down his account, citing policies against using its products for campaigning. Miller quickly made a second ChatGPT bot, allowing him to hold the meet-and-greet almost exactly as planned.

It was just the latest example of Miller's skirting efforts against his campaign by the company that makes the AI technology and the regulatory authorities that oversee elections. His ability to stay one step ahead of both illustrates how the use of AI is developing more quickly than efforts to regulate it. The case also highlights the ease with which the technology has seeped into politics ahead of the November election, spreading false information and injecting chaos into the campaign.

...

Rosenzweig-Ziff reported from Washington, and Sampson reported from Cheyenne, Wyo.

Tarzan (letters of comment by Gary McGath and Mike Van Pelt):

In response to Evelyn's review of L.TARZAN in the 08/23/24 issue of the MT VOID, Gary McGath writes:

Does Farmer address how Tarzan learned to speak English when he had access only to written and printed materials? [-gmg]

Mike Van Pelt responds:

When first contacted, Tarzan couldn't speak English. He could read and write it, but not speak or understand it.

The French ship captain he rescued taught him French, but not English. So, for a while, he could speak and understand French, but not read or write it, and could read and write English, but not speak or understand spoken English.

This amusing dilemma ended quickly, as he had the superpower of being able to learn a new language in about two pages. [-mvp]

Evelyn adds:

See also my comments on language-learning in PROJECT HAIL MARY and ARRIVAL in the same issue. [-eccl]

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

I find that my tastes have changed over the years--or have the authors' styles changed? I used to love Connie Willis's books, but when I started her latest, THE ROAD TO ROSWELL (Del Rey, ISBN 978-0-593-49985-6), I just couldn't get into it. It actually wasn't too bad until she got to the aliens, which is sort of the reverse that it is supposed to be. Anyway, at my age, life is too short to read 400-page books that I'm not enjoying.

One of the things that happens when you keep re-reading a book is that you keep finding new things--some good, some bad. I have previously commented on various "goofs" in THE MARTIAN by Andy Weir (Ballantine, ISBN 978-0-553-41802-6), such as having the laptop display boil off when it was taken outside, while the other laptops seem to have survived the Hab decompression.

So here are the latest: Watney talks about how the MAV for mission N is sent early enough that the pilot for mission N-1 can give it a precision soft landing, which couldn't be done from Earth. What he doesn't explain is how the *first* one got landed.

Also, it apparently took two days to set up the Hab, the solar cells, etc. What did the astronauts do before it was set up? Did they remain in their suits for two days? Watney seems to say elsewhere that the waste reclamation units in the suits were good for only short periods (although he also talks about a drill where they stayed in them for 48 hours [-eccl])

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Quote of the Week:

You see, wire telegraph is a kind of a very, very long cat. You pull his tail in New York and his head is meowing in Los Angeles. Do you understand this? And radio operates exactly the same way: you send signals here, they receive them there. The only difference is that there is no cat.
--Albert Einstein radio, when asked to describe radio

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