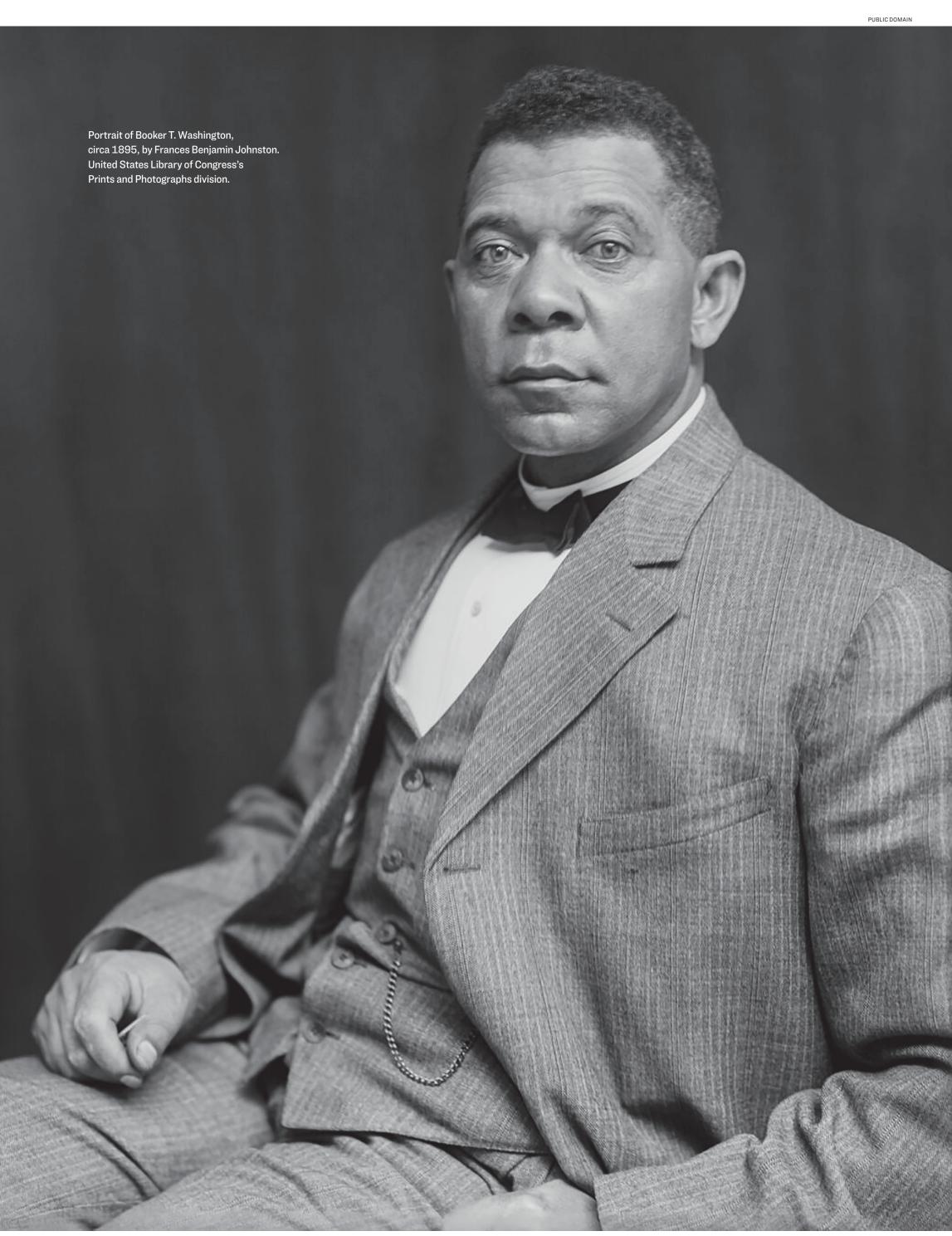
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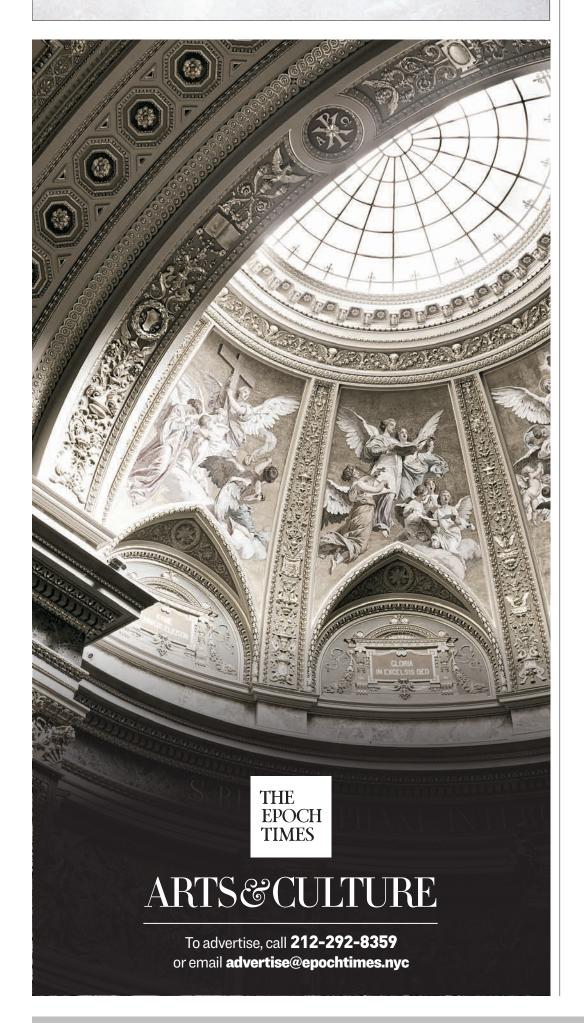
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RECOLLECTIONS AND REFLECTIONS

Modern Art and 'The Emperor's New Clothes'

LORRAINE FERRIER

sk any writer. Often the most poignant of insights come right after an interview ends, when the notebook is closed, the recording device is off, and often when the conversation goes completely off topic. That's exactly what happened to me last year. I'd just had a fascinating interview in London with a well-respected art collector from a renowned family of art collectors. As I was packing up, my interviewee asked me where I was going next.

I'd booked to see the Painted Hall at the Old Royal Naval College in Greenwich, a magnificent Baroque banquet hall painted by British artist Sir James Thornhill, which took him 19 years to complete. The hall was designed by architect Sir Christopher Wren. If you haven't heard of the hall you may have seen it onscreen, as it's often featured in movies and in TV costume dramas. I hadn't seen the hall since it had undergone extensive conservation efforts. As I was telling her that that's where I was heading, the thought of seeing the hall filled me with so much joy that my eyes brimmed with tears. It was one of those wonderfully

unexpected moments that catches you utterly off guard. Slightly embarrassed, I explained how I felt: Many of the traditional art galleries and museums have become so dominated by modern art that these once-bastions of our art heritage have largely pushed out fine art in favor of art with politically correct agendas. The thought of seeing some traditional art and architecture without wading through the rest was like a breath of fresh air.

My interviewee understood. "It's like 'The Emperor's New Clothes,'" she said.

Stating the Truth or Saving Face You'll remember how the Hans Chris-

tian Andersen fairy tale goes: There once was an emperor who loved new clothes so much that he had clothes for every occasion. The emperor was so obsessed with buying new clothes that he cared little for his official duties, unless he could use the opportunity to pose in his new attire.

Two swindlers heard of the emperor's obsession, and posing as weavers they boasted that they could weave the most magnificent set of clothes the emperor had ever seen. Not only would the clothes be stunning, but the cloth had a special ability: It became invisible to whoever was stupid or who was unfit for his job.

The emperor was impressed; he could gain new clothes and an insight into which of his officials were unfit for office. The swindlers set to work. They hid the fine silk and gold threads



The emperor proudly parades the streets in his new clothes, with his noblemen carrying the cloak's train, in an 1853 illustration by Hans Tegner. All the townsfolk happily carry on the charade to save face.

that they were given to make the material and pretended to weave. The clickity-clack of the empty looms could be heard day and night.

Keen to know what the material was looking like, the emperor sent his most honest official to see the weavers. The official observed the weavers working on the looms, but he couldn't see any material. He knew the material became invisible to anyone unfit for office or who was stupid. He surmised that, as he was not stupid, it must mean he was unfit for his job.

Rather puzzled, he returned to the emperor and reported what he found. He said that he'd seen the finest of fabrics, with the most exquisite patterns. He couldn't admit that he had been unable to see the fabric because that would mean he was unfit for his job.

Other officials couldn't see the fabric either, but they all pretended they could out of vanity, fear of looking stupid, or losing their jobs. Although the emperor couldn't see the fabric, because all his trusted officials said they could, he too agreed the fabric was splendid. Soon, the emperor's magnificent new clothes with their magical abilities were the talk of the town and everyone wanted to see them.

Fine art means the artist has created the art using a purely traditional Western art discipline.

A procession was arranged for the emperor to show his people his fine new clothes. The emperor stripped down, and the weavers pretended to dress him in all his new finery. They even told his officials that the cloak had a train, which the officials happily pretended to carry.

As the emperor and his entourage paraded through the streets, all his people cheered in celebration of his fine clothes. No one had ever seen anything like it. And no one wanted to admit they couldn't see the clothes because that would mean they were idiots or unsuited for their jobs. Throughout the town, everyone was full of the same praise.

Then suddenly, a little voice could be heard, the voice of a child: "But the emperor is not wearing any clothes." Whispers of what the child said echoed throughout the town, awakening the people from their delusions. The child was right: The emperor was wearing no clothes.

The emperor, even on hearing the truth of the matter from his people, decided to hold his head high and continue the procession with his officials continuing the facade, holding high the invisible cloak's train.

What I understand from my interviewee's analogy is that just because a large consensus of the population believes that something is right and good, it doesn't necessarily mean that it is. The child in "The Emperor's New Clothes" spoke up from a place of innocence because what that child saw conflicted with everyone else. The child wanted to learn the truth.

The idea of modern art being like the emperor's new clothes really resonated with me.

Exposing the Emperor's New Clothes

I used to believe that everything is art. Now I know better.

My notion was born from a sincere reverence toward all living things, so this seemingly innocent concept of "everything is art" made sense to me. I didn't realize, however, that "everything is art" aligns with the work



The Painted Hall at the Old Royal Naval College in Greenwich, London, where hundreds of figures feature in Sir James Thornhill's paintings celebrating Britain's monarchs and its naval and merchant might

of French conceptual artist Marcel Duchamp, who is often associated with the Dada movement that helped catalyze the desecration of traditional Western art.

How Duchamp helped desecrate art is beyond the scope of this article, but to learn more, do read Chapter 11: "Desecrating the Arts" in The Epoch Times publication "How the Specter of Communism Is Ruling Our World."

Duchamp created an anti-art movement by making art that went against the conventions of traditional art practices. For example, he started exhibiting everyday objects that he called "readymades," such as an upturned urinal he titled "Fountain," a replica of which is on display at the Tate Modern, in London.

Duchamp declared, "An ordinary object [can be] elevated to the dignity of a work of art by the mere choice of an artist." Essentially, Duchamp was saying: Anything is art—if an artist says it's so. This viewpoint shifts the emphasis from the artist as a virtuoso who captures God's creations to making the artist a false idol who believes that his or her viewpoint is more important than the work itself.

Duchamp's ideology deviates from the 16th-century definition of an artist, which, according to the Etymonline website, is someone "who cultivates one of the fine arts." The traditional fine arts, as defined in the Renaissance, are painting, sculpture, and architecture.

Interestingly, "fine" in "fine arts" doesn't reflect the appearance and level of polish of the art, but it means that the artist has created the art using a purely traditional Western art discipline, according to philosopher David Clowney in a 2011 edition of "The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism."

The late philosopher Roger Scruton expands on these definitions, stating in his book "Beauty" that the essence of such art as "True art is an appeal to our higher nature, an attempt to affirm that other kingdom in which moral and spiritual order prevails."

When painting moral and spiritual scenes, an artist needs to understand how to depict not only the superficial appearance of the subject but also each subject's entire character. And as artists paint such upright subjects, they imbue their paintings with those qualities. It therefore makes sense that art painted with the utmost sincerity, that embodies the best moral and spiritual subjects, could move a person to tears. It's why true art appeals to our soul, and when the soul is touched, that's something that words cannot easily

Conversely, when art re-creates degenerate subjects (like a urinal) or fleeting subjects such as human emotions and desires outside of the realms of any spiritual or moral context, then this art cannot help but have an adverse effect on the viewer. A painting imbued with these qualities is not a painting that cultivates the fine arts. It heightens negative human emotions that are there as markers for discontent, and should not be immortalized on canvas. Paintings that capture emotions, desires, or selfish actions act as snapshots of a moment in time without showing any consequence from which to learn or improve our character. In true art, as in real life, every action has a consequence.

Good art embodies reason. There is purpose and there is order to it: It promotes goodness, guiding our morality and inspiring us to be better. Good art makes sense. But modern art, that which deviates from the values of traditional Western art, is senseless. It embodies the irrational, the sensational, and the emotional; it's without reason—reason in the truest sense of the word: rational. Therefore, art as defined by Duchamp fits into the "emperor's new clothes" category. I believe that most nontraditional art created from the time of the impressionists onward (from around 1860) fits into that category too.

True art always guides the viewer to goodness, and art with any other goal is the emperor's new clothes.

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Booker T. Washington at his desk. His autobiography, "Up From Slavery," 1901, was a bestseller.



Theodore Roosevelt speaking at the National Negro Business League in 1910. Seated to his left is Booker T. Washington.

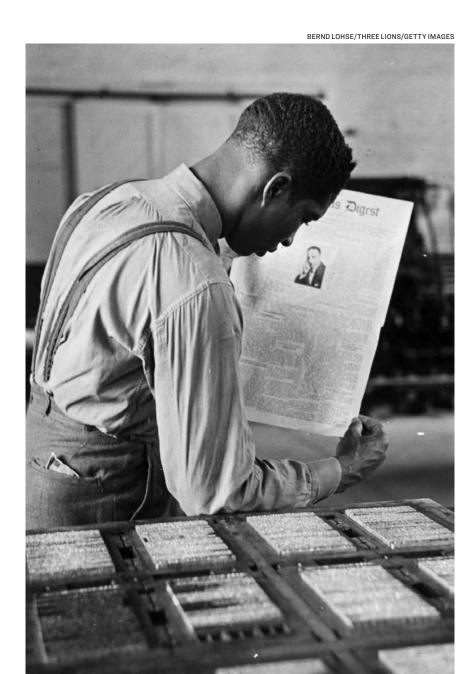


Booker T. Washington making a speech in Mound Bayou, Miss., in 1912.

EMULATE THE BEST

Self-Reliance and Building Bridges

Lessons learned from Booker T. Washington



A student at Tuskegee University in Alabama, circa 1955, learns to print a newspaper page in the institute's printing works.

JEFF MINICK

ometimes looking backward can show us the way forward. Booker T. Washington (1856-1915) was born into slavery in Virginia. After emancipation, his mother took her family to West Virginia, where Washington learned to read, received a rudimentary education, and worked for several years in salt furnaces and coal mines. Ambitious and eager to learn more, he left home to attend the Hampton Institute, a school in eastern Virginia established to educate African Americans.

Like most of the other students, Washington worked his way through Hampton. He became a star pupil, and won the respect and admiration of Samuel Armstrong, president of the institute.

The Tuskegee Institute

When contacted by citizens in Alabama interested in founding a similar institute in Tuskegee, Armstrong strongly recommended Washington. Though the committee was searching for a white man to lead the school, on Armstrong's recommendation they offered the post to the 25-year-old

And so was born one of the most remarkable colleges in American history.

The original mission of the Tuskegee Normal and Industrial Institute, now Tuskegee cans and send them back to their communities as teachers, ministers, and industrial and agricultural workers trained in modern techniques, such as those developed by agricultural scientist George Washington Carver, who taught at Tuskegee. In his autobiography "Up From Slavery," Washington wrote: "Every student who graduates from the school shall have enough skill, coupled with intelligence and moral character, to enable him to make a living for himself and others." These same students literally built most of the school with their own hands, tended crops and farm animals, and lived by a strict schedule to instill in them the discipline Washington thought necessary

Accomplishments and Attacks

Washington's reputation grew along with that of the school. He traveled extensively and often, raising money for his beloved institute and giving so many speeches that he was soon regarded as a leading spokesman for African Americans. In 1895, he delivered his most famous address to the Cotton States Exposition in Atlanta, in which he urged blacks to develop their working skills, gain an education, and put aside dreams of political equality for the present time.

As historian Robert J. Norrell tells us in "Up From History: The Life of Booker T. Washington," black critics, most of whom lived in the North, condemned Washington for this speech, calling him "the Benedict Arnold of the Negro race," "the Great Traitor," and a "miserable toady." Even today, many historians consider Washington's advocacy for cooperation and slow change a capitulation to the Jim Crow laws of the South. In answering these charges, Norrell points out that Washington made these proposals when in the South "white hatred of blacks was intensifying, manifested in an epidemic of lynchings.'

Despite these criticisms, by the end of his life, Washington had firmly established Tuskegee Institute, sent thousands of its graduates to small towns and cities across the South, and helped restore a sense of pride among black Southerners, many of **Patient for Change** whom named schools, parks, and libraries in honor of him.

So what lessons can we learn from this man? What might we, in this summer of discontent, protests, and riots, take from his example?

Grit and Self-Reliance

Determination

Booker T. Washington was a fighter. In "Up From Slavery," Washington recounts in detail the hardships he suffered on his journey to the Hampton Institute. By the time he reached Richmond, he was broke, hungry, and without a friend in the world in that city. He eventually earned money for food by unloading cargo ships, cut expenses by sleeping at night under an elevated sidewalk, set out again for the institute, and arrived at the school with 50 cents in his pockets.

He was equally strong-willed in his creation of the Tuskegee Institute. Within 20 years of his arrival, he transformed an empty piece of land into a thriving campus. Believing in the potential of his students as a force for change in the segregated South, he constantly sought donors whose money would help improve the institute and stuck to his dream of not just a better South but also a better America.

Self-Help and Work

Unlike today, when so many of us seek government solutions to our problems, Washington stressed individual effort, willpower, and hard work as key forces for positive University, was to educate African Ameri- change. He instilled these principles in his young people, urging them again and again to rise above the poverty and bigotry oppressing them, to develop their gifts and share them with the communities where

they lived. In his Atlanta Exposition Address, Washington shared an anecdote still associated with his name. He described a ship in desperate need of water signaling another vessel for help. That ship responded several times, "Cast down your bucket where you are." Finally, the captain of the distressed ship ordered a bucket dropped over the side and found it filled with fresh water from the Amazon River.

In his speech, Washington urged both blacks and whites to cast down their buckets where they are, cooperate with one another, and rebuild a region ruined by war

Building Bridges

Interracial Engagement

In addition to his Atlanta speech, Washington delivered other addresses, sometimes to audiences composed of Southern whites and blacks. In the concluding paragraph of "Up From Slavery," he writes of speaking in Richmond, Virginia, at the Academy of

"This was the first time the coloured people had ever been permitted to use this hall. The day before I came, the City Council passed a vote to attend the meeting in a body to hear me speak. The state Legislature, including the House of Delegates and the Senate, also passed a unanimous vote to attend in a body. In the presence of hundreds of coloured people, many distinguished white citizens, the City Council, the state Legislature, and state officials, I delivered my message, which was one of hope and cheer, and from the bottom of my heart I thanked both races for this welcome back to the state that gave me birth."

Because of his ability to reason and to compromise, Washington reached larger audiences, undoubtedly including some segregationists, than his critics.

More than many of his contemporaries, and much more than the people of our own time when our digital technology brings us instant news and, as a consequence, loud demands for instant change, Booker T. Washington looked at the whites and blacks of the American South and realized that both groups needed time to recalibrate their vision of the future. This recalibration, this hope that the two races would cooperate and eventually regard one another without prejudice, is a theme that runs throughout "Up From Slavery."

Unlike other revolutionaries—Robespierre, Lenin and Stalin, Mao Zedong, and the dozens of other dictators who have demanded instant changes to the societies they controlled—Washington was an adherent of gradualism, a black man in the Deep South who concluded that decades would pass before blacks and whites could together forge a future. And unlike some of his African American contemporaries, especially those from Northern states, he was intimate with Southern whites, knew and recognized their fears and prejudices, and was willing to seek a compromise so that his own people might become more learned and more prosperous.

A Man Is More Than the Color of His Skin

The Blame Game Rejected

In his biography of Washington, Robert Norrell writes: "Blacks needed a reputation for being hard-working, intelligent, and patriotic, Washington taught, and not for slave, his struggles to educate himself, and his fight to maintain Tuskegee Institute in segregated Alabama, Washington could easily have given way to finger-pointing and self-pity, blaming Southern whites and the system of oppression they had created for the condition of his people.

That he continued to move forward, to pursue his dreams of African American education and advancement, without falling into self-pity provides a remarkable example of a man battling overwhelming odds and never surrendering to bitterness or discouragement.

Character

Washington promoted the importance of character. He believed that "character, not circumstances, makes the man" and that "I shall allow no man to belittle my soul by making me hate him."

Like Martin Luther King Jr., who echoed some of Washington's sentiments in his own speeches—"Let no man pull you so low as to make you hate him"—Washington was more interested in what lay under the skin than the color of the skin itself. In his dealings with blacks and whites, he respected and treated them as individual human beings rather than as stereotypes.

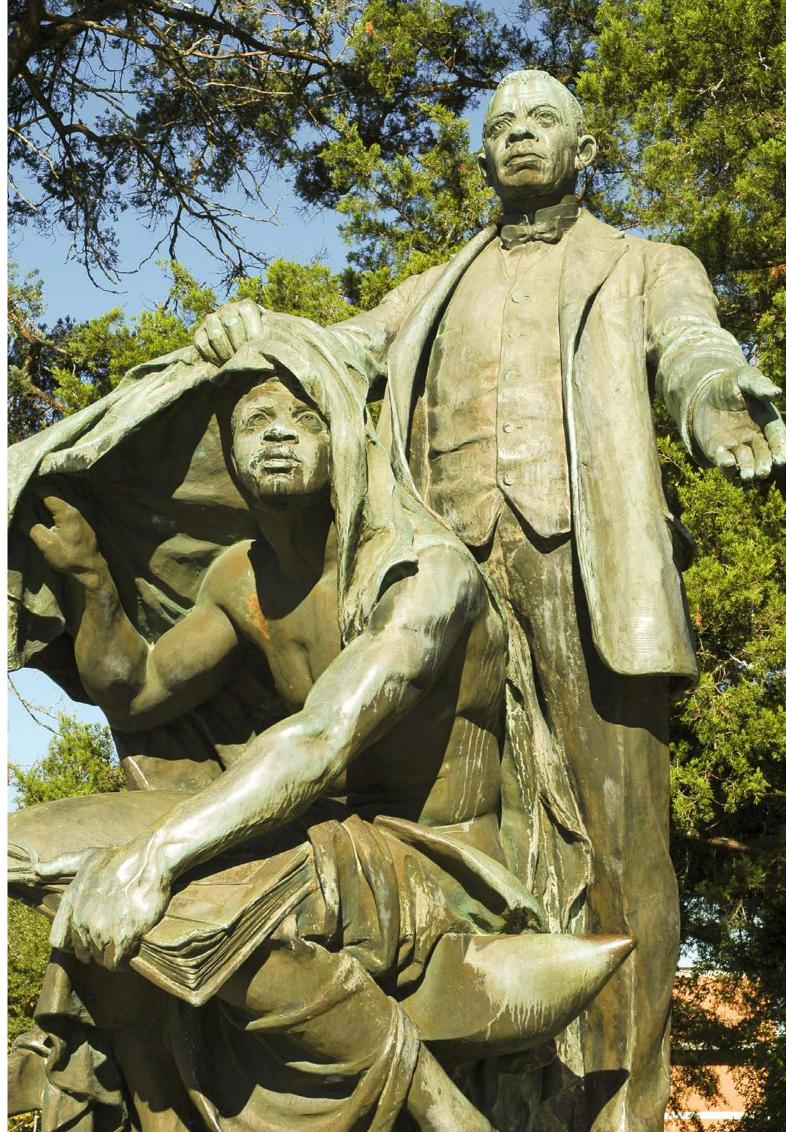
Near the end of "Up From Slavery," Washington noted: "The great human law that in the end recognizes and rewards merit is everlasting and universal." As he of Booker T. Washington.

demonstrates time and again in this autobiography, Washington believed that merit and character were intertwined that regardless of their circumstances, men and women of character who were willing to work hard would find their just

In this same passage, Washington wrote of "the struggle that is constantly going on in the hearts of both the Southern white people and their former slaves to free themselves from racial prejudices," and of his hope that someday they would do so. That hope, that belief in progress and a higher living standard for blacks, was the standard he followed his entire life.

As Norrell tells us in "Up From History," Washington's "effort to sustain blacks' morale at a terrible time must be counted among the most heroic efforts in Ameri-

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



"Lifting the Veil of Ignorance," a statue of Booker T. Washington at Tuskegee University.

Booken J. Washington and Family.

PHOTOGRAPHS OF TUSKEGEE INSTITUTE: AN ILLUSTRATED INVENTORY OF THE AMERICAN ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETY

Booker T. Washington and family.

can history." In our age of rhetoric, rage, riot, and rebellion, we could use more men and women with the values, virtues, dreams, and hopes

Unlike other revolutionaries—Robespierre, Lenin and Stalin, Mao Zedong, and the dozens of other dictators who have demanded instant changes to the societies they controlled—Washington was an adherent of gradualism.

Hope in a Time of Genocide

An interview with author and translator Siobhan Nash-Marshall

JOSEPH PEARCE

iobhan Nash-Marshall is uniquely placed to offer penetrating and iluminating insights into one of the darkest and most horrific chapters in human history.

The chair of philosophy at Manhattanville College in New York is the author of "The Sins of the Fathers," a book about the Armenian Genocide, and translator of the newly published novella "Silent Angel" by Antonia Arslan, which is set against the backdrop of the genocide.

Dr. Nash-Marshall's book exposes Turkish denialism about the genocide and shows how the dehumanizing effects of modern philosophy are responsible for the butchering of a whole people. Her translation of "Silent Angel" has provided readers in the English-speaking world with another book by Armenian-Italian novelist Antonia Arslan, whose earlier novel about the genocide, "Skylark Farm," was an international bestseller.

In this exclusive interview for The Epoch Times, Nash-Marshall speaks by email of the genocide and about her translation of Arslan's latest book.

JOSEPH PEARCE: "Silent Angel" is a novella set against the backdrop of the Armenian Genocide. Could you give a brief explanation and description of this genocide and when it happened?

SIOBHAN NASH-MARSHALL: The Armenian Genocide was the first genocide of the 20th century. The triumvirate at the helm of the Ottoman Empire at the time (Enver Pasha, Talaat Pasha, and Djemal Pasha) took advantage of World War I and launched a full-scale slaughter of the Armenians. A million and a half of them (that is, threequarters of the Armenian people who lived in their historic homeland at the time, in what is today called Eastern Turkey) were slaughtered in the most horrendous ways imaginable.

The men were separated from their families. They were usually killed on the spot. The women and children were then forced to "relocate" by foot into the Syrian desert. Every sort of horror was visited upon them along the way. Most of them died of thirst, starvation, fatigue.

The genocide is a very well documented event. Newspapers from every continent coined the term "crime against humanity" when they called upon the Turks to stop killing the Armenians. Pope Benedict XV, in his letter to the sultan, called it the "leading of the Armenian people almost to its extinction." It was part of an operation that the U.S. ambassador at the time, Henry Morgenthau, called the "whitewashing of Anatolia."

MR. PEARCE: Apart from being the translator of "Silent Angel," you are also the author of "The Sins of the Fathers," a book about the Armenian Genocide. Could you tell us a little about the book?

MS. NASH-MARSHALL: My primary concern in "Sins of the Fathers" is modern philosophy. This is not strange for a Catholic. Pope Leo XIII railed against modernism. He also tried to protect the Armenians during the pre-genocidal massacres (1894–1896) perpetrated by Sultan Abdul Hamid. This is not a coincidence.

In my book, I tried to shed light on five crucial characteristics of the Armenian

First, it was predicated on modern Western thought: All of its perpetrators read and carefully studied 19th-century European philosophers.

Second, it shows the price of modern political hypocrisy. The genocide did not happen overnight. It was preceded by nearly 30 years of negotiations in which the European Powers called for reforms in the Armenian provinces, signed treaties of all kinds with the sultan, but let the Armenians be slaughtered. Pope Leo XIII intervened and tried to mediate between the European Powers and negotiate with the sultan because he was well aware of the plight of the Armenians and the hypocrisy of the Powers.

Third, the Armenian Genocide highlights the historical engineering inherent in modern philosophy. Although the actual killing of the Armenians was mostly completed by 1923, the government of Turkey today is still trying desperately to rewrite Armenians out of the history of the lands of modern Turkey.

Fourth, the Armenian Genocide highlights the social engineering inherent in modern philosophy. The Armenians were



The commemoration of the 1915 Armenian mass killings, held in Istanbul on April 24, 2018

losopher Auguste Comte.]

lently anti-Christian.

killed in order to construct a "new Turkey"

built along the lines dictated by French

and German philosophy. [In "Sins of the

Fathers," Dr. Nash-Marshall shows how

the intelligentsia of the "new Turkey" were

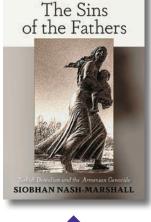
inspired by Karl Marx and Georg Wilhelm

Friedrich Hegel and also by the French phi-

Fifth, the Armenian Genocide was vio-

Professor Siobhan Nash-Marshall attributes the Armenian Genocide to modernist philosophy. COURTESY OF THE AUGUSTINE INSTITUTI





Siobhan Nash-Marshall's book explores the underlying reasons for the Armenian Genocide, and how it is still not acknowledged by the Turkish government.

Armenian-Italian

novelist Antonia Arslan.

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SILENT

ANGEL

"Silent Angel" tells the

story of how an Arme-

nian treasure, an ancient

illuminated manuscript-

the "Book of Moush"-

was saved during the

Armenian Genocide.

The Armenian Genocide thus gives us a very good image in which to understand the problems that we are facing today. We too see historical engineering, social engineering, violent anti-Christianity. The Armenian Genocide shows what happens if we don't pay attention to the signs.

MR. PEARCE: The original title of "Silent Angel" was "Book of Moush." Could you tell us something about the "Book of Moush" and now it relates to the plot of "Silent Angel"? MS. NASH-MARSHALL: Moush was one of the Armenian provinces in the Ottoman Emof the Three Kings of the New Testament, was buried, or so Armenian oral traditions

As the location was important, so too is the "Book of Moush." It is called the "Msho Charantir"—the "Homiliary of Moush." It actually exists. It is the largest extant Armenian manuscript. It is on display in the Matenadaran, the great library in Yerevan, the capital of Armenia. One can plainly see

All Armenians know the story of the book. It was divided into two parts during the genocide and carried by two women who managed to save it. The names of the women who saved it are lost. "Silent Angel" gives the women names and tells their story.

MR. PEARCE: The author of "Silent Angel," Antonia Arslan, wrote a previous bestselling novel, "Skylark Farm," also about the Armenian Genocide. Could you tell us a little about that novel and how it differs from "Silent Angel"?

MS. NASH-MARSHALL: "Skylark Farm" ("La Masseria delle Allodole") is Antonia Arslan's first novel, and the first part of what is likely going to be a pentalogy. The second part is "Road to Smyrna," the third "The Sound of the Wooden Pearls." She dealt with part of it also in "Letter to a Girl in Turkey." Alas, only the first has been published in English.

"Skylark Farm" is a personal novel for Arslan, as can be seen from her dedicating it to her aunt, a survivor of the genocide, with whom she grew up. It is a difficult story. Like all descendants of families and cultures ravaged by genocide, Antonia Arslan has had personally to deal with what can be called the problem of Job since her birth. Her family has seen evil face-to-face and has had to understand how to hold on and deepen their faith through it. And so has she. In "Skylark Farm," she shows that diabolical evil, sparing no details. It was

Like a true classicist, Arslan weaves her family's story in "Skylark Farm" as an epic. This is the perfect genre for a Job-like story. It allows Arslan to weave a timeless perspective in her story.

Both of these things make "Skylark Farm" very different from "Silent Angel." In "Skylark Farm," Arslan is trying to grapple with the horror of what happened to her family and her people. In "Silent Angel," she focuses on the saving of her people.

MR. PEARCE: Who or what is the "silent angel" that gives the novella its name?

MS. NASH-MARSHALL: Antonia Arslan loves the title "Silent Angel." In Italian, as we've mentioned, her novella was published with the title "Book of Moush." There are many silent angels in Arslan's novella. One of them is the Book of Moush itself. It cannot speak, so it is silent. But it can show, and by showing it becomes a messenger of God, bringing the message of salvation.

Another angel is the angelic guide who guards over the people who are called upon to save the book. The angel plays an important role in the story. Yet another angel in "Silent Angel" is Zacharias, the sole survivor of his village, who leads the party pire. It was very important culturally and carrying the book to safety. Two more of the novella's angels are the Greeks, Makarios at one of which, for instance, Casper, one and Eleni, who protect the Armenians who are saving the book from those who would kill them.

> "Silent Angel" is filled with angels, with messengers of God. Arslan has laced the

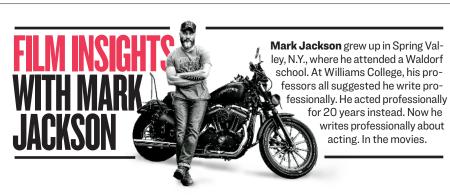
> MR. PEARCE: Without wishing to give the plot away, could you give us a summary, not of the plot but of the principal characters? MS. NASH-MARSHALL: "Silent Angel" is the story of Anoush, which means "sweet" in Armenian, and Kohar, which in Armenian means "jewel." They are simple women. Anoush is a wife and mother, and is shy and soft-spoken. Kohar is boisterous, has a fiancé, and is a decision maker. They are farmers. They come from a beautiful place. In their adventure they are joined by Hovsep, which is Armenian for Joseph, who is an orphan; by Eleni, the Greek midwife; and her sweetheart, the Greek Makarios.

> MR. PEARCE: The literary landscape of "Silent Angel" illustrates the horrors of human cruelty and depravity but also the triumph of human endurance and virtue, as well as suggestions of God's providential presence in the midst of darkness. In what ways does the novella achieve this, and what does it offer 21st-century Americans in the sense of its being somehow inspirational or applicable to our own times and culture?

> MS. NASH-MARSHALL: We are living in difficult times, and risk forgetting what is truly important in our lives. We are distracted by events, by violent emotions, by unrest. We also are always tempted to think that we are alone. This is especially true for us now, not just because of COVID-19, but because those links that once seemed to bind our society have loosened: families, parishes,

> "Silent Angel" reminds us what is important: the glorious Truth that saves us. It reminds us that that truth is not an abstract belief, but a real person. It reminds us that that person does not save us collectively. He saves us individually, and sends us beauty, messengers, hope, and strength.

Joseph Pearce is the author of "Solzhenitsyn: A Soul in Exile" (Ignatius Press).



POPCORN AND INSPIRATION: FILMS THAT UPLIFT THE SOUL

'Field of Dreams' Fosters Belief in the Unseen

MARK JACKSON

n 1989, "Field of Dreams" was nominated for three Oscars. It resonated so **L** powerfully with people wishing for a return to simpler, more innocent times, traditional values, as well as confirmation that time-space portals, parallel dimensions, clairvoyance, karma, virtue (good karma), and destiny exist—that the actual movie-set field in Iowa became a major tourist attraction. They built it, and people came.

If You Build It, He Will Come

Ray Kinsella, a rookie farmer, lives with wife Annie (Amy Madigan) and daughter Karin (Gaby Hoffmann) in the coziest house ever, in a sea of green Iowan corn.

Ray tells the audience about his rocky relationship with his now-deceased dad, John Kinsella, a devoted worshiper at the church of baseball.

One dusk, while walking through his green-corn sea, Ray hears a voice (Ed Harris) whispering, "If you build it, he will come." Ray's like, "What? Huh?" and then he suddenly has a precognitive vision of a baseball field, out on the edge of his cornfield, replete with stadium lights. Ray figures he oughta build that field.

Annie is slightly skeptical about Ray's apparent craziness, but gives him her blessing anyway, pounding nails alongside him in a show of spousal-bleacher-carpentry support, and happily tolerating Ray's never-ending rant about Shoeless Joe Jackson, a long-dead baseball staridolized by Ray's long-dead dad.

Time passes, the field just sits there, nobody comes, and Ray's family farm faces foreclosure. Ray built it, and "he," whoever he is, did not come.

'Field of Dreams'

Director Phil Alden Robinson

Starring Kevin Costner, Amy Madigan, James Earl Jones Burt Lancaster, Ray Liotta. Gaby Hoffmann

Running Time 1 hour, 47 minutes Release Date

May 5, 1989

(L-R) Terence Mann

(James Earl Jones),

young Archie Graham

(Frank Whalev), and Rav

Kinsella (Kevin Costner)

traveling to lowa to

fulfill their dreams.

"What? What pain? Whose pain??" Then, attending the local PTA meeting,

round of fisticuffs for insisting the school ban some of her favorite books—those of radical author Terence Mann. Ray remembers reading those books himself. He puts two and two together: The field-whisperer has to be talking about this man, er, Mann. So Ray does research, turning up a maga-

zine article where Mann admitted that as a kid, he dreamed of playing for the Brooklyn Dodgers. Hmm ... would it ease Mann's pain if he got his dream?

try and drag Mann (James Earl Jones) to a game at Fenway Park, hoping something revelatory will happen there. And lo, the field-whisperer obviously stowed away in Ray's van, because the voice is there at the ball game and says, "Go the distance." You can imagine Ray's reaction.

At the game, both Ray and Terence have the same vision about a player named Archie Graham, a former New York Giant who only got to play one game in 1922—and so off they drive to Minnesota (!) to interview him, only to discover that Dr. Graham died a few years before.

However, Ray has a "Back to the Future" moment; now he time-travels back to 1972 and runs into Doc Graham (Burt Lan-



Ray Kinsella (Kevin Costner) hears whisperings in the cornfield, one of the many occurrences of supernatural events in the 1989 hit "Field of Dreams."

Then one day, wee daughter Karin sees a baseball man out on the field. Who might he be? Shoeless Joe (Ray Liotta)—Ray's whole family can see him.

Joe, the baseball spirit, is ecstatic to be able to experience the essence of baseball again, as he hits Ray's pitching. He later returns with seven other ballplayers—the rest of the ghosts of the players banned in the 1919 Black Sox World Series scandal.

Mark's Not Clairvoyant

Mark, Ray's brother-in-law (Timothy Busfield), a very sensible man concerned with bill-paying and imminent foreclosures and such, doesn't have his third eye open and can't see the other-dimensional ballplayers, and harps endlessly that Ray'll go bankrupt unless he immediately quits all this nonsense.

Meanwhile, Ray, out in his field again, hears that voice say something new; this time it's "Ease his pain." And Ray's all like,

spunky Annie calls out another wife for a

So Ray drives from Iowa to Boston (!) to

3rd-Eye Openings

caster), who explains that while he thoroughly enjoys his medical career, his dream was always to stare down a Major League pitcher in the exquisite moment of sublime baseball-ness. And annoy that pitcher by winking at him. And he never got a chance to step to the plate.

So Ray says, "I know a place where things like that happen and if you wanna go, I can take you." Doc declines.

Ray's confused. Terence explains that if Doc had winked at that pitcher and actually hit a home run, he would never have become a doctor and benefited all those small-town people who adored him.

Cars are still streaming to the Field of Dreams, even as we speak.

But the fact is, Doc Graham had a dream. Remember dreams? This is a movie about dreams. That's why they call it "Field of

So Ray and Terence drive back to Iowa, picking up a hitchhiker along the way, because as Ray says, "I need all the karma I can get right now." Ray means "good karma," not karma, but let's not quibble about spiritual semantics.

Back at Ray's farm, more baseball players' spirits have come out of the cornfield—now there are two teams. And guess who the hitchhiker is, who finally gets to step to the plate and take a swing (and a wink)?

The movie winds down. Terence exits via the cornfield time-space portal. Shoeless Joe, before leaving, reminds Ray about "If you build it, he will come," and also "Ease

Whereupon the catcher takes off his mask ... and guess who it is? For the one percent of the American population that hasn't seen this movie, I'll not spoil the ending—but this is the part that always makes grown men cry.

And as we, the audience, depart the dimension where this story is told, we see a long string of headlights—thousands of cars headed toward the Field of Dreams. Why? Ray built it and we came. We'd like to see. Or at least believe. It'll ease our pain. This actually happened. And cars are still streaming to the Field of Dreams, even as we speak.

POPCORN AND INSPIRATION: FILMS THAT UPLIFT THE SOUL **Bucking White House Corruption**

MARK JACKSON

"Clear and Present Danger" (1994) starring Harrison Ford would be an appropriate title for just about everything in 2020. This year is turning out to be quite a dangerous year, what with COVID-19, the excruciating dearth of toilet paper, Marxist-instigated riots, and murder hornets.

This film, which is Ford's last appearance as Jack Ryan in the Tom Clancypenned series, has a strong whiff of danger; it's almost 2.5 hours long but the action is so compelling, you don't notice the time. The only slow thing is the early-1990s computer technology.

Its immediate predecessor was "Patriot Games," and "Clear and Present Danger" is about the games played in Washington D.C.'s corridors of power, by socalled patriots.

This is a guy movie, jampacked with politics, CIA scheming, special forces com-

lord's daughter's quinceañera. That's what you'd call a real murder Hornet.

Jack Steps Up

the CIA and White House

speaks words he suggested on national TV, soon begins to get the hang of the White House mental chess game (with coaching from Greer's hospital bed).

ry Czerny) have green-light-

ed former Navy SEAL-CIA

operative John Clark (Wil-

lem Dafoe) to audition and

select a small, impromptu

black ops unit of Spanish-

speaking, U.S. Army Green

Beret and Delta Force opera-

tors. And then quickly Black-

James Cutter (Harris Yulin), and Deputy Director of Operations Robert Ritter (Hen-

Admiral Greer (James Earl Jones), is stricken with terminal cancer, Ryan is promoted to take his place. Jack's a rookie, very green;

power-play piranhas size him up, seeking to outmaneuver him immediately. Jack's first item of business

is to handle the drug cartel execution of an American family aboard their yacht. Turns out this family were also close personal friends of the U.S. president (Donald Moffat). Further complicating matters is the fact that the family appear to have been in cahoots with the cartel that killed them.

Rated PG-13 Meanwhile, the POTUS, National Security Adviser **Running Time**

Aug. 3, 1994

Present Danger."



Hawk-helicopter them into the Colombian jungle for search-and-destroy missions against the cartels.

Once inserted, they immediately start blowing up subterranean cocaine labs, and calling in the above-mentioned murder Hornet bomb strike—which is supposed to look like a car bombing. Immediate retribution for the yacht murders.

Jack Takes Off the Gloves Prior to the U.S. covert mili-

tary team eventually getting pinned down by enemy fire in the jungle with no rescue forthcoming (because the POTUS would like the whole headache to just "go away"), Jack's mostly involved in dealing with the extremely sneaky Robert Ritter.

Jack orders a kid from the White House equivalent of Best Buy's Geek Squad to hack Ritter's computer. Once Jack gets in, he ends up in a race to download Ritter's files onto floppy disks and print them, while Ritter tries to delete them, all while small-talking about how they got off on the wrong foot and should have a tennis match. The technology is

now laughable, but the scene remains surprisingly potent. Then, needing to monitor

the situation in Colombia, Jack, along with CIA and Secret Service personnel, winds up in an electrifying motorcade ambush that was probably the forerunner of the powerful ambush of the CIA by the MS-13 gang scene, in 2015's "Sicario."

All in All

This is good, solid, stolid, earnest Ford, who, since carpentry was his day job for years, knows how to assist all his directors in crafting scenes to be more dynamic.

Ford's best moment arrives at the movie's end, when his character faces down the president with threats to go to the press, and the president says that none of that will happen because he'll wheel, deal, and dance what he calls "the Potomac twostep." To which Jack Ryan replies, "Sorry, Mr. President. I

Clearly, the fictitious Bennett administration was a swamp that needed draining. It's inspiring that Jack Ryan had the courage to blow the whistle and pull the plug.

don't dance."

bat sniping, and a sneaky, laser-guided smart bomb dropped by a McDonnell Douglas F/A-18 Hornet fighter jet on a Colombian drug

When Jack's mentor, Deputy Director of Intelligence

Jack, at first wide-eyed and flattered when the president

Dafoe, James Earl Jones, Joaquim de Almeida, Anne Archer, Henry Czerny, Harris Yulin, Donald Moffat, Benjamin

'A Clear and

Phillip Noyce

Harrison Ford, Willem

Director

Starring

Release Date ****

Harrison Ford as Jack Ryan in "Clear and

More Like an Angel Than a Man

ot too long ago, my wife and I drove to a nearby city. Whenever we go anywhere, my wife is usually in charge of the radio, but this time, in a rare gesture, she asked if there was anything I would like to listen to on our journey.

I suggested that we listen to a podcast by Stephen West called "Philosophize This!" We picked a random episode called "Simulacra and Simulation" and began

Baudrillard, Simulacra, and Simulation West has a great ability to make complex ideas easily digestible for the general public. In "Simulacra and Simulation," he breaks down the ideas of 20th-century

philosopher Jean Baudrillard, and here, I'm going to share my very basic understanding of these ideas. Baudrillard suggests that what we experience in a society influenced by mass media like ours, and how we respond to these experiences, is no longer based on the direct experience of immediate reality

Instead, our experience of reality is now made of simulacra, which are copies of things that don't have, or no longer have, an apparent, original source. When we consume and live as influenced by simulacra, we replace our experience of immediate reality with a simulation of reality. To make better sense of this, take a

moment to imagine a morning of mine: I wake up, I brew some coffee, and I check my smartphone for any news I may have missed while I slept.

While my coffee brews, I'm bombarded with information and imagery to which I unintentionally respond: I laugh at some memes, I shake my head in disappointment at what I believe to be misguided social media posts, and I may even boil at some misinformation in media outlets. My coffee finishes brewing.

Not only did I lose awareness of what was actually happening in my immediate reality—the brewing coffee—but I projected my thoughts and emotions into the indirect experiences provided by the information and images on my smartphone-indirect because the information and images I experience through my smartphone are not gathered from directly experiencing them. I am instead experiencing a series of symbols and signs that represent direct experiences, and for a moment, according to Baudrillard, I'm living in a simulated reality created by simulacra.

The question then becomes: How much of my response to simulacra is authentic, and how much of it is formulated by other

simulacra? In other words, is it the case that my identity is merely an amalgamation of ideas and emotions gathered from simulacra, or is there a part of me that's authentic, that remains untouched by the influence of the signs and symbols propagated by mass

A Warped Reality

Hearing West's summation of Baudrillard's ideas made me consider how we might see ourselves in the midst of mass media's onslaught of information. I immediately thought of a self-portrait by Parmigianino completed around 1523.

Parmigianino was one of the most influential painters during the beginning of the mannerist period in Italy. The early mannerists, in reaction to the pursuit of perfection in the Renaissance, were interested in the personal stylization of their creations, which, according to the National Gallery of Art website, resulted in "elongated proportions and exaggerated anatomy of figures in convoluted, serpentine poses."

Parmigianino, in an attempt to present his artistic skills to Pope Clement VII, painted elements of his self-portrait warped, as they would appear in a convex mirror. Parmigianino's hand is painted elongated, and even the walls of the room and window are warped to follow the roundness of the frame. The only thing that is not warped is Parmigianino's face, the placeholder for a person, which the art historian Giorgio Vasari described as "more like an angel than a man."

More Like an Angel Than a Man

So why did West's podcast remind me of this painting, specifically? I think it's because of two elements in the painting: the warped environment and the unaffected, angelic portrait.

It is necessary to remember that Parmigianino painted himself as he looked in a convex mirror. He provided a simulacrum by way of the mirror: The mirror copies the reality he wished to represent, and he copied that copy by way of his painting, which he presented to the world.

Now, 500 years later, I'm trying to untap er screen of a photograph of a painting of a mirrored reflection in conjunction with a summary of ideas about copies. Simulacra abound, and what does this mean for my interpretation? The original, direct experience that Parmigianino had while painting is lost. Or is it?

Is my purpose in this life determined by the mass amount of information thrown



"Self-Portrait in a Convex Mirror" circa 1523-1524, by Parmigianino. Oil on poplar panel, 9.6 inches in diameter. Museum of

Fine Arts, Vienna, Austria.

Parmigianino, in an attempt to present his artistic skills to Pope Clement VII, painted elements of his self-portrait warped, as they

would appear in a

convex mirror.

ever, directly experience? If I were to hold a mirror up to my world, how much of it

someone else's making? Yet, Parmigianino's head and face remain unwarped. The very thing that would house and communicate that he's "more like an angel than a man" is depicted undistorted, despite the warped environment, and it's here I'm left to consider that maybe a piece of Parmigianino's authenticity lives on in what he painted, even if it's many times removed from the

would be warped because the mirror is of

image on my computer screen. Maybe our personalities are not completely formed by mass media. Maybe our truth is not determined by expected responses to experiences we never directly have. And

maybe there's an angel in all of us. I'm left asking, "How can I look at myself and, despite the influence of the simulacra of mass media, recognize what makes me sincere and authentic? What might make me "more like an angel than a man?"

Art has an incredible ability to point to what can't be seen so that we may ask "What does this mean for me and for everyone who sees it?" "How has it influenced the past and how might it influence the future?" "What does it suggest about the human experience?" These are some of the questions I explore in my series Reaching Within: What Traditional Art Offers the Heart.

Eric Bess is a practicing representational artist. He is currently a doctoral student at the Institute for Doctoral Studies in the Visual Arts (IDSVA).

In the Presence of Beethoven and the Divine

The Morgan celebrates the maestro's birth with his sublime manuscripts

J.H. WHITE

hen Ludwig van Beethoven penned his manuscripts, he transformed black ink and white paper into something beyond the ordinary. In 1907, J.P. Morgan experienced this special quality when he came across one of the maestro's original

Morgan had been doing business in Paris when he heard about a dealer living in Florence, Italy, who had held a concert playing from Beethoven's original manuscript for Violin and Piano Sonata No. 10 in G Major, Op. 96.

"Mr. Morgan thought that was really interesting," Robin McClellan, assistant curator of music at The Morgan Library and Museum, told me in a phone interview about the current exhibition "Beethoven 250: Autograph Music Manuscripts by Ludwig van Beethoven." It is viewable online and also in person, once the Morgan reopens, until Sept. 27.

Morgan quickly caught a train to Florence and showed up at the dealer's house. The businessman sat down and paged through the manuscript, which struck him with awe.

"[The manuscript] is a way to feel close to [Beethoven]," McClellan says. Morgan bought the manuscript, and it became one of the first music manuscripts in the Morgan's collection. It's now being displayed in this physical and online exhibition celebrating the 250th anniversary of Beethoven's birth.

The exhibition includes 11 works overall, divided into two sections: firstly, messy musical sketches on single leaves that the maestro jotted down throughout his lifetime; secondly, full multipage manuscripts.

The exhibition allows you to connect with Beethoven, which can be a transcendental experience since his music, after all, wasn't simply for entertainment.

Early 19th-century author, composer, and music critic E.T.A. Hoffmann said of Beethoven, "His kingdom is not of this

Beethoven was "viewed as being in touch with some kind of spiritual truth that's beyond your average person," McClellan says. Beethoven labored away and was "able to teach or transmit that truth back to your average person."

From Chaos Comes Perfection

McClellan hadn't studied these particular manuscripts in detail before he started working at the Morgan. But analyzing the all the other trappings of religion ... The idea assortment of musical ideas that sprawled is that when you can listen to the music of across Beethoven's leaves in the first section of the exhibition was not an easy task.

"I was struck by how messy and chaotic [the notes] are," McClellan says. "It makes For more information, watch a video sense because they weren't intended for public consumption. They were literally 'notes to self."

But essential information was missing in Beethoven's brainstorming notes. It's some- J.H. White is an arts, culture, and men's times unclear whether the notes are in a fashion journalist living in New York.

treble or bass clef, for example, or what the intended pitch is. Fortunately, McClellan is a composer himself, so he was able to competently analyze the music.

"It wasn't like [the music] just pops off the page," he says. "There's a bit of detective work to try to reconstruct what he actually means here."

But McClellan's laborious journey with Beethoven's works seems only fair as the maestro himself suffered through his own creative process. In contrast to Mozart, whose music is often believed to have been delivered to him fully formed, Beethoven toiled, McClellan says.

"One of the things that [Beethoven is] famous for in these sketches is how much work it took him to get to the final results and how hard and difficult that was," Mc-Clellan says. "He was seen as this heroic figure who would venture into the realms of the spiritual and then come back and transmit these profound truths that he'd discovered."

Through this laborious process, Beethoven would unearth a gem-a short melody or musical phrase. The most famous example is the "da-da-da-da-da-da-da-da-a" phrase at the beginning of the Fifth Symphony. He repeats that short rhythm over and over again in different iterations throughout the piece. This contrasts the practice of having one melody, then another, then another.

Beethoven's music is typically "based on one little melody or rhythm; every part of a piece goes back to that little nugget, which unifies the music," McClellan says. "It allows the listener to follow the mood of the music. That little nugget is like a character. Then it allows him to tell a story as that character transforms and goes through different experiences."

Access to the Divine

Not only did Beethoven influence compositional practice, but he also brought music's metaphysical quality into everyday life. In previous centuries, a congregation would listen together to hymns in church, sharing a collective experience. But in the 19th century, at the height of the Romantic era of music, the experience became personal, individual.

With Beethoven's music, "as the listener, you could go into this deep inner place and have the music transmit some kind of deep truth or profound meaning to you as an individual," McClellan says. "You don't need Beethoven, you've got direct access to that

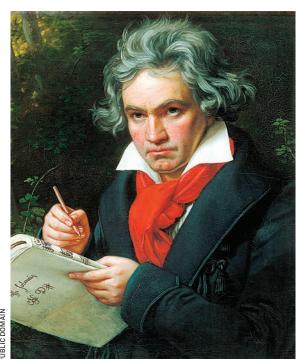
on the exhibition "Beethoven 250: Autograph Music Manuscripts by Ludwig van Beethoven.





"Ars longa, vita brevis" (Art is long, life is short), WoO 193, third setting, 1825(?) by Ludwig van Beethoven; text by Hippocrates. Morgan Library & Museum.

Violin and Piano Sonata No. 10 in G Major, Op. 96, p. 36, 1815, by Ludwig van Beethoven. The Morgan Library & Museum.



Early 19th-century author, composer, and music critic E.T.A. Hoffmann said of Beethoven, 'His kingdom is not of this world.

A portrait of Ludwig van Beethoven by Joseph Karl Stieler, 1820.

Timeless Lessons From Jane Austen's 'Pride and Prejudice'

The popular 19th-century story still inspires today



Colin Firth and Jennifer Ehle in the 1995 BBC miniseries "Pride and Prejudice."

MADALINA HUBERT

recently re-read Jane Austen's "Pride and Prejudice" and was surprised at how much it teaches us about ourselves . as human beings.

I first discovered "Pride and Prejudice" through the 1995 BBC miniseries with Colin Firth and Jennifer Ehle. I immediately became fascinated by the colorful characters, vivid scenery, and of course the beautiful love story. Eager to learn more, I read the book and appreciated the opportunity to connect with the plot and characters on a more personal level.

The story opens with the Bennet family who are excited about the arrival of their new neighbor, a young and wealthy single man by the name of Mr. Bingley. Mrs. Bennet is hoping he will marry her eldest daughter, Jane, and she is prepared to do everything in her power to make this happen.

To a dance, Mr. Bingley brings along his friend, the handsome and even wealthier Mr. Darcy. Yet despite his privileges, Mr. Darcy is a proud young man and inadvertently insults Elizabeth, Mrs. Bennet's second daughter, when they first meet.

Her vanity wounded, Elizabeth develops strong prejudice against Mr. Darcy. He, in turn, starts to fall in love with her. As the story progresses, we see that it takes much



A portrait of Jane Austen, 1873. from the Portrait Gallery of the Perry-Castañeda Library of the University of Texas at Austin.

effort and pain to undo the knots of the characters' pride and prejudices. Yet it is a rewarding ride as we join them on their bumpy journey toward happiness.

"Pride and Prejudice" has been a favorite with audiences and critics alike since its first publication in 1813 in England. The book was soon translated into French, with translations in other languages following. Today, it is one of the most popular books in the world, with the characters of Mr. Darcy and Elizabeth Bennet becoming beloved fixtures of our literary culture.

A Healthy Dose of Humor There are many reasons for the

popularity of "Pride and Prejudice," one being the timeless themes it presents, such as love, family, and friendship, in a witty and entertaining manner. The novel makes us laugh at our flaws and those of society, while simultaneously inspiring us to reflect

The book's opening passage describing the neighborhood's reaction to a new arrival is a great example of Austen's delightful approach to storytelling. She writes:

"It is a truth universally acknowledged that a single man in possession of a good fortune, must be in want of a wife. However little known the feelings and views of such a man may be on his first entering a neighborhood, this truth is so well fixed in the minds of the surrounding families, that he is considered as the rightful property of some or other of their daughters."

We immediately see that Austen is gently mocking these families who are not interested in Mr. Bingley's wants and needs, but rather in their own self-interest. Yet as the story unfolds, we see that this is related to a larger problem they face. This is especially clear in the case of Mrs. Bennet. If her daughters don't marry well-off men, they will be destitute after their father's death. Austen understands their plight and doesn't make light of the matter. However, through-

to point out that Mrs. Bennet's scheming almost ruins her daughters' chances of getting married.

Humility and Truth

Austen demonstrates a keen eye not only for the flaws of human nature, but also for faith in people's ability to improve.

Her two protagonists, Elizabeth Bennet and Fitzwilliam Darcy (known as Mr. Darcy), both have their flaws. They make mistakes and allow themselves to be blinded by pride and prejudice in their interactions. As a result, they hurt each other and almost miss their chance of finding happiness together.

Yet fundamentally they are good people. They are able to look inside themselves, find their faults, and improve their characters. With this heart of humility, they let go of their pride and prejudices and begin to treat each other with mutual respect and appreciation.

We see this when Mr. Darcy expresses his gratitude to Elizabeth for helping him recognize his selfishness. Toward the story's end, he tells her, "As a child I was taught what was right, but I was not taught to correct my temper. I was given good principles, but left to follow them in pride and conceit. ... By you, I was properly

Elizabeth is also willing to admit to her faults. Once she learns out the book, she also makes sure the extent to which her prejudices

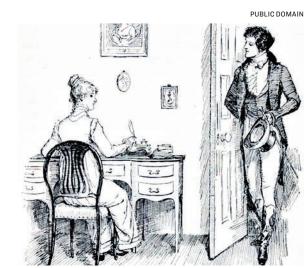
have blinded her toward Mr. Darcy's true character, she faces her shortcomings in an honest manner: "Had I been in love, I could not have been more wretchedly blind. But vanity, not love has been my folly. ... Till this moment, I never knew myself." After recognizing this, she is able to reevaluate her opinion of Mr. Darcy and is thus able to better appreciate him.

Manners and Self-Control

Having read discussions by "Pride and Prejudice" fans online, I get the impression that many people are drawn to the polished manners of early 19th-century society, when men stood up if a lady entered the room, dancing was respectful, and people valued morality. In that sense, the story is timeless in expressing our wish

for a better, more civilized society. One important aspect of such a society is self-control, and this is well-emphasized in the novel. One example is the scene of Mr. Darcy's first proposal to Elizabeth. Confident that she will accept him, he is shocked that she rejects him so rudely. In this scene, Austen makes one another, and in the end the an effort to emphasize that despite his anger, he is able to control his emotions. She writes, "He was struggling for the appearance of composure, and would not open his lips, till he believed himself to

In a world where tempers flare



easily, it is comforting and a good reminder to pay attention to poise and composure.

"Pride and Prejudice" is a combination of family drama, love story, and fairy tale. The lead characters suffer because of their failings but work to overcome them. In the end, they get their happily-everafter. Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy start out with pride and prejudice, but they come together in humility and sincerity. They are equals in their shared respect and love for whole family benefits from their relationship.

"Pride and Prejudice" is a good reminder that true happiness lies in self-improvement, respect, and appreciation for one another, and for that I am deeply appreciative of Jane Austen's beautiful story.

An illustration Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy, from the 1894 London edition of "Pride and

The lead characters suffer because of their failings but work to overcome them.

POPCORN AND INSPIRATION:

FILMS THAT UPLIFT THE SOUL

A Tender Film About

Never Giving Up

IAN KANE

he year was 1995. By all accounts, Jean-Dominique Bauby had a vibrant and fulfilling life. He had worked his way up to the position of editor-inchief of the popular French-based lifestyle magazine Elle, and had a loving family, including two young kids.

At the young age of 43, however, things suddenly take a turn for the worse: He suffers a near-fatal brain-stem stroke that renders him a head-to-toe paralytic. He does, however, remain in command of one physical ability—control over his left eye.

A New Life

Directed by Julian Schnabel, the film "The Diving Bell and the Butterfly" covers the final two years of Bauby's life and is based on a book that he wrote of the same title. Masterfully adapted into a screenplay by Ronald Harwood, the film captures the essence of Bauby's memoirs.

The film opens with Bauby (played by Mathieu Amalric, "The Grand Budapest Hotel") waking up in a hospital in Calais, France. He's been in a three-week-long coma. His neurosurgeon, Dr. Lepage (Patrick Chesnais), tells him that he has a rare cerebrovascular condition known as locked-in syndrome.

Bauby initially thinks that he is speaking to Dr. Lepage. Much to his horror, he realizes that he is only talking to himself in his own mind. In spite of this devastating news, Bauby uses his incredible sense of humor to work through things by mental self-talk.

Dr. Lepage assigns brilliant speech therapist Henriette (Marie-Josée Croze) to help Bauby communicate. She develops an alphabetical system (known today as partner-assisted scanning), whereby Bauby, in blinking his good eye, chooses letters, which then form words and sentences. He is also instructed to answer simple questions by blinking once for "yes" and twice for "no." It's a painfully slow process of



Jean-Dominique Bauby (Mathieu Amalric) and one of the many who patiently help him, in "The Diving Bell and the Butterfly."

communication, but it's the best that is available to him.

The first act of the film details Bauby's thoughts from a first-person vantage point. We hear his thoughts in a somewhat dreamlike way, as he drifts back and forth between flashbacks and his current state. As he tells himself, the only things that have been undamaged, besides his left eye, are his imagination and memory.

Bauby uses his incredible sense of humor to work through things by mental self-talk.

Eventually, after he is moved into a wheelchair so that he can be wheeled around, things switch to a third-person perspective, and we are better able to see how people react to him.

Of course, Bauby's longtime partner, Céline (Emmanuelle Seigner), has also been devastated by this tragic event. However, she manages to keep up a relatively strong façade for the benefit of their mutual mental well-being. In an especially touching scene, she takes him out to a beach for Father's Day, and although he feels happy to see her and their children, he is equally upset that he can't physically touch or play with them.

Another emotionally riveting scene is when Bauby's father, Papinou (the late Max von Sydow), rings his son at the hospital as a show of sympathy. Papinou compares his own failing health to his son's condition, telling him that he is unable to leave his apartment just as Bauby can't move his body, nor escape it.

Schnabel manages to convey the solid support that Bauby has around him, which includes family, friends, and the amazingly caring (and patient) hospital staff. They inspire him to write his memoirs, which is an especially laborious task due to slow eye-blink dictation. Fortunately, Bauby manages to get his memoirs published.

"The Diving Bell and the Butterfly" is a heartfelt cinematic work that pays homage to Jean-Dominique Bauby, along with the helpful folks around him (especially the women) who formed the backbone of his support structure.

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

'The Diving Bell and the Butterfly'

Director

Julian Schnabel

StarringMathieu Amalric, Emmanuelle
Seigner, Marie-Josée Croze

Running Time 1 hour, 52 minutes

Rated

PG-13
Release Date

Feb. 1, 2008 (USA)



Mathieu Amalric as an imaginative man incapacitated after a stroke.

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