

And God Laughs...

The Arthur Jones Autobiography

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“You pay your money and you take your choice.”

Anon.

Many people have asked me which were my favorite books, and which films I liked best. But having read so many books, literally many thousands of them, and having seen thousands of films, it is not easy for me to answer such questions.

Mark Twain, particularly Huckelberry Finn, has long been a favorite of mine; and while many of his stories were intended for children, Huckelberry Finn was not. You will probably recognize everybody you ever knew therein. Some, but not all of Edgar Allen Poe’s published works; particularly the many shorter things that are not included in most of his supposedly complete works. You will have to search very carefully for these.

The Marquis de Sade is primarily considered to be a writer on the subject of sex; but he got in trouble and was thrown into prison for his political writing, with which most people are not familiar. Again, you will probably recognize every politician you ever heard of if you read that part of his work.

John D. McDonald’s stories, particularly those that had a Mexican setting, are usually very well done, and are always interesting.

B. Traven’s books and stories, one of which led to the film ‘The Treasure of the Sierra Madre,’ probably the best film of all time, are also very accurate in regard to Mexico and the people living there.

Anything and everything that you can find on the subject of Chaka Zulu, truly one of the most remarkable men of all time.

Lindberg’s Wartime Journals. The Soong Dynasty. Anything about Tesla, who was probably the greatest scientist and inventor in history, but who remains unknown to most people today. A long out-of-print book called ‘Men, Money and Machines,’ an account of the early history of the automobile industry.

The Conquest of Mexico. The Path Between the Seas. The True Believer. And so many others that the list would extend to hundreds of pages; so my advice is to read everything you can lay your hands on; but also to be very selective about what you believe.

Many of the earliest films were very bad: perhaps the worst being one that was called ‘The Amazing Adventures of the Clutching Hand;’ but it was so bad that it is worth watching. Another early, and very bad, film that is worth watching was called ‘Freaks;’ and the people used in that film really were freaks.

The first version of Trader Horn, produced about 1930, but not the later version that starred Robert Conrad. The earliest version of Mutiny on the Bounty, starring Clark Gable and Charles Laughton. The Treasure of the Sierra Madre, mentioned above, certainly the best film Humphrey Bogart ever starred in. Hell’s Angels and Scarface, both produced by Howard Hughes about 1930. The original Hunchback of Notre Dame. The earliest Frankenstein, but few if any of the later ones. All of the Will Rogers films and all of Wallace Beery’s films.

All of the travel and adventure films produced by Martin and Osa Johnson, but none of those made by Frank Buck, all of which were utterly phony. The original King Kong, but not the later version. Jaws, but none of the sequels. Wings, the first winner of the Academy Award. Most of Charlie Chaplin’s films. Anything with both Mae West and W. C. Fields in it. I Can Get It For You Wholesale. Midnight Cowboy. True Grit, but not the sequels. Hole In The Wall, also released as The Big Carnival. The War of the Worlds. The wartime version of the Memphis Belle, but not the later version. All Quiet on the Western Front. Lost Horizon. The General Died At Dawn. Suzie Wong. The Bridge on the River Kwai. The African Queen. A Tale of Two Cities. The original Dracula.

The Arthur Jones Collection

Again, a full list of the films that I enjoyed would be much too long; while a list of those that I did not enjoy would be much longer. Films like *Lawrence of Arabia* and *Papillon* are sheer fantasy, based upon characters that never did any of the things credited to them. And I never enjoyed the supposedly spectacular films made by Cecil B. DeMille and others; always believed that they had spent so much on props and sets that they then felt it was necessary to drag out these films in attempts to show the backgrounds, and thus made them boring.