

# THE EPOCH TIMES

# ARTS &

# TRADITION

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## The Qipao

A stylish embodiment  
of Chinese tradition  
and grace... **8**



ESSENCE  
OF  
CHINA

## An Ancient Chinese Story

# The Mountain Deity and His Guard Wolf

ANONYMOUS

Long ago, Phoenix Mountain in Shandong Province was home to a secluded spiritual follower and his guard wolf. Through his Buddhist cultivation, the spiritual follower had already become a mountain deity. The two lived in a stone house inside a large cave in the mountain. The mountain deity was deeply fond of his wolf.

Every day, the mountain deity watched over the mountain and read Buddhist scriptures, while his guard wolf paid careful attention to him as he worshiped the Buddha and chanted the scriptures.

The wolf knew it could not undertake spiritual cultivation because it did not have a human body. However, it still memorized the scriptures by heart and was determined not to kill any more humans but rather to do good deeds. It did so in hopes of earning enough "de" (virtue) to obtain a human body in its next life, so that it would have the opportunity to cultivate and attain Buddhahood.

'Please Be Kind'

One morning, the hungry wolf asked the mountain deity for food. The mountain deity said: "Go to the dried river at noon today. There will be something for you to eat."

The wolf went to the dried river at noon and saw a blind man walking with a bamboo pole. In its hunger, it ran over and pushed the blind man to the ground.

The blind man pleaded with the wolf, saying: "Please be kind to me. I have an elderly mother at home waiting for me to bring her food. If you eat me, my poor mother will die of hunger. Please don't eat me."

Upon hearing that, the wolf could not bear to eat the blind man. It turned away and went to a nearby village. After a great deal of effort, it found a few chicken bones. Then it went back to the cave, still hungry.

Two weeks later, the wolf was extremely hungry again. It again went to the mountain deity to ask for food. The mountain

deity told his wolf, "Go to that dried river again at noon today. You will find food there."

It was snowing and freezing at noon. The wolf went to the dried river and saw an old lady carrying a baby in her arms. In its hunger, it ran over, pushed the old lady down, and snatched the baby in its mouth.

The wolf was just starting to run away when the old lady knelt down on the ground and pleaded: "Please be kind. He is the only grandson in my family. If you eat him, our family lineage will cease. Please don't eat him."

After hearing the old lady's plea, the wolf no longer had an appetite. It put the baby down and went to a nearby village to look for food. Snow blanketed everything, and it hunted for a long time without finding any food. Hungry and cold, the wolf dragged its tired body back to the cave.

After that, the weak wolf did not go out anymore and soon died of hunger.

The Temple Host and the Cub

The wolf reincarnated as a son in a family in the same village. The little boy enjoyed going to a local temple and often went with his family to burn incense for the Buddha statue.

When the boy was 13, he went to Phoenix Temple on Phoenix Mountain and became a monk. Phoenix Temple was near the cave where the old stone house used to be, where he, as a wolf in his previous life, had lived with the mountain deity.

The boy sincerely studied Buddhist teachings and cultivated his character. Then when he was 20 years old, he became the host of the temple.

As for the mountain deity, he had been very attached to the wolf, and after the wolf died, he lost all interest in watching over the mountain and reading Buddhist scriptures. Whenever he thought about the wolf starving to death, he lost his appetite and could not sleep. Then a few years later, he also died in the cave.

The mountain deity reincarnated as a yellow



The wolf was determined not to kill any more humans but rather to do good deeds.

low wolf cub in a litter of cubs on Phoenix Mountain. It started out growing well on its mother's milk. However, when its mother stopped nursing, it had great difficulty getting enough food to eat, since it had a clear idea of its previous life and did not want to kill. So the cub mainly ate leftovers from the other cubs and often went hungry.

Cultivating Buddhahood

The cub knew that people left food and fruit at Phoenix Temple, and it frequently went to the temple to find food and fruit to eat.

One day, while the cub was at the temple stealing fruit, the host of Phoenix Temple entered the hall. Upon seeing the cub, the host exclaimed in surprise: "Buddha Amitabha!" and welcomed the cub, saying, "Good, good, very good!"

The yellow cub looked at the host and

knew right away that he was the guard wolf in their previous lives.

The mountain deity had become a wolf, and the wolf had become the temple host.

Feeling great shame, the cub ran out of the temple to the other side of the mountain. It no longer wanted to live. Its only wish was to have a human body again so that it could cultivate Buddhahood.

Thus, the cub rammed itself into a big rock, bounced off the rock, and fell to its death in the valley.

This story illustrates how precious a human body is for a spiritual cultivator. Lifetime after lifetime, many people aspire to attain Buddhahood, but few succeed.

Translated by Dora Li into English, this story is reprinted with permission from the book "Treasured Tales of China," Vol. 1, available on Amazon.



Odysseus's next ordeal starts on the island of Aeolus. An etching from "The Contest of the Seasons," depicting the Rock of Aeolus, 1652, by Stefano della Bella. Bequest of Phyllis Massar, 2011, The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

ODYSSEUS AND THE ENNEAGRAM

## FINDING THE TRUE SELF Part 4

# The Sin of Gluttony

JAMES SALE

In this multipart series, "Finding the True Self," we will discuss nine types of personalities and their flaws, and show how Odysseus, through his adventures, overcame them to find his way back home.

Imagine a world of perpetual feasting and drinking, where one was above the ordinary and everyday cares of most human beings, and where one could contemplate and appreciate each new and interesting idea and snippet of information endlessly—a place where, indeed, the powerful winds of great ideas were likely to propel you to success wherever you desired to go. Such is the place called Aeolia, where Odysseus and his crew land next. How different from the land of the Cyclops!

We noticed in Parts 2 and 3 of this series, how Odysseus, in trying to return to Ithaca to be with his wife (a journey to

find his own soul), encountered two very different types of personality challenges or disorders: the deadly sin of Sloth, as represented by the Lotus-Eaters, and the deadly sin of Lust (for power), as exemplified by the Cyclops.

These personality types, Eight and Nine on the Enneagram typology, which we discussed in Part 1, have within them a central flaw that requires specific—and differing—actions to overcome.

It should come as no surprise, therefore, that as Odysseus escapes—by the skin of his teeth—from the island of the Cyclops, his next challenge in meeting the Seven personality type is different yet again, and requires even more ingenuity and resourcefulness.

As a reminder, Sevens are joyful, optimistic, and often inspiring people, who seek positive experiences and are always propelling themselves forward to find the next one.

Continued on Page 6

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TRUTH AND TRADITION

## HISTORY

# Climbing Mount Durant

The rewards of reading ‘The Story of Civilization’

JEFF MINICK

Eleven volumes in all. Total length: approximately 22 inches. Width per volume: 6 3/4 inches. Height per volume: 10 inches. Weight of volumes combined: 36.6 pounds. Number of pages: 8,945. Number of words: somewhere around 4,000,000. Such are the dimensions of Will and Ariel Durant’s “The Story of Civilization,” published between 1935 and 1975.

For 20 years, “The Story of Civilization” sat on my shelves. Three times I boxed up this Himalaya of History and moved it with my other belongings to a new home. When I was teaching history to home-schoolers, I might open one of these volumes to seek out a pertinent person or event, and take some notes for class, but otherwise there they squatted, forlorn and ignored, good only for decoration and for gathering dust.

In December of 2017, due to a variety of circumstances, I decided to tackle Mount Durant. For my New Year’s resolution, I vowed to read my way through this massive work within one year’s time. I decided to approach the books as I would a novel—it is, after all, the “story” of civilization—rather than as a textbook, and would set aside half an hour or so every day and climb the mountain.

I should add that while I can be the soul of determination in my daily work and my commitments to others, I generally fail at keeping special resolutions. I have broken Lenten vows on the same day as making them. I have composed resolutions on New Year’s Eve and cast them aside before the next morning’s sunlight brightened the window.

### For 20 years, ‘The Story of Civilization’ sat on my shelves.

The most amusing of these broken promises occurred one evening in March when my youngest son, then a teenager, asked me what I had given up for Lent. “I’m trying to stop complaining,” I said. “But it’s hard. I mean, really tough. I’m not sure I can do it.”

He burst out laughing. “I think you just broke your vow.”

He was right. I was complaining about complaining.

Tackling “The Story of Civilization” ended differently. Before the year was out, I had finished the last page of the last volume. For once, I had fulfilled a New Year’s resolution.

### The Pleasures Within

And that planting of the flag on Mount Durant brought rewards.

First was the pleasure I found in Durant’s prose. (After Volume VI, his wife Ariel shares credit along with Will as co-author.) Like Churchill and some other writers of that generation, Durant is a stylistic descendant of Edward Gibbon. His formal, rolling sentences and his command of the English language might put off some readers, but I found his prose enlivening and entertaining.

In part, the entertainment came via another of Durant’s charms, namely his epigrammatic wit. Here are just two examples from the volume “The Age of Louis XIV”:

She had an attentive husband but a bewitching voice; Racine eluded the one and surrendered to the other.

Durant writes here of an actress, Marie Champmesle, who became Racine’s mistress for a time.

In the portraits that have come down to us these ladies seem a bit ponderous, overflowing their corsages; but apparently the men of that time liked an adipose warmth in their amours.

Though Will and Ariel leaned left in their politics, they brought history into print as they believed it had occurred, not as they wished it to be. Such was his success that Will Durant’s friends and readers complained they could not tell whether he was a liberal or conservative, a confusion that apparently pleased Durant. Here, for

example, is a judgment from “Our Oriental Heritage” that must have produced much head-scratching among Durant’s progressive crowd:

The intellectual classes abandon the ancient theology and—after some hesitation—the moral code allied with it; literature and philosophy become anticlerical. The movement of liberation rises to an exuberant worship of reason, and falls to a paralyzing disillusionment with every dogma and every idea. Conduct, deprived of its religious supports, deteriorates into epicurean chaos; and life itself, shorn of consoling faith, becomes a burden alike to conscious poverty and to weary death. In the end a society and its religion tend to fall together, like body and soul, in a harmonious death. Meanwhile among the oppressed another myth arises, gives new form to human hope, new courage to chaos builds another civilization.

Finally, a daily dose of history reminded me of one of the many gifts of Clio, the muse of history: perspective.

In 2018, Donald Trump was our president, and what some observers called Trump Derangement Syndrome (TDS) had reached its peak. In Washington, commentators and politicians waged a war of hysteria and accusations rarely witnessed in our national politics. Not even the Watergate scandal had seen such a heavy barrage of bitter bombast. Other commentators inflated issues like toxic masculinity and environmental ruin into crises of the first magnitude.

According to some, we were living on the brink of disaster and in the worst of times. Really?

“The Story of Civilization” is crammed with real debacles and horrendous catastrophes. Here we can visit Germany during the Thirty Years War, when hundreds of thousands of civilians were murdered or raped, when starvation was so rampant that “In Alsace hanged offenders were torn from the gallows to be eagerly devoured.” We can shamble through the streets of Paris or London in the early 18th century, when the bulk of the population lived in dire poverty, diseases now eradicated or treatable bore off citizens by the battalions, the water was often non-potable, and the streets were a stew of mud, horse dung, and garbage.

My takeaway from “The Story of Civilization”: When we neglect the past, we are prisoners of the present and the playthings of the future. When we delve into the triumphs and calamities of our ancestors, we deepen our humanity and bring perspective to our present difficulties.

Jeff Minick has four children and a growing platoon of grandchildren. For 20 years, he taught history, literature, and Latin to semi-nars of homeschooling students in Asheville, North Carolina. Today he lives and writes in Front Royal, Virginia. See [jeffminick.com](http://jeffminick.com) to follow his blog.



Will Durant is a stylistic descendant of Edward Gibbon, the English historian, writer, and member of Parliament. Portrait by Henry Walton.



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A daily dose of history reminded me of one of the many gifts of Clio, the muse of history: perspective.



PD-US-EXPIRED

(Top) The 11-volume set of Will and Ariel Durant’s “The Story of Civilization.”

(Above) History reminds us that times have been a lot worse than they are now. “Soldiers Plundering a Farm During the Thirty Years War” by Sebastian Vrancx.

(Right) Will and Ariel Durant in the 1950s. Will Durant Foundation.



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Will Durant’s humor comes across when describing the times of Louis XIV. Portrait of Louis XIV by Hyacinthe Rigault.

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## ODYSSEUS AND THE ENNEAGRAM

## FINDING THE TRUE SELF Part 4

## The Sin of Gluttony

Continued from Page 3

But their deadly sin is Gluttony, or excess, and at their worst, they can be irresponsible and shallow.

**The Island of Aeolus**

From the island of the Cyclops, Odysseus and his crew arrive at the Aeolian island. Aeolus, the king, is “beloved by the gods who never die.” His island, with its with huge ramparts of “indestructible bronze” on sheer rock cliffs shooting up from sea to sky, is a “great floating island.” Its location, therefore, is not fixed, for it floats wherever its king wishes it to go.

Still, it is mightily impressive and seemingly indestructible. It can maneuver itself because the king has been given control of all the winds by Zeus himself.

Aeolus had six sons and six daughters, and the daughters were married to his sons, and they, along with he and his wife, feasted continually: “All day long the halls breathe the savor of roasted meats,” and there is the sound of the “low moan of blowing pipes.”

Indeed, the world of the Seven is a kind of perpetual paradise with a harmony and completeness totally unlike the Cyclops’ island.

Additionally, unlike the Cyclopes who are isolated and hostile, Aeolus is curious, generous, and open. He cannot wait to entertain Odysseus, to hear his tale, and to help him.

What could be wrong with all this? Why is this a problem, and how does it adversely affect Odysseus? First, we might be slightly taken aback by the incestuous nature of the six sons marrying the six daughters: an incest that suggests a closed system, which does not allow for any outsider to truly interfere or disturb their reveling.

Also, we might reflect that after Odysseus escapes from the Cyclops, the monster prays to his father, the sea god Poseidon. The prayer puts our hero at odds with the element of water, or in some way the subconscious and its emotions with all their turbulence that Odysseus has to overcome—indeed, that each of us has to overcome in our own lives.

But now, Odysseus meets the wind—the element of air, completely

different from water. Air invariably represents the mind, the intellect, and whereas that would appeal to Odysseus, the thinking man of many stratagems, it is (unlike water, which is fixed in its deep subconscious places) fluid, variable, and ultimately rootless.

The mind, reason itself, cannot establish itself. It is an act of faith that reason is reasonable! Hence, the floating, rootless island, shifting as the winds shift.

**A Glutton for New Ideas and Experiences**

The deadly sin of the Seven type is Gluttony. We see it in the perpetual feasting, but we need to understand this feasting metaphorically, as well as literally: it is a gluttony for experiences, for ideas, for visions of an ideal future that are paradisaical and endless in nature.

In brief, the Seven is the eternal optimist: the light, witty, sophisticated intellectual who simply loves, nay, who devours each new idea, new experience, and has a solution for everything. Sound familiar in today’s high-tech world?

And Aeolus, who with his people “feasts on forever,” likes Odysseus. He hosts him for a whole month, and then when Odysseus is about to leave, he gives him a gift—the solution to Odysseus’s problem—a magic sack (the technology?), which contains all the howling winds of the world in it.

Withholding just the West wind, Aeolus gives Odysseus the power to not get blown off course and, so, to have an easy route home.

But notice the words “easy route,” which should warn us because it is analogous to those warnings we hear from Wall Street: If an investment seems too good to be true, then it probably is too good to be true!

But it seems to work. It takes only nine days of sailing to nearly complete their journey. And note that number nine: Odysseus has seemingly completed the whole Enneagram typology of nine types, but without having actually experienced what six of them actually are. It’s a shortcut, in other words.

So on the 10th day, going beyond the nine types into a possible new state of being, the crew seems to have got there; they can see Ithaca,

and they can even see “men tending fires.” The soul is virtually home and dry.

Interestingly, the element of wind has aided them in getting so far, but now specks of fire appear. Fire often represents a new being coming into existence, as in the Phoenix rising from the burning ashes. The Greek Heraclitus imagined the cosmos as being mainly composed of a “fiery ether” and that the soul too was similarly constituted.

Odysseus is so close to being rejoined with his wife, Penelope, his true soul, and thus becoming integrated, and a “new” man. So close.

**Odysseus as a Seven**

But, Odysseus is also tired; he has worked amazingly hard. He falls

asleep. Tiredness is the reason given for his sleep, or perhaps more accurately, complete exhaustion. But part of this weariness is not just from the exertions he has made, but also from the fact that there was “no letup, never trusting the ropes to any other mate.”

This is a form of workaholicism. Odysseus, in following the advice of Aeolus, has taken on the Seven’s characteristics—the bad ones. The mind drives the body, but the emotions are no longer in sync; it’s a sure-fire sign of imminent disintegration. This is really a Seven at the end of his tether: He has relied on big ideas and his own resourcefulness to the exclusion of all else and all others, and this proves his undoing.



The winds have escaped and returned Odysseus’s ship to Aeolia. An etching of “Ulysses and Aeolus in the Cave of the Winds.” Circa 1600–1605, by Stradanus. Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen.



“Aeolus Giving the Winds to Odysseus,” by Isaac Moillon (1614–1673). Design for a tapestry. Musée de Tessé.

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▲ A mosaic depicting Aeolus in Volubilis, Morocco.

▶ An etching of Aeolus giving Odysseus the bag of winds, circa 1632, by Theodor van Thulden. From “The Labors of Ulysses.” Achenbach Foundation for Graphic Arts, Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco.

## The Seven’s eternal optimism and intellectual visions easily prove a trap for the unwary.

The mind can only take us so far, for if the emotional springs from which we derive our energy are depleted, we are doomed to fail.

And so, as he sleeps, gluttony reasserts itself. His men, or crew “members,” get to thinking that Odysseus is withholding treasure from them in the magic sack that controls—holds back—the adverse winds. As soon as they open it—

whoosh!—a violent storm breaks out, which drives them all the way back to Aeolia. They have achieved nothing, in other words.

Odysseus must then go back, cap in hand, to Aeolus to ask for his help a second time. However, this time

Aeolus is no longer the warm and welcoming friend. On the contrary, he thinks Odysseus is cursed by the gods and demands that he leave.

This reaction is classic Seven behavior: Aeolus has moved on; consistency of approach or attitude is of no concern to him. Like the winds themselves, he blows the way he wants at any given moment.

Yes, Sevens can provide a vision of the way home, and it can be very compelling, but the practicalities are not so important to them, and by the time things have worked out badly, Sevens have moved on to the next thing. (Sound like the careers of certain visionary entrepreneurs

and corporate leaders? Well, there are a lot of them out there!)

Thus, Odysseus is forced to leave Aeolia with nothing, and all he has for his labor is the initial excitement and feasting,” and then mere empty wind. The Seven’s eternal optimism and intellectual visions easily prove a trap for the unwary, and even for the man of many stratagems, Odysseus himself.

**Don’t Take Shortcuts**

This personality’s challenge, then, is not so overtly threatening as encountering an Eight, and it requires not so much a decisive act of will (as with the Lotus-Eaters), but rather

an ability to see beyond appearances, and a reluctance to overcommit to bright ideas that promise a shortcut.

Sevens are ideas people, and following their exact advice might get one permanently lost in an ocean of effort that ends up nowhere. Ask before investing in a Seven’s idea: What are the possible downsides?

Odysseus leaves Aeolia. “Six whole days we rowed, six nights, nonstop. On the seventh day we raised the Laestrygonian land.” After six days, they reach the

Six personality type—the topic of Part 5 in this series. It proves to be, perhaps, even more terrifying than encountering the Cyclopes.

This multipart series, “Finding the True Self,” will now appear every week.

James Sale is a poet and businessman whose company, Motivational Maps Ltd., operates in 14 countries. James will be appearing in New York to do talks and poetry readings for The Society of Classical Poets

on June 17, 2019, at Bryant Park and The Princeton Club. To meet James and for more information, go to [http://bit.ly/Poetry\\_and\\_Culture](http://bit.ly/Poetry_and_Culture)

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## CRAFTSMANSHIP

# THE QIPAO

A stylish embodiment of Chinese tradition and grace

FENZHI ZHANG

The qipao's sleek and elegant form is an image widely associated with Chinese style and aesthetic. And beyond that, this traditional dress serves as a physical record of the historic and cultural changes during China's 20th century. The qipao represents a rich cultural heritage and a sophisticated, intricate artistic custom.

### The Birth of an Iconic Garment

The origins of the qipao lie in the Qing Dynasty (1644-1912), when China was under the rule of the Manchus, an ethnic group that brought their own distinctive customs and clothing to the imperial court. For women, this was a long dress with a straight, relaxed fit that flared slightly at



(Above) The last imperial couple of China, the emperor Puyi with the empress Wan Rong. Wan Rong, who received a Western education, is wearing a short-sleeve embroidered qipao. Rumor says she asked her personal tailor to redesign the traditional Qing Dynasty qipao using Western techniques.

(Right) Two Manchurian women in Qing Dynasty-style qipaos.

the hem. This dress was the first ancestor of the qipao.

Over time, these Manchu-style dresses were influenced by elements of Han fashion. And in the 20th century, as Western learning grew in popularity in post-imperial China, the qipao began to move away from its long and relaxed fit. At the request of wealthy, educated, and fashion-forward young women, private Chinese tailors began to apply Western tailoring techniques, such as chest and waist darts and shoulder seams, to the loose-fitting qipao, giving it a flattering fitted silhouette.

As tailors continued to incorporate more elements of Western fashion into the qipao throughout the 1930s, the dress began to settle into the style we are familiar with today.

**A qipao's adornments, which consist of traditional Chinese elements, are especially exquisite.**



Anna May Wong, the first Asian-American Hollywood actress, in a qipao featuring a contrasting border on the lapel, collar, sleeves, slit, and hem.

### A Fashion Phenomenon

In the 30-some years of the Republic of China (1912-1949), ideas were freely exchanged between East and West. This led to a blending of tradition and modernity and the emergence of many talented scholars and great artists.

This dynamic period was documented in *The Young Companion*, one of the most widely distributed and most influential Chinese magazines at the time. In the spring of 1926, *The Young Companion* was first published in the international and fashion-forward city of Shanghai. The covers of *The Young Companion*, which often featured female actresses and celebrities wearing various styles of qipao, witnessed the ebb and flow of changing Chinese tastes and fashion ideals.



(Left) Indonesian actress Aminah Cendrakasih in 1959. Throughout the latter half of the 20th century, the qipao was popularized by celebrities all around the world. Tati Photo Studios, Jakarta.

(Below) Six of China's seven most renowned female singers of the 1940s. At this point, the qipao featured a wide range of different styles and patterns.



(Left) The cover of the December 1934 issue of *The Young Companion* featuring actress Ruan Lingyu, in an ankle-length, green-and-yellow checkered qipao with a high collar, short sleeves, and a rolled border. The border, a feature unique to the qipao, followed the dress along its collar, sleeves, slit, and hem, and, as it was difficult to make, it marked a qipao's quality.



Modern versions of the qipao grace the runway during the Heaven Gaia show of Paris Fashion Week in October 2016. Designer Ying Xiong's elaborate designs spotlighted traditional Chinese culture.



One of the most unique features of the qipao is the fasteners that adorn them. Handmade fasteners add refinement and elegance to a qipao.



Traditional Chinese embroidery often graces the qipao.

**Meticulous Detail**  
From measuring and sewing to decoration and embellishment, hand-making a qipao takes care and attention to detail. In particular, the qipao's adornments, which consist of traditional Chinese elements, are especially exquisite and visually stunning, giving the dress a unique grace and charm.

The fasteners that adorn qipao are unique to Chinese apparel and are known for their complex construction, elegant design, and ease of use. Handmade fasteners add refinement and grace to a qipao.

Another unique feature of the qipao is its various styles of borders, which follow the qipao around its collar, sleeves, slit, and hem. Some of the most popular styles are the contrasting border and rolled border, which is shaped like a thin round cord.

The surface of the qipao is embellished with exquisite, hand-sewn embroidery of different natural images. They can be displayed all along the dress, as a small detail, or even within a contrasting border.

Adorned with such intricate details, the qipao is a beautiful and enduring classic, uniting Western fashion techniques with a traditional Chinese aesthetic.

Written by Fenzhi Zhang and translated into English by Jenny Zhi, this article is republished with permission from *Elle Lifestyle Magazine*.

## LITERATURE

# SHAKESPEARE

## Research Blows Away Stereotypes and Reveals Teenagers Actually Love the Bard

CATHY BALDWIN

When you think of inner-city teenagers, what springs to mind? For many, it's hoodies, video games—and probably hating Shakespeare. But my research proves that this stereotype is far from the truth.

Shakespeare holds a contested place in the English national curriculum as the only compulsory writer to be studied between the ages of 11 and 16. This imposed curriculum attempts to situate Shakespeare's plays as part of national culture, rather than purely as an exemplar of high art. But teens are rarely asked directly about their experiences of education, and about its relevance to them.

Instead, they are often represented as a homogeneous group who are bored and resistant to studying Shakespeare, particularly when it comes to struggling with the language he used.

However, my research with over 800 students in four London secondary schools offers a very different picture. I asked these 13- to 14-year-olds what they think and/or feel when they hear the word "Shakespeare"—and some of their answers defied expectations.

### What Students Say

Many students told me that they actually enjoy studying Shakespeare in school. From comments such as "I feel happy because I like most of his plays," to "I feel excited because Shakespeare was the best writer ever [...] a legend or genius," they expressed levels of interest in Shakespeare that are rarely acknowledged.

These students also did not see the language as a barrier, but as a challenge to be embraced. One commented: "I also get quite happy because we do not often look at texts with old English."

In this large cohort of students, some comments stand out, showing how varied and individual their responses are. One described Shakespeare as "one of my inspirations for writing poetry," while another said that "although I don't really like English, I like his plays a lot."

Teachers seem to play a key role in developing a positive attitude in some of their students. One student said that "all the work I've done on Shakespeare has been interesting and fun," while another said she "really enjoyed the last play that we did."

This study did not look in detail at what actually happens in the classroom, but many of the students' comments suggest that having the confidence to approach a Shakespeare text with a positive attitude partly comes from the teacher's attitude to him and his work.

### 'Be Not Afraid of Greatness.'

In addition to the wholly positive comments, some students demonstrated a more mixed response to the subject. One student told me that "sometimes it's interesting and sometimes it's just bor-



**Many students told me that they actually enjoy studying Shakespeare in school.**

ing 'cause in Year 7 I remember we did this one play for a very long time and it was just kind of the same thing every lesson for a double lesson."

Here, the lessons were clearly not varied enough to hold this student's attention all the time, although the comment suggests that the student knew that studying Shakespeare could be interesting and fun, even if it isn't always like that in practice.

For others, the choice of play is key: "Some Shakespeare plays are more interesting than others, in my opinion." One of the students I interviewed also articulated a clear tension in her attitudes toward studying Shakespeare. She said:

"The good part is because everyone goes through different stuff, some people can relate and they can feel like they're not alone or like this has happened before and studying Shakespeare makes you see the world differently. [...] and the bad thing about it [is] learning how to write in the Shakespeare kind of structure when it won't be useful in the future."

For a number of students, there are perhaps inevitable negative connotations attached to the word "Shakespeare." Some did describe Shakespeare simply as "boring," but others explained their reservations in more detail. One said, "I feel like I've

heard the word Shakespeare too much and that I don't want to talk about him." Another thought "about long complicated language that no one understands," while further complaints were about how "it is unnecessary to learn about as I don't understand what's beneficial for us as students."

Overall, the students involved in this research demonstrated a breadth and depth of response to Shakespeare that counters the generalized belief that teenagers respond poorly to his work. Indeed, used as an introductory question to establish students' attitudes to Shakespeare before attending a production at Shakespeare's Globe Theatre, in London, I have been fascinated by the variety and subtlety of thought they have demonstrated.

As one said: "I feel honored that I've covered Shakespeare in school, because telling people you have read his plays makes you sound smart." The sense of privilege inherent in this comment, despite the fact that everyone studies Shakespeare at school, is clearly something to cherish.

Cathy Baldwin is a doctoral candidate in education at The Open University in the UK. This article was originally published on *The Conversation*.

Surprise, surprised! Teens seem to actually like Shakespeare.

## CULTURE

# The Power of Language

We translate our thoughts into words, but words also affect the way we think

GUILLAUME THIERRY

Have you ever worried in your student years or later in life that time may be starting to run out to achieve your goals? If so, would it be easier conveying this feeling to others if there was a word meaning just that? In German, there is. That feeling of panic associated with one's opportunities appearing to run out is called "Torschlusspanik."

German has a rich collection of such terms, made up of often two, three, or more words connected to form a super- or compound word. Compound words are particularly powerful because they are (much) more than the sum of their parts. Torschlusspanik, for instance, is literally made of "gate"- "closing"—"panic."

If you get to the train station a little late and see your train's doors still open, you may have experienced a concrete form of Torschlusspanik, prompted by the

characteristic beeps as the train doors are about to close. But this compound word of German is associated with more than the literal meaning. It evokes something more abstract, referring to the feeling that life is progressively shutting the door of opportunities as time goes by.

English too has many compound words. Some combine rather concrete words like "seahorse," "butterfly," or "turtleneck." Others are more abstract, such as "backward" or "whatsoever." And of course in English too, compounds are superwords, as in German or French, since their meaning is often distinct from the meaning of their parts. A seahorse is not a horse, a butterfly is not a fly, turtles don't wear turtlenecks, and so on.

One remarkable feature of compound words is that they don't translate well at all from one language to another, at least when it comes to translating their constituent parts literally. Who would have thought that a "carry-sheets" is a



JAN THUIS/PARAMOUNT PICTURES

In the film "Arrival," a linguist (Amy Adams) tries to communicate with aliens.

wallet—"porte-feuille"—or that a "support-throat" is a bra—"soutien-gorge"—in French?

This begs the question of what happens when words don't readily translate from one language to another. For instance, what happens when native speakers of German try to convey in English that they just had a spurt of Torschlusspanik? Naturally, they will resort to paraphrasing, that is, they will make up a narrative with examples to make their interlocutor understand what they are trying to say.

But then, this begs another, bigger question: Do people who have words of their own to describe a feeling in their native language have access to different concepts? Take the case of "hiraeth" for instance, a beautiful word of Welsh famous for being essentially untranslatable. Hiraeth is meant to convey the feeling associated with the bittersweet memory of missing something or someone, while being grateful of their existence.

Hiraeth is not nostalgia, it is not anguish, or frustration, or melancholy, or regret. And no, it is not homesickness, as Google Translate may lead you to believe, since hiraeth also conveys the feeling one experiences when they ask someone to marry them and they are turned down—hardly a case of homesickness.

### Different Words, Different Minds?

The existence of a word in Welsh to convey this particular feeling poses a fun-

damental question on language—thought relationships. Asked in ancient Greece by philosophers such as Herodotus (450 B.C.), this question has resurfaced in the middle of the last century, under the impetus of Edward Sapir and his student Benjamin Lee Whorf, and has become known as the linguistic relativity hypothesis.

Linguistic relativity is the idea that language, which most people agree originates in and expresses human thought, can feedback to thinking, influencing thought in return. So, could different words or different grammatical constructs "shape" thinking differently in speakers of different languages? Being quite intuitive, this idea has enjoyed quite a bit of success in popular culture, lately appearing in a rather provocative form in the science fiction movie "Arrival."

Although the idea is intuitive for some, exaggerated claims have been made about the extent of vocabulary diversity in some languages. Exaggerations have enticed illustrious linguists to write satirical essays such as "the great Eskimo vocabulary hoax," where Geoff Pullum denounces the fantasy about the number of words used by Eskimos to refer to snow. However, whatever the actual number of words for snow in Eskimo, Pullum's pamphlet fails to address an important question: What do we actually know about Eskimos' perception of snow?

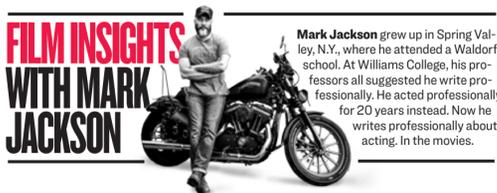
No matter how vitriolic critics of the linguistic relativity hypothesis may be, experimental research seeking scientific evidence for the existence of differences between speakers of different languages has started accumulating at a steady pace. For instance, Panos Athanopoulos at Lancaster University has made striking observations that having particular words to distinguish color categories goes hand-in-hand with appreciating color contrasts. So, he points out, native speakers of Greek, who have distinct basic color terms for light and dark blue ("ghalazio" and "ble," respectively) tend to consider corresponding shades of blue as more dissimilar than native speakers of English, who use the same basic term "blue" to describe them.

But scholars including Steven Pinker at Harvard are unimpressed, arguing that such effects are trivial and uninteresting, because individuals engaged in experiments are likely to use language in their head when making judgments about colors—so their behavior is superficially influenced by language, while everyone sees the world in the same way.

To progress in this debate, I believe we need to get closer to the human brain, by measuring perception more directly, preferably within the small fraction of time preceding mental access to language. This is now possible, thanks to neuroscientific methods, and—increasingly—early results lean in favor of Sapir and Whorf's intuition.

So, yes, like it or not, it may well be that having different words means having differently structured minds. But then, given that every mind on earth is unique and distinct, this is not really a game changer.

Guillaume Thierry is a professor of cognitive neuroscience at Bangor University in the UK. This article was originally published on *The Conversation*.



Mark Jackson grew up in Spring Valley, N.Y., where he attended a Waldorf school. At Williams College, his professors all suggested he write professionally. He acted professionally for 20 years instead. Now he writes professionally about acting in the movies.

# ‘The Lord of the Rings’ Fandom Will Not be Particularly Happy

(L-R) Anthony Boyle, Tom Glynn-Carney, Patrick Gibson, and Nicholas Hoult in the film “Tolkien.”



## MARK JACKSON

At my 25th-year high school reunion, Dr. Peter Gordon, my best friend from grade school, said, regarding the John Ronald Reuel Tolkien fans he encountered through the years: “They’d tell me they’d read all the books, and they knew Tolkien. And I’d think to myself, “You say you know Tolkien ... but can you write the language?”

See, a few of us in my class were massive “The Lord of the Rings” (or LOTR) devotees. By age 18, we’d read the entire trilogy, plus “The Hobbit,” in excess of 50 times. I crafted myself a fine rendition of Gandalf’s sword, Glamdring, in shop class. We learned how to write Tolkien’s “dwarvish” runes, and would use them to pass notes back and forth in class (which may or may not have included some test-cheating).

This was in the Allman Brothers and Jethro Tull 1970s. We didn’t have smartphones. We had muscled-up Camaros, VW buses, Led Zeppelin, handwritten notes in dwarvish, and Tolkien. Heck—Robert Plant of Led Zeppelin wrote Tolkien lyrics. Yes, I own the extended version of the LOTR set. Might be on my 20-viewing.

### Just Doesn’t Cut It

So imagine my disappointment in finding that this new J.R.R. Tolkien biopic is rather boring. It basically recounts the youth of Tolkien (played by Harry Gilby) from around 12 to his Oxford studies, World War I trench warfare, and finally, family life (played by Nicholas Hoult).

Tolkien’s father had died, and his mother (Laura Donnelly) was a woman of great courage, who instilled a sense of wonder in her son, and then died of diabetes. Father Francis Morgan (Colm Meaney) looks after the orphaned J.R.R. Tolkien, finally finding a home for him with the stodgy, wealthy Mrs. Faulkner (Pam Ferris).

Also living with (and playing piano for) Mrs. Faulkner is the fetching young Edith Bratt (Lily Collins). It’s an immediate soul-mate situation, and Lily Collins pretty much steals the entire movie with her loveliness, which manifests as a rare, curious mind, a flirtatious sense of adventure, and the ability to gently goad John Ronald to challenge himself and

think bigger.

Ultimately, Father Morgan frowns upon their budding romance, since Tolkien is, after all, his charge, and he wants only the best for him, including for Tolkien to be accepted to Oxford. The anguish of John and Edith’s parting is the strongest thing in the movie. Conversely, so is their reuniting.

### Four Friends, Four Hobbits

It should come as no surprise that young Tolkien has four friends who form a fellowship. Which means lots of Hogwarts-type goofing off (of the posh, British, rugby-playing sort), including drinking, dares to ask a pub waitress on a date, standing up to strict dads, a la the character of Cameron in “Ferris Bueller’s Day Off,” and so on.

A nice touch is of the alcohol-besotted Tolkien lying on the grass in an Oxford quad, spouting, per his passionate love of philology, his made-up poetry, in one of his made-up languages.

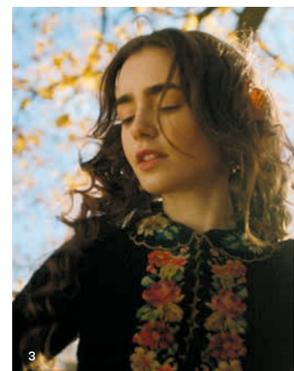
And the next day, a chance encounter with Oxford’s top linguistics professor (Derek Jacobi), who remarks he happened to hear some odd language in the middle of the night, floating up to his window, which contained traces of Finnish. Needless to say, John Ronald knows who he wants to study with.

### Where Do the Ideas Come From?

Everybody’s seen Peter Jackson’s run of three “The Lord of the Rings” movies by now, followed by his three “Hobbit” movies, all of which kicked off in 2001. Lots of accolades and awards. Personally, I’ve never seen any other movie, before or since, that so accurately nailed the pictures I had in my mind from reading all those books.

I’ve heard others have had a similar experience. It seemed like a kind of zeitgeist thing, as if all those human imaginations, picturing all those scenes collectively for so many years, created a template so universal and powerful that it just broke the dam of Peter Jackson’s imagination and flooded his psyche. Tolkien geeks far and wide were hugely satisfied. You don’t get that unification of opinion so much in, say, “Star Wars” fandom.

And so it would have been satisfying to see more specific instances of the original sources from Tolkien’s



life that inspired his powerful imagery. It’s admittedly a tall order, but just a WWI flamethrower being the source of the dragon Smaug in “The Hobbit,” and some other fire sources as conjuring up a shadowy Balrog (fire demon) are a bit too thin.

The corpse-strewn WWI battlefields, pock-marked with giant pools of blood, definitely conjure up the desolation and dread of the land of Mordor, though. But a real top-tier movie would have provided exciting CGI to accompany the real-life sources.

It comes down to the fact that literary biopics are about a man or woman who basically sits in one place his or her whole life and types or scribbles. Worlds come into being and pass away in their minds, but on the surface of it, their day-to-day lives provide little in terms of fodder for dramatic storytelling. And so, in the end, it’s all a bit too posh and stodgy and British (for American tastes, at least).

Hoult does a good job, and as mentioned, Lily Collins does a better job, and the legions of LOTR fans will definitely be seeing this and will thrill to the concept of witnessing the origin stories to all the mythological LOTR concepts. They won’t really find what they’re looking for.

What do I feel is the takeaway, as an LOTR fan? I don’t feel “Tolkien” enhanced my lifelong devotion to the books in any way.

What LOTR did for me, on the other hand, through the repeated readings, was prepare me for a study of spiritual enlightenment. Because that’s what “The Lord of the Rings” ultimately is: It’s the premier enlightenment tale of our time. A furry-footed hobbit walks an ancient path of enlightenment, whereby he sheds all his karma and leaves Middle Earth, via the Grey Havens, for the Elvish equivalent of a Buddha paradise.

You think you know Tolkien? Can you write the language?

### ‘Tolkien’

**Director**  
Dome Karukoski

**Starring**  
Lily Collins, Nicholas Hoult, Colm Meaney, Pam Ferris, Derek Jacobi, Laura Donnelly, Craig Roberts, Anthony Boyle, Tom Glynn-Carney, Patrick Gibson

**Running Time**  
1 hour, 52 minutes

**Rated**  
PG-13

**Release Date**  
May 3

★ ★ ★ ★ ★



1. Nicholas Hoult as “The Lord of the Rings” author J.R.R. Tolkien, in the film “Tolkien.”  
2. A flamethrower is inspiration for the dragon in “The Hobbit,” Smaug, in “Tolkien.”  
3. Lily Collins as Tolkien’s love interest.  
4. Derek Jacobi (L) plays the mentor to the young Tolkien (Nicholas Hoult).

# Biopic on Serial Killer Bundy Doesn’t Shock

## MARK JACKSON

Here’s a bland movie about an extremely bad boy named Bundy that bagged a bunch of showbiz buzz, but didn’t open big, because, although it stars “Baywatch” beefcake Zac Efron, it’s almost blasphemously blah.

One of the main reasons is miscasting: Lead actor Zac Efron excels at hunky heartthrobs. He’s got comedic chops, and after bulking up for the movie version of “Baywatch” (so he wouldn’t disappear standing next to Dwayne Johnson), Efron pretty much put the bodybuilding world on notice that he could have a second career if he wanted to.

What Efron doesn’t have is the underlying menace needed to play a foul creature like Ted Bundy, serial killer of upward of 30 women. Look-wise and intensity-wise, this would have been the perfect Jason Patric role were he a little younger.

So, in light of the fact that this was a meh movie, that doesn’t mean there aren’t fascinating things to talk about. There are wildly interesting theories about Bundy’s background that don’t come up in the movie. Like satanism.

### First Things First

It’s based on Elizabeth Kloefer’s memoir (her pen name is Elizabeth Kendall), “The Phantom Prince: My Life with Ted Bundy.” And the movie title, “Extremely Wicked, Shockingly Evil and Vile” is a line said by drama-queen-y Judge Edward Cowart (John Malkovich) while sentencing Ted Bundy to death by the electric chair in 1979.

Bundy was a slick, turtleneck-wearing law student, who picked up a single mom named Liz Kendall (Lily Collins, currently also starring in “Tolkien”) in a Seattle bar.

They go to her house. She wakes up. He’s not there. Neither is her kid. Panic! Oh—there he is in the kitchen wearing her apron, making breakfast. The kid is happily prattling, and he’s waving a butcher knife around. That can’t be good, right? It’s almost out of Monty Python; “Howwww do you knowwww he is a serial killer?!”

Ted and Liz find love, but the television keeps running stories about the kidnapping, rape, and mutilation of comely young women in numerous states. “Silver Dagger,” a song made famous by Joan Baez in the 1960s, could have been describing Theodore Robert Bundy:

My daddy is a handsome devil  
He’s got a chain five miles long  
And on every link a heart does dangle  
Of another maid he’s loved and wronged.

Wronged? Wronged?? Try head-smashing with crowbars and head-removal with hacksaws. It needed to be said.



(Above) Zac Efron as Ted Bundy in “Extremely Wicked, Shockingly Evil and Vile.”

(Right) Zac Efron (L) and Brian Geraghty in “Extremely Wicked, Shockingly Evil and Vile.”

**The film’s mostly the facts and a little bit of drama’ is not enough to be interesting.**



### Why It Should Have Been So Much Better

What’s surprising is that director Joe Berlinger has long been an acclaimed documentary producer-director. He produced and directed “Conversations With a Killer: The Ted Bundy Tapes,” which is a documentary series that started streaming on Netflix in January. A four-part series, it’s apparently comprehensive. This movie would appear to be a condensed version of the series. But does he get the facts right? I’ll come back to this.

Psychopathic serial killers are smart. They’re chameleons, they walk among us, they have ice water in their veins, and they can tread the razor’s edge of almost getting caught and yet hiding in plain sight. Which is why they’re terrifying; it’s a fascinating, if morbid topic.

But even with this A-list cast, the film stagnates. Like a flaccid, third-rate documentary, it perfunctorily

checks a bunch of boxes, but “riveting” is not one of them. The reason is that the movie focuses primarily on Ted’s charm, and only at the end do we get a glimpse of the ghastliness of what he was really up to. The problem that director Berlinger must have had here is that mostly the facts and a little bit of drama is not enough to be interesting.

But, on the other hand, to have the movie play as a real-life version of a “Saw” movie would have been grotesquely, career-ruiningly exploitative. So, it’s kind of damned if you do, damned if you don’t.

### The Deal With Satanism

There’s stuff swirling around the internet that claims that Bundy was most likely a member of the infamous Bundy family, which happens to be on the list of illuminati families. Scoff if you wanna—it’s pretty interesting. There are parallels drawn regarding Bundy’s methods of killing, which are similar to those of other known serial killers, who all turn out to have been satanists. Charles Manson, anyone?

And then there’s the fact that ... You know what? Go research for yourself. You won’t be disappointed. Here’s a tip: There’s an article by Katie Dowd that says the portrayal of Bundy’s story here is just absolutely way off, meaning this movie is basically just sensationalism and whitewashing.

Ultimately, the best thing about the movie is the 10 seconds’ worth of rock band Metallica’s frontman, James Hetfield, playing a suspicious state trooper. Now that’s good casting.



(Above) Zac Efron as Ted Bundy in “Extremely Wicked, Shockingly Evil and Vile.”

(Right) Zac Efron (L) and Brian Geraghty in “Extremely Wicked, Shockingly Evil and Vile.”

**The film’s mostly the facts and a little bit of drama’ is not enough to be interesting.**

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Wronged? Wronged?? Try head-smashing with crowbars and head-removal with hacksaws. It needed to be said.

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THEATER REVIEW

# A Piercing Look at Our Responsibilities to One Another

JUDD HOLLANDER

NEW YORK—That each of us has a moral duty to everyone else is a message at the center of Arthur Miller’s powerful drama “All My Sons,” which is being given a stellar Broadway revival by the Roundabout Theatre Company.

It’s August 1947, and while World War II is over, its effects linger, as clearly evident in the Keller family’s comfortable middle-class enclave.

The family has never recovered from the news that their son Larry was listed as missing in action three years earlier. Matriarch Kate Keller (Annette Bening), in particular, is holding on to the irrational belief that her son is still alive.

The certainty of his death is something neither her husband Joe (Tracy Letts) nor Chris (Benjamin Walker), their one remaining child, has been able to shake, though each halfheartedly tries to.

Kate’s resolve toward her missing son is about to be tested as never before, with the impending arrival of his former girlfriend Ann (Francesca Carpanini). She and Chris, who survived his own wartime experiences, have begun a romance, and Chris now plans to ask Ann to marry him.

Joe, though, is worrying what will happen when Kate hears the news. Kate still sees Ann as Larry’s girl, and she regards anything otherwise as a betrayal.

Also hanging over the family is the fact that during the war, Joe and his former business partner were convicted of selling defective airplane parts to the



The cast of the Broadway production of Arthur Miller’s “All My Sons” includes (L–R) Benjamin Walker, Tracy Letts, Annette Bening, and Hampton Fluker.

Army, which resulted in the deaths of 21 pilots when their planes crashed. Although Joe was eventually exonerated on appeal, his partner, who is also Ann’s father, remains in prison.

Even though Joe has always denied culpability in the matter and has worked hard to rebuild his factory and his reputation since, there are those who doubt in his innocence.

Bringing matters to a head, Joe has just learned that Ann’s brother George (Hampton Fluker) is coming to town to see them after having recently visited his dad in jail. Joe awaits the visit with some trepidation.

More than simply a morality tale about coming to terms with one’s past actions, “All My Sons” is also an indict-

ment against those profiting from war, no matter how lofty or necessary their goals may have been.

Playwright Arthur Miller, through Chris—the most innocent character in the piece—rejects claims that culpable people are simply cogs in an uncaring system that is only interested in results. The play takes pains to point out that no matter how hard one may be pushed by those in authority, each of us is personally responsible for how our decisions, or non-decisions, affect others.

Quite interesting are the little pockets of gossip that occur in the play through conversations with the Kellers’ neighbors, who keep alive a distrust and suspicion of Joe. It’s clear that we are able to convict a person in the court of

public opinion, if nowhere else. (Thanks to today’s social media platforms, the court of public opinion is even more common today.)

Jack O’Brien’s direction is excellent. His efforts help to create a seemingly quiet and content existence for these characters, until a closer look reveals their turmoil. The story slowly but surely unfolds with a simple, yet devastating effect.

This feeling is helped greatly by Douglas W. Schmidt’s set design and Natasha Katz’s lighting.

Letts does a perfect turn as Joe. He’s a fellow who wants to be everybody’s friend, holding sway over the neighborhood’s weekly card games and always having time for everyone. Yet he cannot

escape others’ suspicions concerning what he may have done.

Bening is wonderful as Kate. As a wife and mother seemingly clinging to a hopeless fantasy, she is in actuality protecting her family from destruction.

Walker is fine as Chris, a young man who has somehow held on to his wide-eyed hopeful view of the world, even during the darkest points of war, only to have it threatened anew on the home front.

Carpanini is appealing as Ann. Like so many others, she just wants to move on from the hurts of the past but may not be able to easily do so.

Fluker is very good as George, a son who tries to learn the truth regarding his father, but who finds himself caught up in his own desires to go back to the way things were when everything made perfect sense.

Michael Hayden, Nehal Joshi, Chinsaa Ogbuagu, and Jenni Barber are fine as the various neighbors, each with their individual quirks and complaints that show the dark spots in their own versions of the American dream.

Thanks to a top-notch cast and creative team, this production of “All My Sons” hits the bull’s-eye on every level. All are advised to immediately put this show on their must-see list.

Judd Hollander is a reviewer for Stagebuzz.com and a member of the Drama Desk and the Outer Critics Circle. He may be reached at bnchpeop@aol.com

‘All My Sons’

Roundabout Theatre Company  
American Airlines Theatre

227 W. 42nd St., New York

Tickets  
212-719-1300 or  
RoundaboutTheatre.org

Running Time  
2 hours, 15 minutes (one intermission)

Closes  
June 30



Tracy Letts and Annette Bening star in “All My Sons.”



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