

Humanist Association of Connecticut Book Discussion – Upcoming Books 2018

Saturday, January 20: *The Machine Stops* by E.M. Forster & *A Story of the Days to Come* by H.G. Wells

First published in 1909, Forster's short science fiction work, *The Machine Stops*, posits a technology-dependent humanity now living underground, its every need serviced by machines. But what happens if – or when – the machines stop? *The Machine Stops* was named one of the greatest science fiction novellas published before 1965 by the Science Fiction Writers of America.*

[*A Story of the Days to Come*] depicts two lovers in a dystopian future London of the 22nd century and explores the implications of excessive urbanization, class warfare, and advances in the technology of medicine, communication, transportation, and agriculture...Socially and economically, however, it predicts a very stratified class structure and a largely communal society where few mega-corporations control all means of production.**

Saturday, February 17: *The Righteous Mind: Why Good People are Divided by Politics and Religion* by Jonathan Haidt

As America descends deeper into polarization and paralysis, social psychologist Jonathan Haidt has done the seemingly impossible – challenged conventional thinking about morality, politics, and religion in a way that speaks to everyone on the political spectrum. [H]e shows how moral judgments arise not from reason but from gut feelings. He shows why liberals, conservatives, and libertarians have such different intuitions about right and wrong, and he shows why each side is actually right about many of its central concerns. In this subtle yet accessible book, Haidt gives you the key to understanding the miracle of human cooperation, as well as the curse of our eternal divisions and conflicts.*

“A landmark contribution to humanity’s understanding of itself. . . . Haidt is looking for more than victory. He’s looking for wisdom. That’s what makes *The Righteous Mind* well worth reading.” – *New York Times Book Review*

Saturday, March 17: *Margaret Fuller: A New American Life* by Megan Marshall

Pulitzer Prize winner Megan Marshall recounts the trailblazing life of Margaret Fuller: Thoreau’s first editor, Emerson’s close friend, daring war correspondent, tragic heroine. After her untimely death in a shipwreck off Fire Island, the sense and passion of her life’s work were eclipsed by scandal. Marshall’s inspired narrative brings her back to indelible life.*

“Megan Marshall’s brilliant *Margaret Fuller* brings us as close as we are ever likely to get to this astonishing creature. She rushes out at us from her nineteenth century, always several steps ahead, inspiring, heartbreaking, magnificent.” – Rebecca Newberger Goldstein

Saturday, April 21: *The Blithedale Romance* by Nathaniel Hawthorne

The Blithedale Romance is a work of fiction based on Hawthorne's recollections of Brook Farm, a short-lived agricultural and educational commune... The commune, an attempt at an intellectual utopian society, interested many famous Transcendentalists such as Ralph Waldo Emerson and Margaret Fuller...**

[The novel is a] superb depiction of a utopian community that cannot survive the individual passions of its members. In language that is suggestive and often erotic, Hawthorne tells a tale of failed possibilities and multiple personal betrayals as he explores the contrasts between what his characters espouse and what they actually experience in an 'ideal' community. A theme of unrealized sexual possibilities serves as a counterpoint to the other failures at Blithedale: class and sex distinctions are not eradicated, and communal work on the farm proves personally unrewarding and economically disastrous.*

"Hawthorne, in putting this novel together, was engaged in the most serious literary enterprise of his career." – Louis Auchincloss

All discussions are from 2-4 pm at the Unitarian Society of New Haven, 700 Hartford Turnpike, Hamden, CT.

* Description from Amazon.com website

** Description from wikipedia.org website