

WEEK 16, 2020

THE EPOCH TIMES
ARTS &
CULTURE

PUBLIC DOMAIN



The Chandos portrait of William Shakespeare, considered the only reliable image of the famous author, by John Taylor. It is called the Chandos portrait due to the name of a previous owner.

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TRUTH CAN BE BLOCKED BUT NEVER STOPPED

Pass it on, one friend at a time!



I enjoy reading The Epoch Times daily and share links, stories and “real news” updates whenever I can. Because of this, several friends and family members are now subscribers and have thanked me for sharing “real news” that is going on globally.

— DELINDA FORSYTHE

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TRADITIONAL CULTURE

Discards, Rewrites, and Ignorance

The enemies of culture and how to resist them

JEFF MINICK

Back in January, before COVID-19 bolted the doors to my public library, I entered the vestibule and saw that the tiny used bookstore located there, the proceeds from which help support the library, sported a cart in the hallway containing volumes from the classic “War of the Rebellion: Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies,” with a sign reading “Make An Offer.” Stunned that the library was discarding this magnificent 128-volume resource, and certain that the librarian I knew at a small nearby college would love to own these books, I stepped into the store and offered the volunteer behind the desk a low-ball price of \$60. “We can’t do that,” she said. “We’ve been selling the books for \$4 to \$5 apiece.”

Her answer shocked me. Not only was the library selling off a seminal historical work, but the volunteers in the bookstore were letting it go piecemeal, one or two books at a time.

The library had once kept “War of the Rebellion” in its Virginia Room, so I went there and mourned the empty shelves. Did the librarians get rid of the set because they needed the space? Possibly. Did they let it go because no one was reading these books? Possibly.

Did they make a mistake? Definitely.

and for us to acknowledge their virtues but also to consider the present turbulent state of the art institutional soul.”

Though many readers of Carter’s piece, including me, were probably unaware that museums and their institutional souls were in a “turbulent state,” Carter offers several recommendations to museums during this shutdown:

In 2020, after the decades-long surge of identity politics, with its demands for inclusiveness and historical truth-telling, the traditional museum is on the hot seat. And a political present charged with racial bias, misogyny and economic inequality, has upped the heat. The result is a new institutional self-consciousness. Our big museums are feeling compelled to acknowledge that they are products of an earlier, ideologically fraught time. To retain credibility they need to rethink what they were and are.

They need to rethink the Temple of Beauty branding they’ve coasted on from the start. They need to acknowledge the often conflicted relationship between aesthetics and ethics. They need to address what their collections leave out. They need to reconsider their own role as history-tellers and history-inventors. In short, they need to redefine what “encyclopedic” and “museum” and “art” can mean.

In short, let’s give our museums a makeover by applying identity politics, judging art and the past through the lens of race, feminism, and gender.

Discarding the Past

As a former bookseller and a lover of history, I believe those books should have been sold as a set—not for the price I was offering, which was ridiculously low, but for hundreds of dollars to a history buff or to another library.

Much more importantly, I believe the library should never have sold the “War of the Rebellion” at all.

On a much smaller scale, the careless discarding and breakup of that monumental collection is like knocking down the Lincoln Memorial and selling it off in pieces. During the Civil War, the capital of the Confederacy was in Richmond, many of the South’s greatest military leaders were Virginians, and the state saw more major battles fought within its borders than any other. If nothing else, the library should have kept “War of the Rebellion” as a monument commemorating the state’s history.

Rewriting the Past

The library was guilty of negligence in shedding itself of these volumes, but others today often seek to reevaluate our history and civilization in the light of their own prejudices. In “America’s Big Museums on the Hot Seat,” which appeared in The New York Times in mid-March, Holland Carter calls on art museums to use the closures brought by the pandemic to “take stock of themselves,

We can learn and honor our history, study and treasure the arts, and live by the ancient virtues rather than by slippery values.

Carter has a five-point plan for art museums in “a post-coronavirus future.” These are “Go for Truth,” “Rewrite History,” “Redefine Expert,” “Rethink Big,” and “The Answer Is in the Art.” His first two points are the ones most likely to confuse his readers. In a culture that worships relativity, promotes narcissism, and spurns the ancient triad of truth, goodness, and beauty, how does one “go for truth”? As for rewriting history, many in the last 50 years have labored long and hard to do that very thing, most often judging our ancestors not by the times and circumstances in which they lived, but by our own beliefs and prejudices. How much farther down that road must we go?

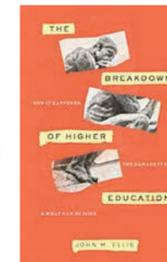
Planned Ignorance?

In addition to our careless approach to our civilization and the incessant de-



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Should the monuments to our culture be discarded? The Fifth Avenue entrance facade of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City.



In his new book, John Ellis, chairman of the Board of the California Association of Scholars, examines why most college graduates are woefully undereducated.



PUBLIC DOMAIN

Should we dismiss great writers of the past because their understanding of the world was different from ours? A portrait of Jane Austen, 1873.

can learn and honor our history, study and treasure the arts, and live by the ancient virtues rather than by slippery values. We can educate our children to do the same.

And we have comrades in this fight, warriors like John Ellis, outfits like The Epoch Times, our like-minded friends, and our family. In addition, we have the examples of such men and women as William Shakespeare, Jane Austen, George Washington, Emily Dickinson, and a host of others whose bones may now be dust but whose ideas, words, and deeds shine brightly as the stars.

If we stand with this stalwart company, the living and the dead, we can and will preserve our culture.

Jeff Minick has four children and a growing platoon of grandchildren. For 20 years, he taught history, literature, and Latin in seminars of homeschooling students in Asheville, N.C., Today, he lives and writes in Front Royal, Va. See JeffMinick.com to follow his blog.

mands by our intelligentsia that we reconstruct our history, we encounter another foe in our culture wars: ignorance.

In his online article “How Low Can Higher Education Go?” John Ellis has excerpted part of his new book, “The Breakdown of Higher Education: How It Happened, The Damage It Does, and What Can Be Done.” Ellis scores many points regarding the failures of university education, one of which addresses this cause for the plunge in literacy rates among graduates:

The period from 1992 to 2003 was the crucial time when the politicization of the nation’s college and university faculties suddenly gained enormous momentum, resulting in an already pro-

nounced tilt to the left, which quickly turned into the virtually one-party campus. Can it really be a coincidence that the literacy of college graduates plunged disastrously at the same time?

Ellis is the chairman of the Board of the California Association of Scholars, an organization “persuaded that only through an informed understanding of the Western intellectual heritage and of the realities of the contemporary world can citizen and scholar be equipped to sustain our civilization’s achievements.”

He points out that the radical politics of the campus are now wending their way through government and the private sector, infecting everything from state bar associations to journalism, and

even art schools, where students learn social justice activism from politically motivated professors rather than the ideals of beauty and the mechanics of drawing and painting.

What Can We Do?

Philosopher Roger Scruton once wrote, “Beauty is vanishing from our world because we live as though it did not matter.” A civilization can vanish in the same way. The careless, the malicious, and the ignorant—they are, wittingly or unwittingly, allies in this destruction. They live as though culture did not matter.

We can resist this demolition by turning Scruton’s quotation on its head and live as though culture does matter. We

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THE EPOCH TIMES

TRUTH AND TRADITION



PUBLIC DOMAIN

Are we to forget or pretend the Civil War never happened? A Harper’s Weekly newspaper features the famous “Bayonet Charge,” 1862, by Winslow Homer.



How did the plague influence the writing of Shakespeare's plays? Sir John Gilbert's 1849 painting "The Plays of William Shakespeare," containing scenes and characters from several of the Bard's plays. Dahesh Museum of Art.

LITERATURE

Shakespeare and the Plague

What do we learn?

JAMES SALE

Does anyone now remember what was highly significant in England, circa 1592–94? Or how about 1603–04? No? What about 1605–06? Historians among you might want to say that in 1603 Queen Elizabeth I died and James I ascended the throne. That was significant for England and Scotland, but that's not the answer I am seeking. What I am thinking about here is the same event that occurred in all three instances, in other words, an event that was recurrent. And the answer is, of course, the plague.

Indeed, the plague was an annual visitor to England, and London in particular; but it was particularly acute in 1592–94, 1603–04, and 1605–06. And this had huge consequences for Shakespeare. For when the deaths reached 30 per week, the theaters were closed, and so effectively, it would seem, Shakespeare was out of his livelihood.

The plague, like COVID-19 now, was a very serious matter. London, then, had a population of about 200,000 people; in the plague visitation of 1603–04 alone, it is estimated that over 30,000 people died. As a percentage, that is 15 percent of the total. Imagine that in New York now—population 18,804,000—2,820,600 dead within a few months! And the thing is, that is just for one year: London was in a near permanent state of having plague outbreaks.

What was the plague? According to Columbia English professor James Shapiro in "1606: William Shakespeare and the Year of Lear,"

Following on the plague of 1603–04, we start arriving at the truly greatest period of Shakespeare's achievements.

it was an infection "caused by Yersinia pestis, a strain of bacterium transmitted either through the bite of an infected flea (invading the lymph nodes and producing painful swelling or buboes) or by an infected person's cough or breath, a mode of transmission that rapidly led to lung failure. The fleas were carried by rodents, especially rats." Perhaps what is most scary here is not so much the rats, but the cough (or even breath) of an infected person transmitted to another—just like the CCP (Chinese Communist Party) virus, commonly known as novel coronavirus.

Nobody, therefore, wants to pretend that the plague is a good thing; but as I mentioned in my last article on Dante and CCP virus, without the Black Death, the modern world would have been seriously deferred, if not impossible.

Furthermore, from Shakespeare's perspective (and ignor-

ing the possibility that his own son, Hamnet, died of the plague in 1596), as Shapiro again puts it: "We know a great deal more about how a rodent-borne visitation in 1606 altered the contours of Shakespeare's professional life, transformed and reinvigorated his playing company, hurt the competition, changed the composition of the audiences for whom he would write (and in turn the kinds of play he could write) and enabled him to collaborate with talented musicians and playwrights—an outbreak of plague that may also have come close to killing him."

Eh? What was that? That the plague of 1606 had many professional and commercial benefits for Shakespeare? Yes, it would seem so.

Shakespeare Sheltering in Place We can look at all three plague periods and probably conclude that Shakespeare found some benefits in them. Taking all publication

and performance dates from authorities Professors K. Muir and S. Schoenberg, we might note that at the end of the 1594 period, Shakespeare's "Venus and Adonis" was published. This was the work that established Shakespeare as the leading poet of his day, and was a huge bestseller; nine editions were published in his lifetime alone. It is generally accepted that it was composed during the theater shutdown. The publication's other huge benefit was that it almost certainly cemented Shakespeare's famous relationship with the third Earl of Southampton. And we note, too, that in 1594, his play "Love's Labor's Lost" was also produced which, while not one of his greatest plays, contains much fabulous poetry and dramatic inventiveness. How productive Shakespeare had been!

Note, too, that in 1594 there was a big increase in plays printed. As Muir and Schoenberg explain it, "The probable explanation of the sudden increase in printed plays in 1594 is that the companies were so disorganized by the plague that they raised money by selling their MSS." What we are saying here is probably that the survival of many plays from this period depended on the common sense of the theaters as they sought other ways of making money: Selling manuscripts obviously was lucrative.

Following on the plague of 1603–04, we start arriving at the truly greatest period of Shakespeare's achievements: "All's Well That Ends Well" and "Othello" were produced, and the second quarto of "Hamlet" was published. Incredible works. Then in 1605–06 we got "King Lear" and "Macbeth."



An illustration by an unknown German engraver, circa 1890, shows William Shakespeare reciting his play "Hamlet" to his family. His son, Hamnet, is behind him on the left; the boy died at age 11, most likely of the plague.



Traditionally, the Sabbath allowed a periodic time to stop all busyness. "Sabbath Eve," 19th century, by Alexander Johnston. Bequeathed by C. Roberts, 1965; Leeds Art Gallery, Leeds Museums and Galleries, UK.

The point is that the plague forced Shakespeare to rest, recuperate, and write more—to go from one great height to an even sublimer one. And this is the lesson we need to learn from Shakespeare.

We Can Be Shakespeare!

The leading UK financial journalist, Matthew Lyn, asked this question recently: "What do the following businesses have in common: IBM, Disney, Uber? The answer is simple. They were all founded during a deep recession."

Morgan Housel, the USA investment expert, said something similar: "The Great Depression brought us bread lines. But it also brought us supermarkets, microwaves, sunscreen, radar, jets, rockets, penicillin, electron microscopes, magnetic recording, nylon, photocopying, teflon, helicopters, color TV, plexiglass, commercial aviation, most forms of plastic,

synthetic rubber, nuclear fission, laundromats, and countless other discoveries.

"The timing of some of these breakthroughs were coincidences. But many were not."

What I am getting at is that plagues and pandemics are not welcome: People will die, Gross National Product will decline, businesses will go to the wall, and fear will be endemic. And yet in such times as these, the lessons of history and of great and not-so-great human beings are clear: Here is our chance for maximum productivity, invention, creativity, and yes, greatness too.

Our consumer society is like some farmer who has simply exhausted the land. In Shakespeare's time, they all practiced crop rotation, which is the growing of different crops in succession on a piece of land to avoid exhausting the soil and to control weeds, pests, and diseases. Usu-

ally, as well, it involved a piece of land that is not grown in at all, so the land could recover. Think of it as a kind of Sabbath: the one day a week (or, for the land, one year in three, five, or seven) when we really mustn't work if we are to sustain our vitality.

We are being forced now to have a Sabbath, as it were. But instead of living in fear, worry, and anxiety about it—all useless and non-productive emotions in this context—we need to embrace Shakespeare's pragmatic attitude: We can develop ourselves, we can develop our people or our employees, we can develop new products and services, we can innovate and create, we can solve problems that we have not had the time to before, and—heck!—we can even write that book that we always said we would. We can be Shakespeare!

What a good month to be Shakespeare too! April 23 celebrates his birthday (1564) and his death day

Here is our chance for maximum productivity, invention, creativity, and yes, greatness too.

(1616). Thank God that in the midst of all that plague and human destruction, he kept to his course and fulfilled his mission.

Now let's fulfill ours so that in years to come, people will write about the incredible creativity and inventions by those of us who lived during the pandemic. This terrible calamity may prove in the future—for all its fear and death—to show the true mettle and greatness of the peoples who were afflicted.

James Sale is an English businessman whose company, Motivational Maps Ltd., operates in 14 countries. He is the author of over 40 books on management and education from major international publishers including Macmillan, Pearson, and Routledge. As a poet, he won the first prize in The Society of Classical Poets' 2017 competition and spoke in June 2019 at the group's first symposium held at New York's Princeton Club.



Shakespeare's "King Lear" was likely written when the playwright was sheltering down during the plague. In this painting by American artist Edward Austin Abbey, Cordelia (C) is banished by her elderly father and king, Lear, for not flattering him, while her elder sisters (L) look on and the king of France, impressed with her honesty, kisses her hand. The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

ARCHITECTURE

'Bearing Rome Across the Alps': The Cork Architecture of Ancient Rome

LORRAINE FERRIER

In 18th- and 19th-century England, wealthy young men traveled to continental Europe to explore ancient sites, discover ancient relics and Renaissance art, and learn the languages and culture. Known as "Grand Tours," these cultural explorations were rites of passage in which men became gentlemen.

"Nothing can be compared to the new life that the discovery of another country provides for a thoughtful person. Although I am still the same I believe to have changed to the bones," Johann Wolfgang von Goethe wrote in the "Italian Journey" based on his time in Italy between 1786 and 1788.

“**The uncommon taste, lightness, and elegance of every part of this beautiful composition has never been surpassed, nor can be sufficiently admired.**”

Sir John Soane, architect



Sir John Soane's model room. Giovanni Altieri's cork model of the Temple of Vesta is prominently on display on the center shelf.



Built in the first century B.C., the Temple of Vesta in Tivoli, Italy, was thought to be dedicated either to Hercules or to the goddess Vesta.

returned to England, he collected models of the sites he had visited.

Temple of Vesta

The circular Temple of Vesta at Tivoli, about 19 miles from Rome, was one of Soane's favorite Roman buildings. Leading model maker Giovanni Altieri's cork model of the Temple of Vesta, made in the 1770s, is prominently on display in Soane's model room.

Built in the first century B.C., the circular Roman temple is believed to be dedicated to Hercules, or to Vesta, the Roman goddess of home, hearth, and family. (Rome's Pantheon is another excellent example of a circular temple.)

Set on top of a cliff edge opposite the Aniene Falls, the Temple of Vesta appears partly cocooned by elegant Corinthian columns in varying states of decay. Narrow vertical grooves on the columns seem to elongate the enormous columns, and ornamental capitals (architectural features that sit on the tops of columns) are decorated with leaves and scrolls that typify

this classical style of architecture called the Corinthian order. The Corinthian order is the most ornate of the three styles of classical architecture, the Doric and Ionic being the others.

Soane had sketched the Temple of Vesta in his 20s during his Grand Tour, and many years later he praised the temple in his Royal Academy lectures, for "the uncommon taste, lightness, and elegance of every part of this beautiful composition has never been surpassed, nor can be sufficiently admired."

The Temple of Vesta influenced Soane throughout his career. One of the most prestigious examples of its influence was the Bank of England building with its aptly named Tivoli Corner.

Sadly, Soane's original Bank of England building, built between 1788 and 1827, underwent numerous reconstructions between 1921 and 1939, and no longer captures Soane's intentions.

To find out more about the model room at Sir John Soane's Museum, visit Soane.org

CHILDREN'S BOOK REVIEW

A Quest for Knowledge

JUDD HOLLANDER

A key element of any biography is the author's ability to truly capture the essence of the subject, and then pass on that understanding to readers. This attribute is even more important for a children's book, as younger audiences are notorious for short attention spans; they have little patience for long-winded pontifications. Author Jen Bryant expertly delivers with the insightful "Feed Your Mind: A Story of August Wilson."

The book explores August Wilson's life from his childhood in Pittsburgh during the 1940s and '50s to his emergence as a successful and later celebrated playwright. Frederick August Kittel Jr. was born to a mostly absentee white father and a black mother who took in washing to make ends meet. The two-time Pulitzer Prize winner passed away in 2005 at the age of 60, and is most notably remembered for his 10-play cycle that explores the black experience in America during each decade of the 20th century.

Relatively short in length, the book spans 48 pages in hardcover, and not all of it text. Both Bryant and illustrator Cannaday Chapman have taken great care to ensure that each word and image is designed to evoke a strong emotional response. One such image involves Wilson's mother, sister, a radio contest, and a washing machine.

The text and images culminate in

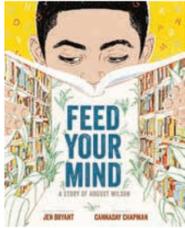
an important moral lesson regarding dignity. The idea of people staying true to who they are is a running theme in "Feed Your Mind" and is also one that Wilson incorporates into his plays. The theme is illustrated when Wilson is hurt over the racial taunts he endured from his classmates, as well as his bitter frustration, and ultimate resolve, when one of his public school teachers simply refuses to believe that he had actually written the paper he submitted for a class assignment.

The Written Word

Most importantly, the book illustrates, starting with its title, the wonders that can be found through the written word. An intensely curious child, Wilson practiced reading by sounding out words he saw on various objects: street signs, newspapers, soup can labels, and boxes



ALL IMAGES BY CANNADAY CHAPMAN



Jen Bryant teamed up with illustrator Cannaday Chapman to capture the essence of playwright August Wilson's life.

"Feed Your Mind: A Story of August Wilson" Jen Bryant Abrams Books for Young Readers 48 pages, hardcover

The Hill District in Pittsburgh, where August Wilson grew up.

of breakfast cereal.

His mother, who always encouraged his reading, first took him to the library at the age of 5. His practice of reading whatever he could find opened him to a world of possibilities. A particularly pivotal moment occurred one day when he came upon a shelf in a library titled "Negro Books." As Bryant notes in her text, "all around him the world shifts, the universe opens wide."

"Feed Your Mind" comes back to this premise time and again, while at the same time providing a road map for any young reader who picks up this book to begin his or her own journey of discovery.

Taking It All In

Wilson was always an acute observer of those around him. This fascination is elaborated on in such passages as "Summer nights in the backyard, [Wilson's mother] plays card games with the neighbors as someone strums a guitar, their laughter drifting over children playing dodgeball and stickball—loading the bases." Wilson was particularly fascinated by the older men in his neighborhood: taxi drivers and former Pullman porters. He would write poems and stories about these individuals, using their words and feelings to keep these experiences alive. These writings ended up in his plays, such as "Jitney," a story about gypsy cab drivers.

Ironically, Wilson resisted becoming a playwright until a friend explained the importance of listening to the characters he had created and hearing what they had to say, rather than simply trying to put words into their mouths. Bryant

also notes that the "plays, he discovers, are like puzzles for which he has to make the pieces."

The Text and Images

The book is divided into two acts, as were most of Wilson's plays. Since it was Bryant's intention to focus on Wilson's early years, things get a bit truncated toward the end, and the story takes on a more bullet-point feeling.

Yet the story flows nicely from one section to the next. Each page is labeled with its own particular heading (such as "The Hill District, Pittsburgh," "School," "Now What?" and "Prove It!")

Fortunately, the book concludes with a lengthy informative note from Bryant, explaining how she first became aware of August Wilson and what inspired her to write "Feed Your Mind." This is followed by a detailed timeline of Wilson's life and an extensive bibliography. Chapman's illustrations are quite expressive, each one creating a sort of mini-tableau to go along with the accompanying text. Especially effective is the image showing the 5-year-old Wilson pulling a book off a library shelf, which opens to reveal a collage of images offering a universe of possible experiences found within.

"Feed Your Mind" wonderfully tells the story of August Wilson, while showing just how important reading and understanding the written word can be.

Judd Hollander is a reviewer for stagebuzz.com and member of the *Drama Desk* and *Outer Critics Circle*.



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.

'Click': Adam Sandler Fails to Remote Control His Life

MARK JACKSON

Workaholic architect (Adam Sandler) finds a fairytale-type magic wand in the form of an all-purpose remote control. It lets him remove the tedious, the inconvenient, and the uncomfortable from his life via the fast-forward, mute, pause, and rewind buttons.

Not to mention color adjustment, volume control, a "making-of" option, chapters, and commentary via James Earl Jones's basso profundo. Basically, life rendered as a special-edition DVD. Click! Who wouldn't want one of those?

Ah, but this is a Faustian tale. One of the unseen laws of the cosmos is "in order to gain, you must lose." And like the film's distant cousin "It's a Wonderful Life," in which Jimmy Stewart's character sees what life would have been like without his existence, in "Click" Adam Sandler's Michael Newman sees what life would be like without the "bad" in it. A life with no bad in it ... is good, right? Nope. It's worse. Way worse.

Speaking of Life With Bad in It ...

The pandemic is bad. It's a huge manifestation of loss. But what's the gain? Well, it remains to be seen. But one tiny gain is that it's clarified something for us movie buffs: Since the dawn of Hollywood, there's been a torrent of movies, not to mention foreign films, and even though writing about movies is my profession, I've recently come to realize the obvious—I haven't seen them all.

My job, in addition to recommending what's good in movieland, is to recover movieland's uncut gems and gold nuggets that deserve polishing. So even though the virus has shut down Hollywood production for the time being, it can't shut down Epoch Times movie reviews. The saying "So many movies, so little time" is, for the foreseeable future, null and void. We've got time. And all anybody is doing right now? Watching movies.

So last week I wrote about a Ben Stiller comedy that got slammed by critics on Rotten Tomatoes, and which I discovered was actually a treasure trove regarding certain issues I think are important to talk about today.

This week, likewise, I'm choosing something by Stiller's equivalent in underrated Hollywood comedies—Adam Sandler. Let's talk about one of his movies that got critic-slammed even worse than Stiller's on R.T. One of my father's favorite expressions was "You can sometimes find nuggets of gold in junk."

Too Much on His Plate

Michael Newman (Sandler) has to bring home the bacon, and keep his boss (David Hasselhoff), wife (Kate Beckinsale), two kids, parents, and dog happy. He himself is not happy—hence the immediate addiction to above-described remote. The other solution to this problem was fleshed out (pun intended) by 1996's "Multiplicity," where Michael Keaton's character figured out how to clone himself six times, to his wife's great delight.

It's a man-who-works-too-much movie. When Michael winds up in the "Beyond" section of Bed Bath & Beyond, looking for a universal remote, he encounters a lab-coated, bow-tied, Einstein-haired fellow named Morty (Christopher Walken, outdoing himself in his one-of-a-kind, Brooklyn-accented, syncope-weariness), manning what appears to be B, B & B's version of Apple's Genius Bar. Morty (hint—his name carries clues) dems the basics of how to use the remote. Michael's sold!

The supernatural power of the gizmo reveals itself to Michael when he points the remote at his yapping dog and turns down the volume. From there it's a quick foray

into fast-forwarding through arguments with his wife, and pausing his boss's bossing so he can kick him in places where it'll hurt a lot when he un-pauses.

Michael has demonstrated a predilection for the fast-forward function. So like TiVo's "favorites" feature, which analyzes the shows you watch and selects other shows you might enjoy, his magic wand-clicker starts skipping weeks, then months, years, and eventually decades.

His wife divorces him and marries their boy's smarmy, Speedo-wearing swim coach (Sean Astin). Michael gains 300 pounds. His dad (Henry Winkler) dies.

Harbinger of 'Uncut Gems'?

Now, believe it or not, some of this is actually tragic. Like, "OMG! Sandler is actually making me reach for the Kleenex box" tragic. Who knew? Very surprising. But having recently seen "Uncut Gems," the first movie where people have been forced to take Sandler seriously as a dramatic actor, I can see in "Click" bits and pieces, in and among the flautulence jokes, of this capacity coming to light.

Make no mistake though, this is still goofball Sandler-the-clown schtick, and director Frank Coraci puts Sandler's trademark inner 11-year-old-who-needs-detention endlessly on display. There are some exceedingly funny moments, if fleeting, and plenty of "ugh, stop" moments, but all in all, you won't believe you watched an Adam Sandler movie you thought you'd never, ever watch. And pretty much enjoyed it.

Speaking of trademarks, let me end with my own trademark, which is where I attempt to draw highly esoteric parallels and cite instances of higher spiritual concepts hiding in plain sight in low-brow fare, like I know things.

What that clicker in "Click" might very well represent is an ability to skip around in what's known in ancient literature as "The Akashic Chronicle." Imagine that instead of one time-space, there are hundreds of time-spaces, spanning a range from extremely slow times to ones that are extremely fast. And in each one, a you exists.

Some say that one's entire life already exists across the span of all these other dimensions, with bonds connecting the different yous like the bonds between atoms. And if you could jump to a slower dimension, you'd see yourself being born; if you jumped to a faster dimension, you'd see yourself being lowered into your grave.

What's that got to do with anything? If your life is already planned in advance, it means that if you try and force it onto another set of tracks, you'll gain karma. And then more lifetimes will start bubbling up and developing, where a plan is set up for you to pay off that karma in your next lifetimes.

So how do we avoid creating karma for ourselves by trying to skip all the bad stuff? Don't skip the bad stuff! Bad stuff is karma from our previous lives when we tried to go against the tide and created suffering for ourselves in this lifetime!

And so ultimately, this lowly Sandler comedy addresses a giant truth. Go with the flow. The ancient Chinese called it "wuwei." Live in the now. Breathe. Walk the middle path. Don't let life's pain drag you down too far, and don't let life's ecstatic highs unseat you. Our modern society only wants to experience life's ecstasies and take painkillers and antidepressants to avoid the rest of it.

This movie about a gizmo that allows Michael to shirk his responsibilities is a wee wakeup call; it blows the whistle on our culture's instant-gratification laziness. We must learn to take the bad with the good and be grateful for all of it, at all times.



(Top) Michael Newman (Adam Sandler) enjoying his new remote-control life, in "Click." (Bottom left) The lovely family of Michael Newman (Adam Sandler) played by (L-R) Kate Beckinsale, Tatum McCann, and Joseph Castanon. (Bottom right) Christopher Walken stars in "Click."

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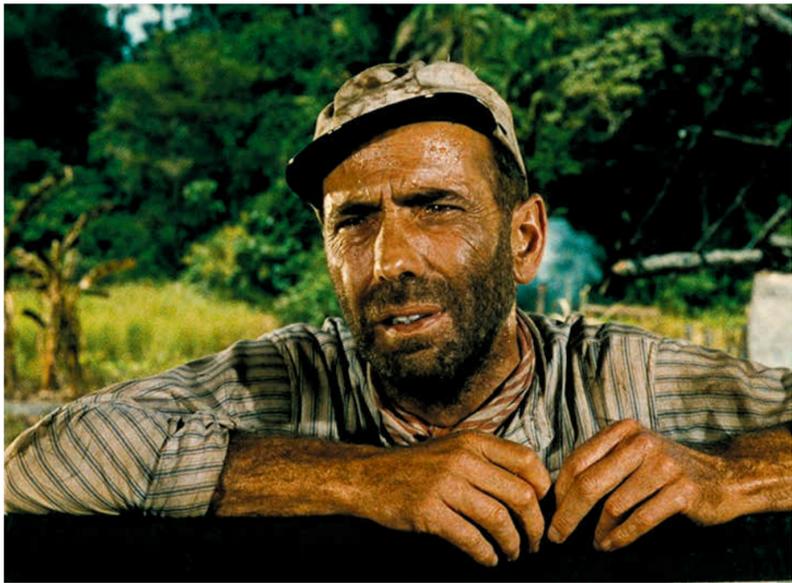
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Hepburn's performance earned her a fifth Academy Award nomination, and Bogart's won his only Oscar.



(Clockwise from top left) A missionary (Katharine Hepburn) and ship captain (Humphrey Bogart) meet. Humphrey Bogart was known for his tough-guy roles. The character of Charlie Allnut was unusual for him. The African Queen sails on location. The film was shot in Uganda and the Belgian Congo. Katharine Hepburn, a star for decades, plays a missionary in Africa, in the 1951 film "The African Queen."



POPCORN AND INSPIRATION: FILMS THAT UPLIFT THE SOUL

'The African Queen': A Real Adventure

TIFFANY BRANNAN

How many films from 1934 to 1954 have you seen? Everyone recognizes titles like "Gone With the Wind," "Casablanca," and "The Wizard of Oz," but many Americans have watched few or even no old movies. Although they can seem foreign to those unfamiliar with Hollywood's Golden Era, these movies are worth watching for their artistry, stories, and decency. Between 1934 and 1954, the Motion Picture Production Code was Hollywood's moral compass, and no rating system was needed; all films obeyed the Code and were acceptable for all viewers. The Code curtailed violence—not action and excitement—so Code adventure movies came in many genres, including Westerns, war films, and swashbuckling dramas.

A great film for introducing adventure lovers to classic Hollywood is 1951's "The African Queen," starring Humphrey Bogart and Katharine Hepburn. This film's titular queen is a boat, not a person.

In 1914, middle-aged Rose Sayer (Hepburn) and her brother, Samuel (Robert Morley), are British missionaries in German East Africa. A Canadian riverboat pilot, Charlie Allnut (Bogart), brings word that Germany has declared war on England. Soon after, German troops burn down the village, leaving the missionaries as its lone occupants. The tragedy makes Samuel first go insane and then die. Charlie returns the next day and takes Rose aboard his riverboat, the African Queen.

Aboard the steamboat, the journeyers' lifestyles clash. After the prim spinster shows the unkempt bachelor that she won't tolerate his drunken disorder, he begins appreciating her company. Rose decides they must help the war effort by destroying a German ship. To accomplish this mission, they must make the Queen into a torpedoed after a treacherous journey downriver. Charlie opposes the plan

but eventually agrees. While enduring rapids, pests, and mud, the pair fall in love.

An Odd Couple Turns Heroic

Neither Rose Sayer and Charlie Allnut nor Katharine Hepburn and Humphrey Bogart are a likely pair. This is the only film that paired the independent Bryn Mawr actress with the slurred-speech, heavy-drinking tough guy, perhaps because they were as unlikely a couple as these characters. Rose is a proper Englishwoman, who accompanied her missionary brother because she was unmarried; Charlie is a rough sailor who guzzles gin and fends for himself. Despite their differences, we can't help loving this pair.

These two characters find strength together that they lack separately. Charlie never would have formulated the plan alone, knowing the danger, and Rose lacked the knowledge and experience to execute the plan alone. Together, they have enough resourcefulness, bravery, and stubbornness to succeed. Since they are so different, they supplement each other. Rose has fearless determination, and Charlie has clever ingenuity. Rose inspires Charlie to be clean, respectable, and selfless, and he teaches her to enjoy life and acknowledge her feelings.

These characters are not typical adventure-film heroes: athletic, fearless youths setting out to conquer. They are middle-aged strangers united by chance. Rather than just surviving, they risk their lives to aid the Allies' efforts.

These characters are inspiring because they show that you don't have to be a predictable hero to be heroic: Anyone, when circumstances require it, can find the bravery and strength to fight for right.

The African Queen's torpedo expedition is a longshot, but this movie shows that you can find something wonderful when you take risks.

An African Adventure

Africa's flora and fauna provide this drama's background through

Technicolor footage of "the dark continent." Although filmmakers frequently created backlot jungles, director John Huston insisted on shooting this film in Uganda and the Belgian Congo. When the cast and crew settled into a makeshift camp in Ponthierville (now Kindu), they began an unforgettable adventure.

During production, the film crew suffered plague-like ordeals straight out of the story, including wild animals, insects, torrential rains, and unbearable heat. Also, the contaminated water made everyone except whiskey-drinkers John Huston and Humphrey Bogart severely sick. Add to that the challenge of communicating with natives needed as extras, who mistook the filmmakers for cannibals! Nevertheless, Katharine Hepburn loved the experience, finding Africa "utterly divine."

The difficult circumstances of this movie's filming made it a masterpiece. Even the greatest actors can't fully understand how foreigners might feel in the African wilds when comfortably filming in the Los Angeles Arboretum. Research and imagination can help them embody their characters' trials, but not like 10 weeks in Africa. Bogie and Kate are Charlie and Rosie because they really did fight the mosquitoes, feel the rain, survive the humidity, and sail on rafts. This movie's location footage did more than provide accurate, beautiful scenery. It gave the story gripping realism.

A Dramatic Introduction

Modern viewers—even those who aren't already classic film fans—can enjoy "The African Queen." First, it was filmed as a period piece (World War I), and so all historical references are explained; old films set contemporaneously can sometimes include vague references to current events that might be unknown to audiences today. Second, it's in clear, vivid color, for eyes unfamiliar with black and white. Third, the exotic setting gives it a

stark realism, which some classic films lack. There is no "Hollywood glamor" here.

This movie succeeded because the actors brought the moving story of C.S. Forester's novel to life. Hepburn's performance earned her a fifth Academy Award nomination, and Bogart's won his only Oscar.

"The African Queen" was released almost 70 years ago, but it is as exciting, emotional, and humorous now as in 1952. Its inspiring message of heroism from an unlikely couple in unusual circumstances is always pertinent. If you enjoy adventure dramas, this may be the movie to make you a Code film fan!

Tiffany Brannan is an 18-year-old opera singer, Hollywood historian, travel writer, film blogger, vintage fashion expert, and ballet writer. In 2016, she and her sister founded the Pure Entertainment Preservation Society, an organization dedicated to reforming the arts by reinstating the Motion Picture Production Code.



Humphrey Bogart (left of center) between takes with director John Huston (C) on the set of "The African Queen."



The actors really experience the travails of Africa: swamps, heat, humidity, insects, and rapids.

'The African Queen'

Director
John Huston

Starring
Humphrey Bogart, Katharine Hepburn, Robert Morley, Peter Bull, and Theodore Bikel

Running Time
1 hour, 45 minutes

Not Rated

Release Date
March 21, 1952 (USA)

★★★★★

METRO-GOLDWYN-MAYER STUDIOS INC.

POPCORN AND INSPIRATION

AN Inspiring Mission TO SAVE LIVES

IAN KANE

When Great Britain's military high command taps Major Mallory (Robert Shaw) and his friend Sergeant Miller (Edward Fox) for a top-secret mission to take out their old enemy, German spy Nicolai (Franco Nero), they don't hesitate to take the job. "Force 10 From Navarone," directed by Guy Hamilton (of James Bond 007 fame), is all about revenge as Mallory and Miller were betrayed by Nicolai in the film's 1961 predecessor, "The Guns of Navarone."

The duo soon learns that Nicolai is hiding out in war-ravaged Yugoslavia (the film takes place during World War II) and that getting to him won't be an easy task. Therefore, their superiors team them up with Lieutenant Colonel Barnsby (Harrison Ford), who leads a Special Ops unit (the titular "Force 10"), which will afford them the best opportunity to get their shot (pun intended). Mallory and Miller reluctantly join Force 10.

Unfortunately, Barnsby isn't too keen on having to escort the relatively older Mallory and Miller overseas either. He feels that the two will only be a drag on the Force 10 mission: to blow up a bridge. The bridge in question is a critical piece of real estate. The Germans plan to use it to reach a populated Yugoslavian region, and thereby kill a lot of innocent civilians. So, the men are in a race against time in order to destroy the bridge.

Not surprisingly, Force 10 and their two escorts spring into action right away. As they sneak aboard a clandestine plane to fly to Yugoslavia, they are discovered by a detachment of military police who are on their own escort mission: transporting a prisoner, Sergeant Weaver (Carl Weathers). After some feral fisticuffs, the MPs are overcome and Weaver inadvertently joins the Spec Ops unit. He literally jumps into their plane as it's taking off, rather than answering to authorities.

Their rocky start gives way to more bad news when they get spotted by some German fighter planes and are shot down over a Yugoslavian forest. Most of the unit is killed, but Mallory, Miller, Barnsby, Weaver, and a young lieutenant named Reynolds (Angus MacInnes) barely manage to survive.

Most of the film is chock-full of tension as Force 10 races against time to get the bridge destroyed.

Soon after, they briefly team up with what they think is a group of Yugoslavian partisans (rebels who are resisting the Nazis), including the towering Captain Drazak (Richard Kiel) and Marit-



▲ Artwork for the MGM film "Force 10 From Navarone."

'Force 10 From Navarone'

Director
Guy Hamilton

Starring
Harrison Ford, Robert Shaw, Edward Fox

Running Time
1 hour, 58 minutes

Rated
PG

Release Date
Dec. 8, 1978 (USA)

★★★★★

Ian Kane is a filmmaker and author based out of Los Angeles. To see more, visit DreamFlightEnt.com

za (Barbara Bach). But it isn't long before the now five-man Force 10 discovers that the fighters are actually Chetniks—Yugoslavian Nazi collaborators. Force 10 is captured by the Chetniks but later manages to escape.

Force 10 eventually manages to locate both the bridge and their ever-scheming quarry, Nicolai, who is posing as a partisan fighter in Yugoslavia under the alias of Captain Lescovar. Lescovar's direct superior, Major Petrovich (Alan Badel), tells the men of Force 10 that a spy was discovered and disposed of months earlier, but Mallory has his doubts since the person he suspects to be Nicolai is standing right next to Petrovich.

As Miller is Force 10's demolitions expert, he surmises that the explosives on hand won't be enough to destroy the bridge, but if he can get to a dam upriver, he's almost certain that he'll be able to blow that up. The resulting surge of water should take out the bridge.

Most of the film is chock-full of tension as Force 10 races against time to get the bridge destroyed, without being discovered and killed by the Germans. There are

also some double-crossings on display as Nicolai (as Lescovar) attempts to betray Force 10, but luckily there aren't any half-baked romantic subplots, which seem to be par for the course with these types of movies.

The film's peppy screenplay pairs well with Hamilton's able direction, and most of the dialogue-heavy scenes seem inspired, if a bit casual here and there. This is a lighter-toned film than "The Guns of Navarone," which had Gregory Peck and David Niven starring as Mallory and Miller, respectively.

The action choreography is also done well, and the film's various set pieces look convincing. This movie was made back before digital effects, so miniature models were used for many of the larger structures, such as the bridge and the dam (in the destruction sequences), and for the most part, they're impressive-looking.

Overall, "Force 10 From Navarone" is a rousing, action-packed war drama that is a fun and inspiring. It portrays a small unit of men, which despite tremendous odds against them, attempt to save thousands of innocent Yugoslavians from German liquidation.

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