WEEK 38, 2020

THE EPOCH TIMES

# ARTS& CULTURE

PUBLIC DOMAIN

The end times of mankind are marked by violence and falsehood. But which came first? "Cain Slaying Abel," 1608–9, by Peter Paul Rubens. The Courtauld Institute of Art, London.

The End Times and the Soul of Progressive Thought

***In the Beginning: Spelling! Part 1***...4

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REFLECTIONS AND RECOLLECTIONS

# IDEOLOGY, MOBS, AND CANCEL CULTURE

## LET THE RESISTANCE BEGIN WITH US

JEFF MINICK

In "Orthodoxy," G.K. Chesterton wrote: "Therefore the modern man in revolt has become practically useless for all purposes of revolt. By rebelling against everything he has lost his right to rebel against anything."

The key word in Chesterton's aphorism is "right."

Rebellion brought America into existence, a revolution predicated on specific issues: liberty and taxation without representation. The men and women of 1776 focused on "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness," founded a republic, wrote a Constitution that remains one of the world's most profound documents, and left untouched such institutions as the church, the family, and free enterprise.

### The French Model

Less than 20 years later, France also raised the banner of revolution, a violent upheaval that differed radically from that of the United States. The new government outlawed the Catholic Church and replaced the Triune God with the goddess Reason. Citizens deemed traitors to the revolution were carted through the streets of Paris to the guillotine and beheaded. The state issued decrees controlling speech and behavior, crushed its opposition in regions like the Vendée, and wreaked havoc on an already failing financial system. Napoleon eventually brought order from this chaos by assuming the mantle of emperor and dictator.

The French Revolution, and not the American, has served as the prototype of revolt ever since.

And it is the French model that we have seen at work in America for the last 50 years.

### The Academy

Just as French intellectuals—Rousseau, Voltaire, and others—laid the foundation for the French Revolution, American teachers and professors have produced two generations of students who were rarely taught love of country in the classroom and who were instead fed narratives of leftist ideology portraying the United States as a racist, sexist, and capitalist hellhole, a blood-drenched land of oppression and failure.

At Guilford College in the early 1970s, I took a course in the history of post-World War II India. The professor, a visitor from some university in California, neglected to address that history but instead spent nearly every class attacking Richard Nixon, the American family, and the middle class. After a paper I submitted to him came back marked B-, I decided to conduct an experiment. Having received his permission to rewrite the paper, I changed my conclusion to fit what I judged to be his worldview and received an A. Any temptation to join the left died that day.

In the article "I'm a Former Teacher. Here's How Your Children Are Indoctrinated by Leftist Ideals," Douglas Blair recounts several examples of such indoctrination from his four years of teaching in elementary school. When he had his class making paper tepees for a Thanksgiving project, other teachers told him this was "cultural appropriation," and Blair was ordered to desist. When he asked students to research famous men and women of Britain, he looked at one girl's list and asked, "Well, what about Winston Churchill?"

"Oh, no, not him," she replied. "He was a racist and didn't think women should have rights. He wasn't a good guy."

### By Their Fruits, You Shall Know Them

Today, we are reaping the terrible harvest planted by these sowers. Mobs in the streets tear down statues, loot stores, burn and pillage, and beat and sometimes murder their fellow citizens, all in the name of equality and social justice. Even worse, in some of our cities, government officials abet these vandals, allowing them free rein in their destruction and praising them for calling our attention to their grievances.

HULTON ARCHIVE/GETTY IMAGES

Young Marlon Brando's image was of a rebel without a cause.

And the focus of these riots and protests? Chesterton's Everything. The middle class, the family, the history of our country, God—all are under assault. Even Mother Nature is not exempt from this revolt, as we see when men and women claim it is their "right" to change their sex.

This scattergun approach to rebellion might be summed up in a line from the movie "The Wild One," when someone asks biker Johnny Strabler (Marlon Brando), "Hey, Johnny, what're you rebelling against?" and he replies, "What've you got?"

Rebelling against everything means standing for nothing.

In other words, nihilism.

### Darkness Falls: The Culture

Even more threatening to our culture are the attacks by the electronic mob. Step out of line, post something on social media that offends someone—anyone—and you encounter the wrath of these digital Visigoths. In the last decade or so, professors, celebrities, and even ordinary citizens have fallen victim to the group-think crew, their reputations destroyed, their ability to earn a living forbidden them, their families verbally assaulted and threatened.

But this ravenous mob doesn't stop with the living. It hunts down writers, artists, politicians, and military heroes from the past, and works around the clock to eradicate them from our memory and our history books.

Let's look at their latest victim.

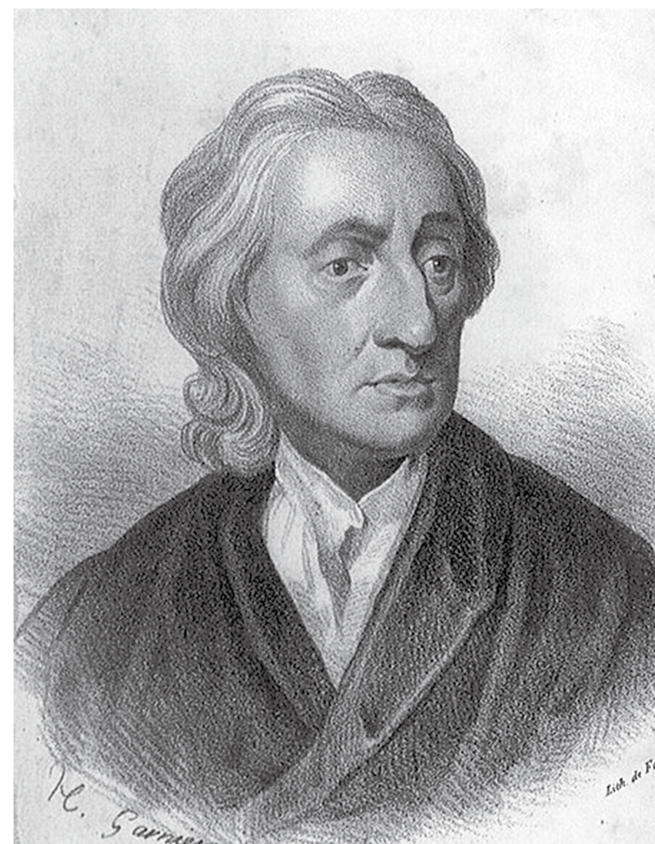
### How Cancel Culture Works

Until now, most literary critics judged Flannery O'Connor as one of America's great 20th-century writers. Her short stories appear in any anthology worthy of the name, and professors teach her work in classrooms across the country. My Advance Placement students read her novel "Wise Blood" and her short story "Revelation," which I regard as one of the finest ever written by an American writer.

Now O'Connor is under attack as a racist. In a recent essay in The New Yorker, Paul Elie, who included a highly favorable portrait of O'Connor in his biographical study of four American writers, declares her a racist, not for her books and stories but for some things she said and wrote privately. The mob has already come a-running; some readers have denounced her, and Baltimore's Loyola University has erased her name from a dormitory.

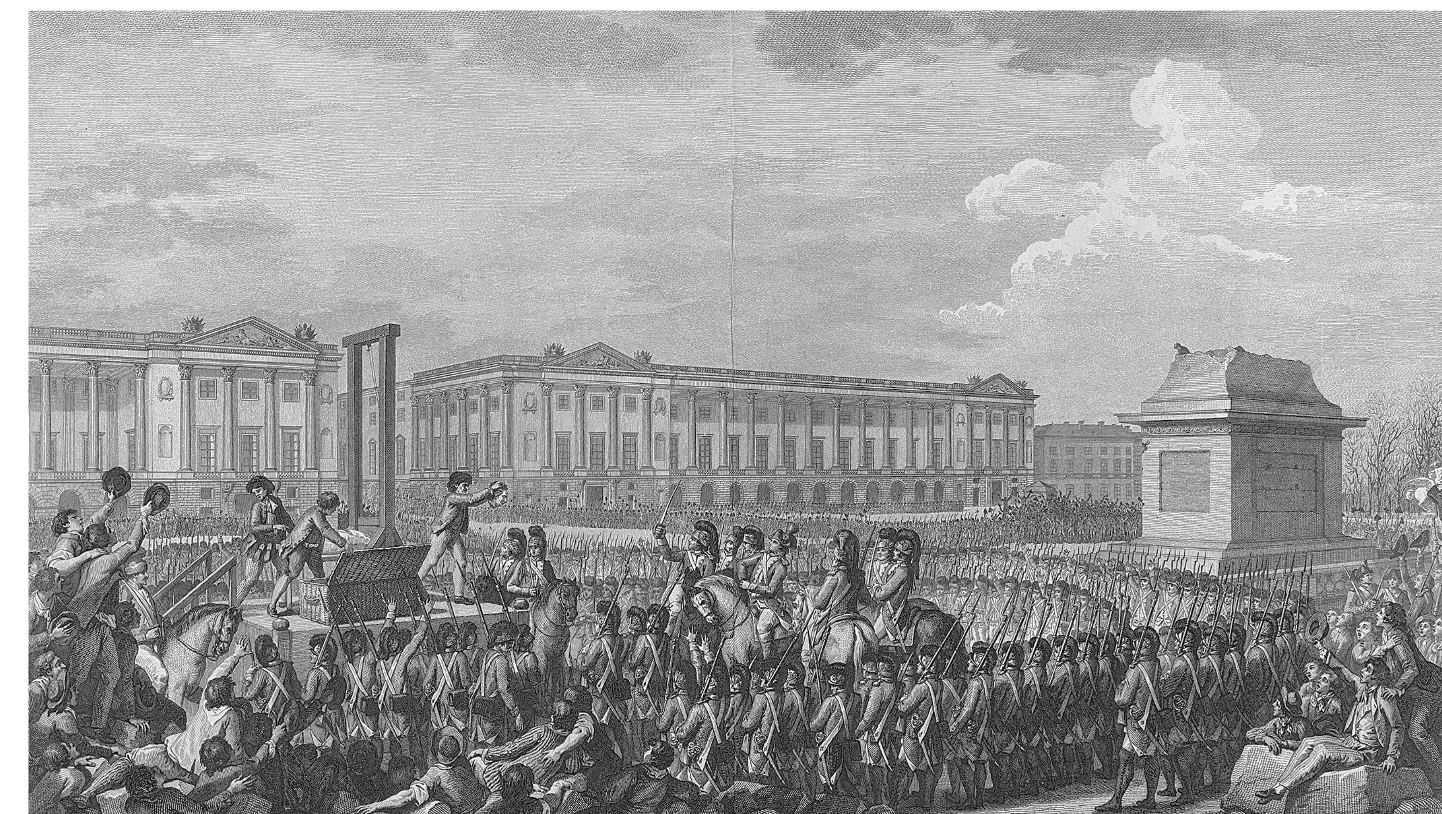


PUBLIC DOMAIN



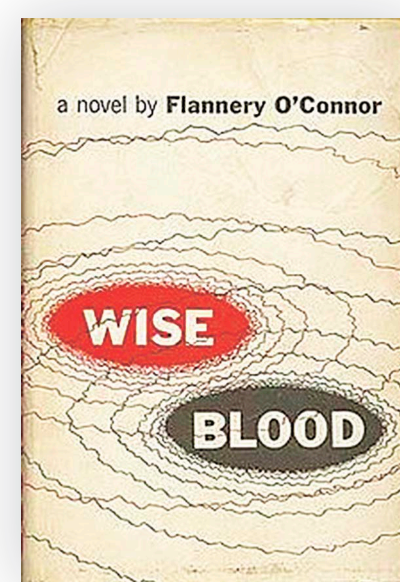
Where today among those wanting to destroy our culture is there a political thinker such as John Locke? A lithograph after H. Garnier; Library of Congress.

PUBLIC DOMAIN



"Execution of Louis XVI," during the French Revolution. The empty pedestal in front of him had supported a statue of his grandfather, Louis XV, torn down during one of the many revolutionary riots. Engraving by Isidore Stanislas Helman (1743–1806) after Charles Monnet (1732–1808); Bibliothèque Nationale de France.

**Time to cancel 'cancel culture.'**




A first edition of Flannery O'Connor's 1952 novel.

In "Flannery O'Connor and the Ideological War on Literature," Charlotte Allen defends O'Connor and explains the devastating effects of cancel culture:

"The fact that this debate is taking place at all, however—whether or not Flannery O'Connor was a racist, how racist or not she might have been, whether she redeemed herself from her racism via her writing or grew past her racism morally—is exactly what has gone fearfully wrong. The primary evil of cancel culture isn't toppled statues or renamed buildings or even destroyed livelihoods. It is that, once cancel culture has come for an artist, it becomes impossible to take that artist's artistry seriously ... Henceforth, it will be impossible to give a public lecture about O'Connor, teach a college class, write a critical essay, or adapt her fiction to stage or screen without appending a dreary prologue rehearsing all the arguments about her attitudes toward black people. And in the midst of such arguments, all nuance, humor, characterization, and subtlety in the works themselves gets flattened or lost. This is what cancel culture does: It reduces literature to ideology."

### Kneeling Before the Small-Minded

In fact, cancel culture reduces all that it touches—art, beauty, family, and love—to ideology. Once we see all of reality through political glasses, once we accept the notion that "the personal is political," all that we treasure becomes dross. The magic of life vanishes.

As may be seen by its advocates, both the young rebels in the streets and their older allies, cancel culture also reduces adults to infants, toddlers with no sense of nuance or history who smash our past and our culture as a 3-year-old might kick apart a sandcastle.

While they are amusing themselves, let's ask some questions.

Where among these destroyers are philosophers comparable to Socrates and Plato? Where are the great writers like Cervantes, Shakespeare, and so many others; the political geniuses like John Locke, Thomas Jefferson, and James Madison; the painters and sculptors like Michelangelo, Titian, and Rembrandt; the composers with the talent of Bach, Mozart, and Beethoven?

We kneel before the small-minded when we might stand on the shoulders of giants.

We can mount those once sturdy shoulders of Western civilization by studying and passing along its gifts to our young people. The climb will be arduous—the lures of popular culture are many and seductive—yet how else can we defend and save Western culture unless we ourselves understand it, absorb it, and love it?

Time to cancel "cancel culture."

*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.*

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PUBLIC DOMAIN

At one time, people believed the Golden Age was in the past. Today, we believe it is always in the future. "The Golden Age" by Pietro da Cortona. Palazzo Pitti, Florence, Italy.

TRADITIONAL CULTURE

# THE END TIMES AND THE SOUL OF PROGRESSIVE THOUGHT

JAMES SALE

We get so used to some paradigms that we forget to ever question them. Perhaps the one I find the most troublesome is the idea we have in the West of "progress"—or is that Progress with a capital P?

Progress has the underlying assumption that we can only get better, that things are constantly improving, and this particular false assumption riddles our political landscape. The very word "progress" gives rise to "progressive" parties with "progressive policies," and these typically arrogate to themselves a certain virtue and self-righteousness, as if they—and they alone—represent that tide of history which is helping and advancing humanity. They are not like stuffy "conservatives" and such-like, with their antiquated, iniquitous, backward-looking, and selfish ideologies.

It would seem that no amount of history or actual experience can ever shift devotees of progress from this chronic mindset or belief paradigm.

A portrait of science fiction writer Michel Corday.

PUBLIC DOMAIN

The idea that we are making "progress" took a significant and fateful turn with the advent of the Enlightenment of the 18th century. The French soldier and science fiction author Michel Corday, though, let the cat out of the bag when he commented on World War I: "Every thought and event caused by the outbreak of war came as a bitter and mortal blow struck against the great conviction that was in my heart: the concept of permanent progress, of movement towards ever greater happiness. I had never believed that something like this [WWI] could happen." Wow! The concept of "permanent progress"!

We recall in the UK that another great science fiction writer, H.G. Wells (of "War of the Worlds" and "Time Machine" fame), believed in progress. He spent his life advocating it, and yet when he died in 1946, just after World War II had ended, his last book, "Mind at the End of Its Tether," ends in disillusion, pessimism, and the rather hopeless and unsubstantiated idea that we as a species might be replaced with some more advanced one. That's Progress? As his verbal jousting partner and friend G.K. Chesterton more accurately observed: "Everything that modern progresses finally perishes."

André Breton, poet, writer, anarchist, and one of the founders of surrealism—that specifically modernist movement—observed in that movement's manifesto: "Experience ... paces back and forth in a cage from which it is more and more difficult to make it emerge. It too leans for support on what is most immediately expedient, and it is protected by the sentinels of common sense. Under the pretense of civilization and progress, we have managed to banish from the mind everything that may rightly or wrongly be termed superstition, or fancy; forbidden is any kind of search for truth which is not in conformance with accepted practices."

Strangely, then, we realize that even the modernists—in their brighter moments—see that something is profoundly wrong with our thinking and especially in how we view the past. Indeed, progress itself is now virtually the very "superstition" that its advent declared it was abolishing.

**If society is based on lying, and the encouragement of the lie, then dreadful consequences follow.**

## An Ancient Way of Seeing

One of the most striking things about the ancients is their near-universal testimony that things were better or superior at the beginning and that history reveals one long, slow decline. The ancient Egyptians, for example, believed in a time called "Zep Tepi" (or the "First Time" or Golden Era), a time of perfect harmony and planetary alignment.

So too, the ancient Greeks believed in a Golden Age when humans and gods did not conflict, and life was extraordinarily long and healthy. Sadly, the Golden Age gave way to the Silver and then the Bronze, till finally we reached their Iron Age where war, violence, and treachery are endemic: Life is nasty, brutish, and short.

Hindu mythology, too, posits four ages: Satya, Treta, Dvapara, and Kali. These represent huge stretches of time, and they are endlessly cyclical; but the thing is, the first age, Satya, is the age of pure truth and righteousness, and each subsequent age represents a diminution of that truth. Currently, we are in the Kali Age, which means that we are in the age where evil and dishonesty have replaced the truth and righteousness of the past.

We could produce many more examples, but finally, coming closer to home, Judaism and Christianity also share the story of human degeneration. It is not such a neat story as the "four ages" story, although levels of degeneration are very apparent in the Genesis narrative: The Fall in the Garden of Eden is quickly followed by the violence of Cain, but exceptional human longevity is retained more or less up until the Flood, which is evidently a considerable time after the Fall.

But if I were to characterize one of the primary differences between Golden Age humans and humans now—aside from the obvious violence—it would be their speech. Hindus specifically talk about truth, a way of speaking in which one says what one means (or otherwise, not lying, or what Jonathan Swift called "saying the thing that is not"). In a way, violence is not primary, or causal of our afflictions; it is symptomatic.

Let's look at Cain's story. But first remember that the Devil is the "father of lies" and that speaking falsely results from thinking falsely. False thinking—the kind that distorts moral choices—is often a thinking entirely divorced from the feelings of the heart.

If we think of the violence of Cain, we recall that God warned him that sin was crouching at the door and was a desire he had to master. Following that warning, Cain told his brother—and then killed him. We do not know what Cain told his brother, but the disconnect between telling his brother—as if wanting to share or to clarify—and then killing him when Cain failed to gain some kind of satisfaction from Abel is palpable. Whatever Cain told his brother, I think we can assume it was not true. He was lying to himself as he lied to his brother, and the murder was his coverup.

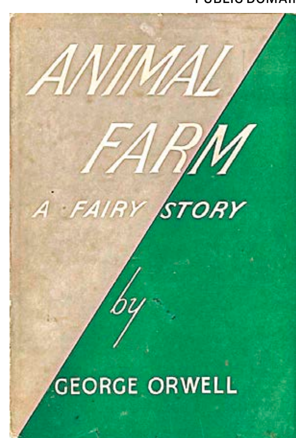
## The Root of Progressive Thought: Lying

We are all too familiar with this kind of false language since we have always been exposed to it. History is littered with famous examples of false, misleading, and lying speech. Sometimes we feel we have to tell "white lies" ourselves if we wish to preserve our relationships with those we deem important not to upset—a family member, for example. This is the opposite of what Confucian scholar Chu Hsi said: "Sincerity is the principle of reality. It is to be the same whether before men's faces or behind their backs."

Buddhism extends all this in its Noble Eightfold Path. The steps of this path are Right Understanding, Right Thought, Right Speech, Right Action, Right Livelihood, Right Effort, Right Mindfulness, and Right Concentration. Notice that wonderful flow: understanding ... thought ... speech ... action. This works not only at an individual level but at a societal level too. If society is based on lying, and the encouragement of the lie, then dreadful consequences follow—if not immediately, then in time.

This is why George Orwell, despite being a socialist, was a kind of hero in that he relentlessly pursued truth and insisted on language doing so. He documented as well as foresaw what would happen once language strayed from truthfully reflecting the reality surrounding us. His essay "Politics and the English Language" is a forensic analysis of the problem; and his two great works of fiction, "Animal Farm" and "1984," despite being fiction, demonstrate with uncanny precision the consequences of false language. His works are a supreme example of where fiction is more truthful than any political document of his time.

PUBLIC DOMAIN





George Orwell's political satire "Animal Farm" examines how lies permeate Karl Marx's theories once they are put into action.

Before returning to the issue of the language of the Golden Age, we might note that we have this problem in the West now. We call it "fake news," but it is, in its way, no different from the dissemination of propaganda under the Nazis and the Soviets of the 20th century. Fake news is propaganda, and it is designed to sow discord, uncertainty, and fear.

In this way, moderate opinion and democracy itself is unnerved, undermined, and ultimately defeated unless democratic and legitimate authorities act decisively to counter this onslaught on thought and thinking.

Of particular interest now is the resurgence of Marxist ideology that is disguised under "progressive" headings. Perhaps the most revealing comment on Marxism, communism, or Bolshevism that was ever made—certainly relevant to our topic of language and progress—was said by philosopher Leszek Kolakowski in his "The Main Currents of Marxism: Its Origins, Growth, and Dissolution." He said, "Mendacity is the soul of Bolshevism."

Mendacity—lying—is its soul! It's the heart of it; and this is the exact opposite of the Golden Age, the Eightfold Path, Adam before the Fall, and more besides. Thus, the language of this ideology constantly stresses progress, but in reality it means the opposite. And this is why historians often agree with Professor Norman Davies, who says in his book "Europe: A History," that "on the moral front, one has to note the extreme contrast between the material advancement of European civilization and the terrible regression in political and intellectual values."

Given this, the intriguing question is: What was that lost language really like? Can we say more about it? We will look at this in Part 2 of this article.

*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.*

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The eight-spoke Dharma wheel symbolizes the Noble Eightfold Path in Buddhism.



# Emily Dickinson Is the Unlikely Hero of Our Time

MATTHEW REDMOND

Since her death in 1886, Emily Dickinson has haunted us in many forms.

She has been the precocious "little dead girl" admired by distinguished men; the white-clad, solitary spinster languishing alone in her bedroom; and, in more recent interpretations, the rebellious teenager bent on smashing structures of power with her torrential genius.

As the world continues to endure the ravages of COVID-19, another ghost of Dickinson steps into view. This one, about 40 years old, seems by turns vulnerable and formidable, reclusive and forward. She carries the dead weight of crises beyond her control, but remains unbowed by it.

It was while drafting my dissertation, which explores the meaning of old age in America, that I first encountered this Dickinson. She has been with me ever since.

## The Depths of Loss

Most admirers of Dickinson's poetry know that she spent a considerable part of her adult life in what we call self-imposed confinement, rarely venturing outside the family homestead in Amherst, Massachusetts. Less known, perhaps, is that the final 12 years of her life were passed in a state of nearly perpetual mourning.

A daguerreotype taken December 1846 or early 1847, the only authenticated portrait of Emily Dickinson after childhood. Amherst College Archives & Special Collections.

PUBLIC DOMAIN

It began with the death of her father. For all his stern comportment, Edward Dickinson had enjoyed a special relationship with Emily, his middle child. When her surviving letters declare him "the oldest and oddest sort of a foreigner," one hears the affectionate annoyance that comes with real devotion. He died in 1874, away from home.

Loss followed loss. Favorite correspondent Samuel Bowles died in 1878. With the passing of Mary Ann Evans, otherwise known as George Eliot, in 1880, Dickinson lost a kindred spirit—a "mortal" who, in her words, had "already put on immortality" while living.

A very different loss was that of Dickinson's mother, Emily Norcross Dickinson, with whom she enjoyed little or no rapport for much of their life together, but who became at least somewhat precious to her daughter on her deathbed. That was in 1882, the same year that took from her literary idol Ralph Waldo Emerson and early mentor Charles Wadsworth.

The following year saw the death of her cherished 8-year-old nephew, Gilbert, from typhoid fever, his illness having spurred one of Dickinson's rare excursions beyond the homestead. The year after that, Judge Otis Phillips Lord, with whom she pursued the only confirmed romantic relationship of her life, finally succumbed to an illness of several years and was wearily dubbed by the poet "our latest Lost."

## Piling On

What impact did so much grief have on the mind of one of America's greatest visionary artists? Her letters say little enough. Writing to Mrs. Samuel Mack in 1884, however, she frankly admits: "The Dyings have been too deep for me, and before I could raise my heart from one, another has come."

The word "deep" is an arresting choice, making it sound as though Dickinson is drowning in a pile of dead loved ones. Each time she comes up for air, yet another body is added to the great mass.

This is characteristic of Dickinson. If her imagination shrinks from visualizing breadth, it thrives on depth. Some of the most captivating images in her poetry are piles of things that cannot be piled: thunder, mountains, wind. During the Civil War, she uses the same technique to represent soldiers' heroic and terrible sacrifice:

The price is great -
Sublimely paid -
Do we deserve - a Thing -
That lives - like Dollars - must be piled
Before we may obtain?

In describing her more personal losses of the 1870s, Dickinson seems to imagine yet another pile of human corpses rising before her eyes. Or maybe it is the same pile, her loved ones added to the dead troops whose fate she kept contemplating to the end of her own life. Seen in this light, the "Dyings" appear not just too deep but unfathomably so.

## Life After Death

At the time of this reprinting, the pile of lives that overshadows our lives is 18,00,000 deep and getting deeper by the hour. Dickinson's imagery shows how keenly she would have understood what we might feel, dwarfed by a mountain of mortality that will not stop growing. The same anger, exhaustion, and sense of futility were her constant companions in later life.

Fortunately, she had other companions. As recent studies have shown, Dickinson was the best kind of social networker, maintaining profoundly generative relationships by correspondence from the family homestead. Her poetic output, though greatly diminished toward the end of her life, never ceases, and its offerings include some of her richest meditations on mortality, suffering, and redemption.

I never hear that one is dead
Without the chance of Life
Afresh annihilating me
That mightiest Belief,

Too mighty for the Daily mind
That tilling it's abyss,
Had Madness, had it once or, Twice
The yawning Consciousness,

Beliefs are Bandaged, like the Tongue
When Terror were it told
In any Tone commensurate
Would strike us instant Dead -

I do not know the man so bold
He dare in lonely Place
That awful stranger - Consciousness
Deliberately face -

These words resonate in the current crisis, during which protecting the "daily mind" has become a full-time job. News reports, with their updated death tolls, erode our intellectual and spiritual foundations. All seems lost.

But if strain and sorrow are palpable in this poem, so is courage. Dickinson's lonely speaker chooses to express what she has felt, to measure and record the burden of loss that life has thrust upon her. Beliefs, once bandaged, may heal. And while no man has ever been bold enough to confront the deeper "Consciousness" that so many deaths expose within the human mind, the speaker will not rule out doing so herself. There is still room in this blighted world for the kind of visionary experience from which hope not only springs, but flourishes.

Living in the shadow of death, Dickinson remained enamored of life. This, as much as anything, makes her a hero of our time.

*Matthew Redmond is a doctoral candidate in the department of English at Stanford University in California. This article was first published on The Conversation.*

FROZEN SHUTTER PHOTOGRAPHY/ISTOCKPHOTOS

**(Above)** The photo that inspired "Child of the Greatest Generation." **(Below)** These days, it's a rare book that is unabashedly patriotic.

BOOK REVIEW

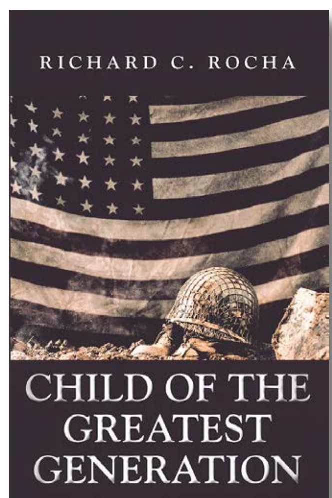
# Honoring Patriotism

LINDA WIEGENFELD

"I'm proud to be an American
Where at least I know I'm free
And I won't forget the men who died
Who gave that right to me
And I'd gladly stand up next to you
And defend her still today
'Cause there ain't no doubt
I love this land
God Bless the U.S.A."

Ever since 9/11, "God Bless the U.S.A" is the song that we hear often in September, but we don't hear much about patriotic books. I proudly introduce my readers to a new book that glorifies patriotism: Richard C. Rocha's "Child of the Greatest Generation."

Born on Jan. 20, 1942, Rocha's very start in life coincided with America's involvement in World War II. The country had just gone to war with Japan after its attack on Pearl Harbor the previous month. Rocha grew up as a child whose parents formed "The Greatest Generation," as Tom Brokaw called them.




"Child of the Greatest Generation"
Richard C. Rocha
Christian Faith Publishing, Inc.
86 pages

As a group, this generation persevered through the difficult times brought on by economic stress and war. The result was a generation that knew how to withstand hardship. They favored personal responsibility, had a strong work ethic, practiced frugality, had integrity, and were very patriotic.

Rocha writes about his earliest days as a child of this generation and how he came to understand what patriotism means to him. The meaning became tangible whenever Rocha came across a painting or photo that depicted the history of the United States—he would sit down and write a story to go with it.

Pictures can often reach a part of us that is difficult to access through words. The pictures Rocha collected are not sophisticated glossies; but rather, they are no-frill images found on the internet royalty-free or able to be purchased through iStock, Getty Images, or Shutterstock. The idea of using patriotic pictures readily available to the public was very appealing to Rocha.

Over time, Rocha built a collection of these pictures and pieces. His book includes 13 pictures, each with an accompanying original poem or story. (That number is significant because of the original 13 colonies.)

Finally, his family told him to share his work with others, and eventually his book—a book museum of America—came into being. He has the same goal as museum or art gallery curators who develop ways in which objects, archives, and artworks can be interpreted.

But these entries are mixed with the memories of his entire life. At 17, Rocha enlisted in the United States Navy, and after returning to civilian life, he worked for the defense industry. The company's two biggest contracts were for the Navy and Air Force.

**How wonderful to discover a book that emphasizes America's greatness rather than its faults.**

The project all started when he saw a picture of an American bald eagle perched on what appears to be a headstone in a cemetery. Prodded by his very strong reaction to the image, his imagination led him to wonder what the eagle, if it could speak, would have to say about the nation today. At that moment, Rocha decided to write his very first story. The image is still his favorite picture in the collection.

I love the soft tone of the book that comes from the sincerity of this gentle man who truly loves his country and is not afraid to express his feelings. How wonderful to discover a book that emphasizes America's greatness rather than its faults. As Bill Clinton said in his first inaugural address in 1993, "There is nothing wrong with America that cannot be cured by what is right with America."

Reading Rocha's book will nourish your own patriotism. At a time of deep social division, when the American Dream is under constant attack, his book will remind you of this majestic idea.

As Rocha wrote me in an email, "May you always feel the wind of freedom and the warmth of the torch of liberty." That patriotic phrase says it all about the man and the book.

*Linda Wiegenfeld is a retired teacher with 45 years' experience teaching children. She can be reached for comments or suggestions at LWiegenfeld@aol.com*

HISTORY

# *Kids Must Learn History to Avoid Being Gaslighted by Media*

ANNIE HOLMQUIST

Growing up, history was one of my favorite school subjects. This might come as a surprise to some. After all, history class is traditionally thought of as the domain of the high school football coach who has very little interest in the subject itself, and therefore, passes little enthusiasm or knowledge of the past along to his students.

Perhaps that is why The Nation's Report Card finds that only 12 percent of high school seniors are proficient in American history. Perhaps that is why we see the 1619 Project push an alternative history curriculum. Perhaps that's why we see young radicals destroying historical statues without rhyme or reason. If one has little knowledge of history, or if that knowledge is limited to a narrative that paints our predecessors as evil aggressors, then why would there be any need to revere heroes of the past, the ideas they advanced, or the progress they made?

My story is different. As a child, I learned history through historical fiction, which portrayed the subject as the story it is meant to be—fascinating, intriguing, and even relatable to our day and age. Even the dry history textbooks I encountered in high school and college couldn't remove the love of history that historical fiction instilled in me as a young child.

I now realize what a special privilege it was to learn history this way, and I wonder if other students would appreciate the past more if they had the same opportunity.

We suddenly have a chance to find out. Gallup reports that 10 percent of parents are choosing to homeschool their children this year. That means that 10 percent of parents now have the chance to make decisions about what their children will read and study, while many other parents, forced into quasi-homeschool through distance learning options, also have the opportunity to direct more of their children's education.

Might I suggest that parents try the path that I was blessed with in my history lessons?

MONKEY BUSINESS IMAGES/SHUTTERSTOCK

Learning about history and other cultures gives children perspective on their own time and society.

**"The scholar has lived in many times and is therefore in some degree immune from the great cataract of nonsense that pours from the press and the microphone of his own age.**

*C.S. Lewis, author*

The beauty of this plan is that learning history doesn't have to be a chore. It can become evening entertainment as families come together to read stories out loud. The reading lists at Beautiful Feet Books are wonderful places to start in finding titles based on ancient, medieval, and early and modern American history.

So why does all this matter? I'll let the great author and thinker C.S. Lewis answer that question for me. In an essay from "The Weight of Glory," Lewis exhorts:

"Most of all, perhaps we need intimate knowledge of the past. Not that the past has any magic about it, but because we cannot study the future, and yet need something to set against the present, to remind us that the basic assumptions have been quite different in different periods and that much which seems certain to the uneducated is merely temporary fashion. **A man who has lived in many places is not likely to be deceived by the local errors of his native village; the scholar has lived in many times and is therefore in some degree immune from the great cataract of nonsense that pours from the press and the microphone of his own age.**" [Emphasis added.]

We're living in a time where we are hit with huge amounts of information. If you've been paying attention lately, you may have noticed that what your own eyes see and what the media reports on are two different things. As such, we need to make sure that we, and our children, know how to relate the past to the present in order that they can have a bright future.

If we can teach our children that history is enjoyable, they will be more ready to dig into it on their own, and in so doing, they will be more apt to discern what is true and what is false in "the great cataract of nonsense that pours from the press and the microphone" of our time.

*Annie Holmquist is the editor of Intellectual Takeout, which originally published this article.*



ALL PHOTOS BY D. STEVENS/UNIVERSAL PICTURES

**(Above)** James Brown (Chadwick Boseman, C) and the Famous Flames, in "Get on Up." **(Top right)** Ben Bart (Dan Aykroyd, L) and James Brown (Chadwick Boseman). **(Bottom right)** Chadwick Boseman (Foreground L) deserved an Oscar for his performance, shown here with director Tate Taylor.

**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.

REWIND, REVIEW, RE-RATE

# R.I.P. Chadwick Boseman

MARK JACKSON

**'Get on Up'**

**Director**
Tate Taylor

**Starring**
Chadwick Boseman, Nelsan Ellis, Dan Aykroyd, Viola Davis, Lennie James, Octavia Spencer

**Rated**
PG-13

**Running Time**
2 hours, 19 minutes

**Release Date**
Aug. 1, 2014

★★★★☆

R.I.P. the Black Panther. Chadwick Boseman, who became synonymous with the role of Black Panther in the Marvel Comics cinematic universe, has passed away at the age of 43.

Boseman had already become Hollywood's go-to biopic portrayer of Black American icons. Let's have a look back at Boseman's channeling of American musical and cultural icon James Brown in the biopic "Get on Up."

### Birth of the Funk

Watching "Get on Up," it becomes immediately apparent that Prince stole his entire act off James Brown. Dance moves, microphone moves, wardrobe, and hairstyle. Not Prince's world-class guitar playing, though—that's courtesy of Carlos Santana and Jimi Hendrix. But as prodigious a talent as Prince was, he only altered American funk music.

The megalithic, trail-blazing talent of James Brown birthed it. All the styles that followed—disco, house, dance, trance, drum and bass, hip-hop, trap, rap, the swingier parts of Led Zeppelin, Aerosmith, and even Metallica—are all direct descendants of James Brown's transmogrification of 1950s blues and 1960s soul into funk.

For years, the mere thought of an actor attempting to capture James Brown onscreen was cringe inducing. Every black comic and actor with middling mimicry chops was able to do a competent Bill Cosby impression, but only Eddie Murphy had the ability to talk like James Brown.

But as a young comic, Eddie was a little too scant in the dramatic heaviness department to pull off the weighty rendering required by the force of nature that was James Brown. Chadwick Boseman finally nailed it in the smokin' James Brown biopic "Get on Up." This was Boseman's second-in-a-row, slam-dunk biopic role after his outstanding turn as Jackie Robinson in "42."

**James Brown composed music using every instrument percussively.**

Boseman nails it top to bottom—hair, talk, attitude, and jittery-footed, shimmying, blurry-fast dance moves. Not even Jamie Foxx playing Ray Charles surpassed Boseman becoming Brown, which is a shame because Foxx won a well-deserved Oscar but Boseman only a nomination for 2015's Image Awards.

Basically, the film's narrative follows a sort of pinball-machine-with-signposts approach, pinging and rebounding around the various titles (most self-imposed) that Brown accrued over the years, like "Mr. Dynamite," "Hardest Working Man in Show Business," "His Bad Self," and so on.

### Signposts

"Get on Up" kicks off by showing us a latter-day James Brown freakout. Confronting a crowd, under the influence, toting a shotgun, and irate that someone used the public toilet in one of his buildings—blam!—he blows a hole in the ceiling. And then he hilariously consoles the terrified perpetrator in a moment of vocalized introspection and self-revelation, admitting as to how he might have taken such an opportunity himself, because he, James, didn't grow up with any opportunities.

As a boy in the Jim Crow Deep South, he, not uncommonly, might find lynched black men hanging in trees. Little James was dirt poor, viciously beaten by an alcoholic father, and tragically abandoned by his mother.

Forced to work as a barker for a house of ill repute, 8-year-old James yelled, "Pretty girls! Whiskey!" He also had to take part in a demeaning sport for the mint-julep set: Little black boys were put in a boxing ring, blindfolded, with one hand tied behind their backs, and made to pummel each other until only one was left standing. James stood. Demeaning, but it honed James's risk-taking toughness.

An example of such risk-taking is when his band, the Famous Flames, shamelessly jump on stage when Little Richard (Brandon Smith) is on a cigarette break. Ultimately forgiven by Little Richard for the venue usurpation, James gets music business advice from the more experienced (and just as flamboyant) Mr. Penniman (Little Richard's real name).

Richard and Brown were more or less the gay and straight versions of the same person: both pompadoured dynamos, and both exceedingly loud, ultra-talented innovators. There was more than a little rivalry between them. The tension between Boseman and Smith in these scenes is electric.

But still—Little Richard rode the coattails of the king of rock 'n' roll, Chuck Berry, while James Brown explored new territory and planted a flag as the king of funk.

### Showbiz Wiz

The band hits the big time, and James, in cutthroat fashion, subjugates his friends and band mates to underling-employee status. The record company sharks immediately smell blood in the water, recognizing that the money will roll in only if James got top billing. James knows it too.

Brown's comprehensive showbiz talent included business savvy above and beyond that of his handlers, especially his first manager, ham-fistedly played by Dan Aykroyd. In a scene much like Eddie Murphy's in "Trading Places" (which also starred Aykroyd), Boseman showcases James's street-honed business smarts with a monologue about using common sense regarding human behavior.

Eventually, trailing multiple (current and former) wives, kids, Learjets, and other classic alpha spoils of war, James achieved a cultural stature such that he was able to calm a mutinous Boston Garden concert crowd in the wake of Martin Luther King's assassination.

### The Devil's Music: A History

"Get on Up" is the PG-13 version, but James Brown's actual life was quite a bit more X-rated. It would have been interesting to see a grittier, darker version (more like "Ray") with less of the comedic breaking-the-fourth-wall device (Chadwick-as-James speaking directly to the camera).

The movie's most powerful scene shows the mother who abandoned James (Viola Davis) showing up after a gig to flatter her son with the intent to hoover up a bit of the James Brown riches.

Davis is devastating. When she says, "I did the best I could. And I am ashamed," we realize that these words are coming from a place of deep truth, ripping open old wounds even as she utters them. James remains cold as ice until she leaves, and then he breaks down, telling band mate Bobby to "Get her anything she needs."

Brown's long-suffering friend Bobby Byrd (Nelsan Ellis) takes a lifetime of abuse from James, only to be won over as James sings to him in the crowd, after years of estrangement—a repentance, an apology, and a declaration of love and friendship. Both actors quietly blow this scene away.

The movie could have used more of this. In fact, just the removal of Aykroyd's performance from the film would have had the immediate effect of making it weightier: Aykroyd's a king of sketch comedy—a different skill set.

Had the teeth not been taken out of "Get on Up," there might be more of an understanding of why, historically, white kids didn't get to listen to early James. Did James bring the "devil's music" like preachers and parents warned?

No, the devil jumped into music long before that. Some musicologists say that the sentimentality introduced by third, sixth, and seventh chords in Renaissance music is where the devil crept in; medieval church music's austere fifths didn't stir human emotion.

The great American racial divide in music consisted of James Brown's black proto-funk as the "roll" (sex) in "rock and roll," while "rock," which eventually came to be considered a white art form, followed its logical progression to nihilistic punk and death metal.

The great German poet-philosopher Goethe, via the character of Mephisto in "Faust," was among the first to recognize the sex-death dichotomy as two separate devils: the red devil (Lucifer) in cahoots with the black devil (Satan).

In modern American music, it translates to the two extremes of sex and death/destruction cooperating to capsize mankind's spiritual voyage off the middle way. It's enough to make you "break out in a cold sweat," as James's early hit says.

Be that as it may, this pastel-colored, nostalgic look back, with James (as he puts it) "in a sapphire blue suit and the band in purple brocade," is a fitting tribute to a man who in many ways was an American hero, living the American dream. Such as it is.

James Brown composed music using every instrument percussively, with the objective being that funk music bypasses our consciousness to the point that the body wants to move of its own accord.

Famous funk bassist Bootsy Collins, who got his start in Brown's band before later moving on to Parliament-Funkadelic, learned funk's number-one rule from James: "You've got to keep it on the one." Meaning, the bass and rhythm section has to hit the first beat of every bar. This incessant slamming on the one awakens not the mild sentimentality of third and sixth chords—but lust.

What does that do for a person? As James succinctly put it, "I Got Ants in My Pants (And I Want to Dance)."

So put on your hot pants, get on the good foot, dance a few bars of the Funky Chicken, holler "I Feel Good!" Tip your hat to Chadwick Boseman's stellar channeling of James, and then hie thee to a church (wait, there's a pandemic on) or listen to "A Treasury of Gregorian Chants" (a four-record set) to get the devil back out.

James Brown (Chadwick Boseman, C), the loud, talented originator of funk.

**REACHING WITHIN:** WHAT TRADITIONAL ART OFFERS THE HEART

# Diogenes and the Pursuit of Truth

PUBLIC DOMAIN
The painter John William Waterhouse (1849–1917).

ERIC BESS

Sometimes, on the rare occasion I get a chance, I sit and ponder what it means to be me. Who am I?

I try removing all of the qualities and characteristics I perceive about myself to see if I can think of myself as still me without them. Most of the time, I can. I can't, however, think of myself without my love of art. Something about it informs me about who I might be as a living being on this drifting globe we call Earth.

My interest in authenticity, I believe, is something many of us come across at some point in our lives. What does it mean to be me? What does it mean to be you?

I came across a wonderful painting by John William Waterhouse simply called "Diogenes." Around 2,500 years ago, Diogenes, like some of us, was a person interested in authenticity.

**Who Was Diogenes?**
Diogenes was an interesting character, to say the least. There are mwany apocryphal stories that suggest his unusual behavior.

His beliefs and practices helped give rise to Cynicism, which became a philosophy that promoted the pursuit of truth over social conventions. This philosophy is different from the modern cynics who maintain a pessimistic view of life in their mistrust of everyone and everything. Traditional Cynicism strongly adhered to the pursuit of truth and virtue and upheld three types of freedom: self-sufficiency, freedom of will, and freedom of speech.

**Diogenes was known for saying whatever he wanted to whomever he wanted.**

Diogenes became self-sufficient by practicing a type of asceticism in which he removed all unnecessary things from his life. For example, he watched a mouse run around without a care and decided that he would no longer participate in the cares of ordinary people. He saw children scoop water with their hands and eat lentils with bread and decided that he would no longer need a bowl or spoon. He even lived in a large wine cask after deciding that a finer dwelling was unnecessary.

According to the "Lives of the Eminent Philosophers" by the ancient Greek biographer Diogenes Laertius (not to be confused with his subject with the same given name), Diogenes "would often insist loudly that the gods had given to men the means of living easily, but this had been put out of sight, because we require honeyed cakes, unguents [ointments] and the like." Diogenes thought that our pursuit of comfort, ironically, might prevent us from actually living comfortably.

Freedom of will included the pursuit of virtue and truth. Diogenes would approach people in broad daylight, put a lamp to their faces, and declare that he was looking for a true man.

Laertius claimed: "He would say that men strive in digging and kicking to outdo one another, but no one strives to become a good man and true. And he would wonder that the grammarians should investigate the ills of Odysseus, while they were ignorant of their own. Or that the musicians should tune the strings of the lyre, while leaving the dispositions of their own souls discordant; that the mathematicians should gaze at the sun and the moon, but overlook matters close at hand; that the orators should make a fuss about justice in their speeches, but never practice it; or that the avaricious should cry out against money, while inordinately fond of it."

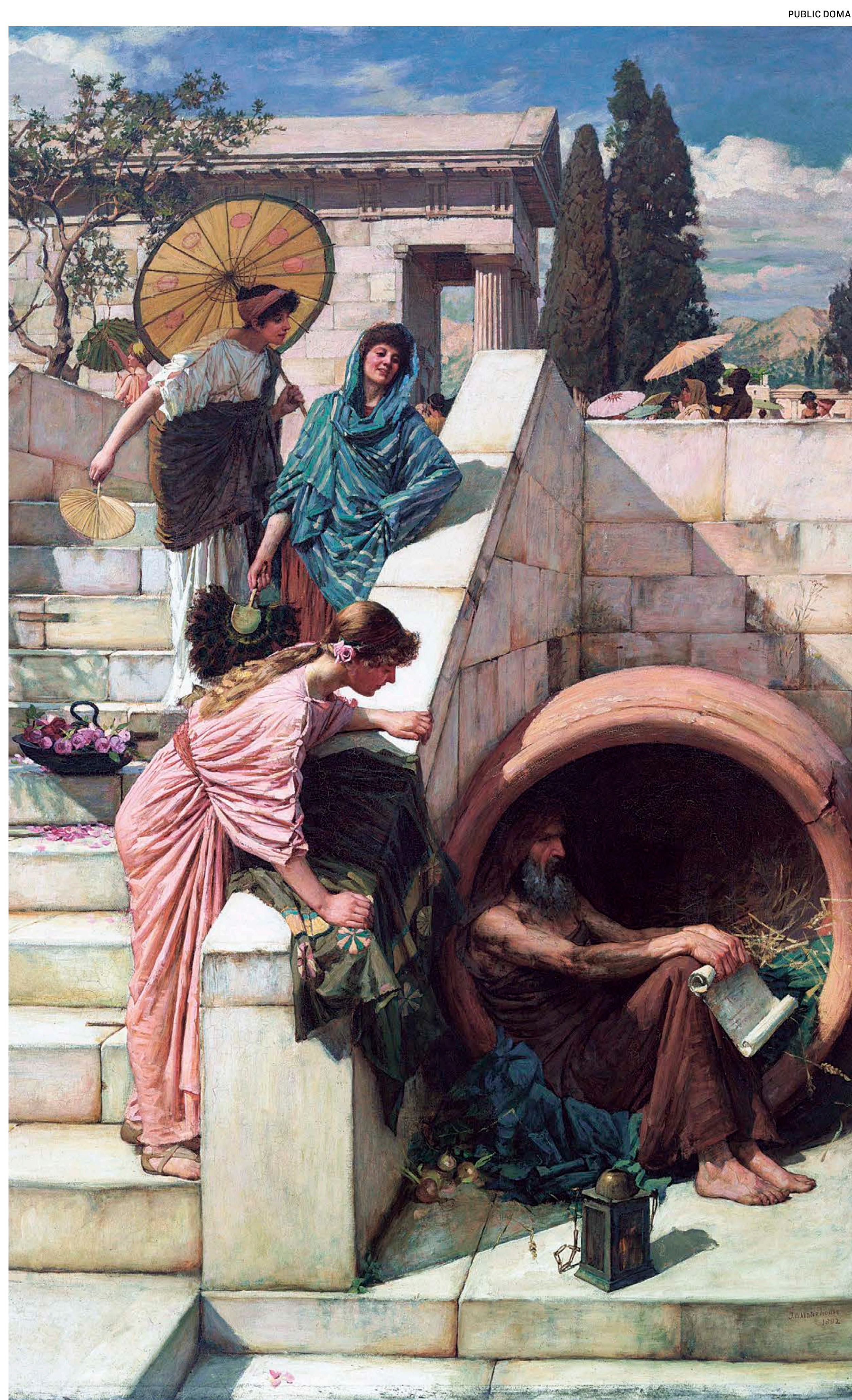
Freedom of speech included the ability to speak authentically without fear of punishment. Diogenes was known for saying whatever he wanted to whomever he wanted. He would quip at citizens, including the great philosopher Plato or the powerful leader Alexander the Great, with witty remarks.

Practicing wisdom, as opposed to merely thinking about it as many philosophers were prone to do, was Diogenes's goal, and the true freedom of virtue was the foundation of that goal.

**'Diogenes' by Waterhouse**
In 1882, Waterhouse painted an interesting picture of Diogenes. One of the first things I notice is that a banister diagonally divides the composition from upper right to lower left. We are immediately presented with two sides of the composition.

On the right side, Diogenes sits in his wine cask bedded with straw. He holds papers in his hand, and his back is turned to the happenings of the left side of the composition. He is relatively dirty and unkempt. Outside of his cask are onions, most likely his food for later, and the lantern he uses to search for truth.

**Diogenes would approach people in broad daylight, put a lamp to their faces, and declare that he was looking for a true man.**


PUBLIC DOMAIN
"Diogenes," 1882, by John William Waterhouse. Oil on canvas, 82 inches by 53 inches. Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia.

From the left side of the composition, a young woman leans over the banister to get a closer look at Diogenes. Above her are two other young women, and they all are dressed very nicely. They hold umbrellas and fans to dispel the discomfort caused by the heat of the sun. On the steps are flowers, with which the leaning lady has adorned herself.

The banister leads our eye up to the top of the composition, where we can see more people in the distance. These people appear to enjoy similar luxuries as the three young women on the stairs: They possess attractive clothes and hold umbrellas to protect them from the sun; they seem to lounge in leisure.

**The Courage of Authenticity**
I find it interesting that the composition is divided into two sides. I think the right side represents the Cynicism of Diogenes, and the left side represents societal comfort.

Diogenes has turned his back to the comforts of social conventions because they do not provide him with the truth he pursues. Comforts and the desires they instill represent a type of slavery.

Diogenes holds what I believe to be his doctrine in his hand. The onions and wine cask represent the self-sufficiency gained from his asceticism, and the lamp represents his search for truth. His pursuit of authenticity is joined with a sense of freedom.

I see the young ladies behind him as representing societal niceties. The fancy clothes, umbrellas, flowers, and leisure seem to represent a certain social status. Is the crowd at the top of the stairs their goal? And if so, does this pursuit interfere with their authenticity, with their freedom?

I do not mean to argue that comfort is a bad thing. I, like most human beings, enjoy comfort. Nor do I mean to argue that extreme asceticism is a virtue. There is, however, the point at which adopting either extreme comfort or extreme asceticism can interfere with one's own authenticity and freedom.

We have to be careful because resisting the crowd for its own sake can turn into following a different crowd, another way of distracting us from getting closer to who we truly are, another way of enslaving ourselves to chains of another's making.

The young woman at the bottom of the stairs leans in closer to get a better look at Diogenes. In leaning closer, her interest breaks the boundary and casts her shadow on Diogenes. Is she also interested in authenticity and freedom absent at the top of the stairs? Or does she share in the amusement the young women above her seem to have toward Diogenes, a man who chooses a harder but ultimately more fulfilling path?

Sometimes, in order to turn toward our own authenticity, we have to break free from the pursuits of the crowd. Keeping up with the crowd comes with its own anxieties.

Authenticity is built on sincerity, on sincerely searching for truth irrespective of what others may think of us. It is a pursuit that takes courage, both in questioning ourselves to find the truth and in confronting a society that may consider such a pursuit crazy. How many of us possess such courage?

*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.*

BBC
Actor Mark Williams as Father Brown, a Catholic priest who happens to be good at solving crimes, in the BBC TV series "Father Brown."

LITERATURE

# God's Detective: The Everlasting Goodness of Father Brown

BENJAMIN WELTON

When British journalist Gilbert Keith (G.K.) Chesterton began writing his Father Brown detective stories around 1910, the genre was dominated by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and his seminal creation, Sherlock Holmes.

The character of Holmes, which remains prominent today in the form of hit television shows, movies, and a million pastiches and homages, was the quintessential thinking machine and walking computer. Doyle's "tales of ratiocination" (to borrow a phrase from Edgar Allan Poe, the inventor of the modern detective tale) uphold the scientific method and rationality as the primary components of any criminal investigation. All other elements are discarded in favor of pure calculation. In "The Adventure of the Sussex Vampire" (1924), Holmes makes clear his disdain for the supernatural or anything other than rational when he quips, "The world is big enough for us. No ghosts need apply."

Chesterton (1874–1936) took a completely different tack when he created his own detective named Father Brown. While ghosts and the supernatural do not make appearances in the Father Brown stories, Brown is a Roman Catholic priest with an abiding appreciation for the inexplicable mysteries of life and fate.

Where Holmes uses deduction to collar his crooks, Father Brown often relies on intuition and his experiences as a confessional priest. Holmes is a cold and aloof aesthete who cares about solving puzzles above all. Father Brown is a warm and humble investigator of the human psyche as well as the human soul. Holmes follows clues and builds his case from there; Father Brown examines the heart and traces sin back to its source.

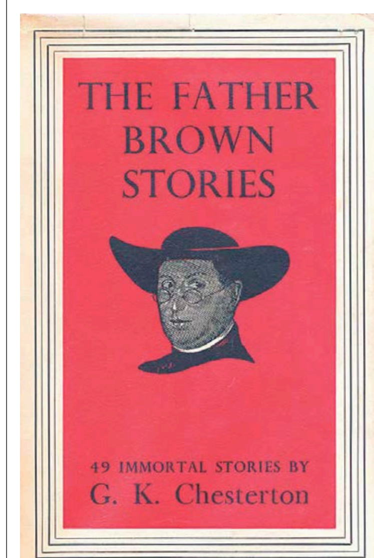
Holmes does not always collar his criminals, but he rarely if ever absolves them of guilt. Like Sherlock Holmes and Professor Moriarty, Father Brown faces off against his own arch-villain, the French master thief Flambeau. However, Father Brown makes a friend of Flambeau in the later stories, whereas Professor Moriarty and Holmes never cease their deadly cat-and-mouse struggle.

In contrast to the lean, hawk-like Holmes, Father Brown is described in "The Blue Cross" (1910) as a man with "a face as round and dull as a Norfolk dumpling." Whereas Holmes immediately commands respect in his stories, most observers are quick to disparage the provincial priest as the embodiment of dull-witted and staid rural life. This always proves to be a miscalculation, for in all of the stories, the Essex priest gets the better of his opponents without ever breaking a sweat.

**Chesterton and Joy**
There have been many surprising champions of Chesterton and his work, such as the dour Prague author Franz Kafka, who once remarked that Chesterton was "so happy that one might almost believe he had found God."

KEYSTONE/GETTY IMAGES
English author G.K. Chesterton in the garden of his home in Beaconsfield, England.

**Father Brown is a warm and humble investigator of the human psyche as well as the human soul.**



A series of detective stories with a more humane hero than Sherlock Holmes.

Chesterton may not be as famous as Conan Doyle to most readers, but to Anglophone Christians he is arguably one of the most beloved and quoted writers in any genre.

The joy and deep faith of the Father Brown stories are no accident. Chesterton, arguably the 20th century's most famous British convert to Roman Catholicism, likely based Father Brown on Father John O'Connor, the parish priest who played a decisive role in his conversion from Anglicanism.

Many have also argued over the years that Father Brown is nothing more than the literary doppelgänger of Chesterton himself. Like his fictional creation, Chesterton, a rotund and rubicund fellow, appreciated reason and rationality but did not deify them like his favorite enemies, the Jacobins, did during the French Revolution. Indeed, Father Brown, in stories like "The Miracle of Moon Crescent" (1924), upholds reason as part of the correct theology of the Church, but not the sum total.

Through these God-given talents, humans can learn to see the divine design in all things, Father Brown says in "The Blue Cross," the most anthologized tale in the Father Brown oeuvre. Father Brown's perception of God's ever-present hand makes him especially perceptive of other people.

This quality is what makes the Father Brown stories so unique. Whereas most detective stories adhere to a type of scientism that places forensics, mathematics, and elements of chemistry and biology at the forefront, Chesterton's most enduring creation centers on the humanities and the human condition.

In Father Brown tales, the thoroughly metropolitan flavor of the Holmes stories is replaced by elements of "Merrie Olde Englande," with the simple pleasures of village life and the common sense wisdom of the local priest. One of Chesterton's most famous phrases—"In Catholicism, the pint, the pipe, and the cross can all fit together"—offers a neat summation of his many novels and short stories, chiefly the Father Brown stories. The Catholic Chesterton saw medieval England as the high point of Anglo-Saxon civilization. He wrote the Father Brown tales to invoke those halcyon days, despite the fact that all the Father Brown stories take place in the age of telephones and automobiles.

The Father Brown tales, which were collected in six compilations between 1911 and 1936, offer a pleasant diversion to the mass anxiety of our contemporary world and the often bleak cynicism of most detective fiction. More to the point, Chesterton's everlasting creation offers a literary alternative to the rampant scientific materialism of our lives.

Constant discussions about mechanical matters are, as Chesterton knew, the pale spawn of technocracy. Humans were not created to be technocrats nor to serve science. We still long for mystery and the unknown, and the Father Brown stories, as well as the cozy BBC series from 2013 starring Mark Williams as the priest-sleuth, serve as a reminder of that eternal truth.

*Benjamin Welton is a freelance writer based in New England.*

BEHOLD THE BEAUTY

# Alexander Hamilton and the Humanity of Civic Statuary

LORRAINE FERRIER

Noble statues "enrich the city in beauty, in meaning, and in purpose," author Michael Curtis wrote in his book "Classical Architecture and Monuments of Washington, D.C.: A History & Guide."

Curtis reminds readers that sculptures are different from statues: Sculptures "might contain any idea large, small or insipid of anything or non-thing or nonsense," he wrote. "Statues are intelligently composed, aesthetically resolved, expertly crafted tributes to civic, military, and humanitarian accomplishments."

It then makes sense that statues are imbued with the virtues of such great people, and in the case of civic statuary, these virtues are on public display for generation after generation of citizens to aspire to.

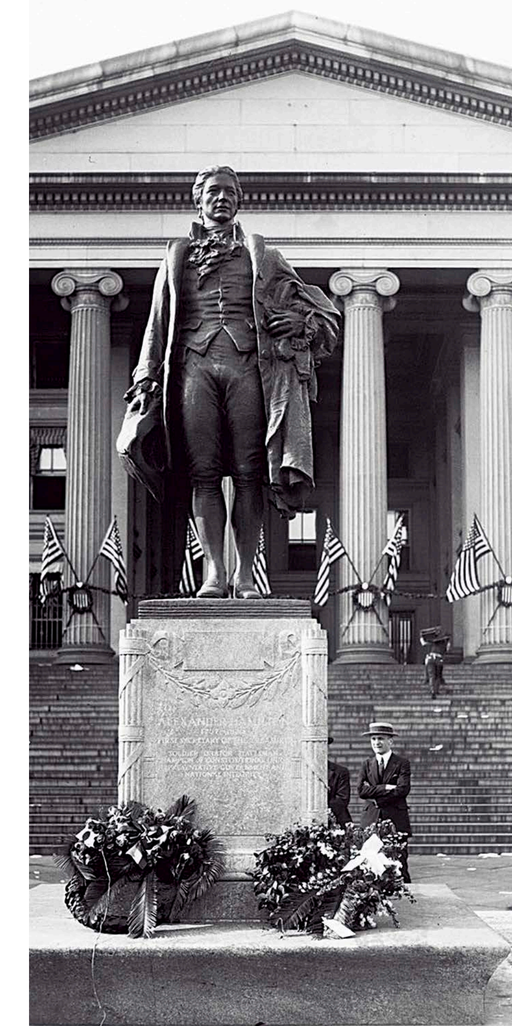
**Fraser's Hamilton cuts a dashing figure, which although cast in bronze, is alive with feeling.**

A fine example of such statuary is American sculptor James Earle Fraser's 10-foot bronze statue of Alexander Hamilton. As the first secretary of the Treasury, Hamilton stands prominently on the south side of the Treasury Building.

Fraser's Hamilton cuts a dashing figure, which although cast in bronze, is alive with feeling. Confident in pose, Hamilton appears as if he is ready to stride off into action, with his left foot ready to propel him to walk. His face exudes a certain assuredness along with a faint but charming smile that distinguishes the man from the monument.

On Feb. 23, 1775, Hamilton wrote in "The Farmer Refuted": "The sacred rights of mankind are not to be rummaged for, among old parchments, or musty records. They are written, as with a sun beam, in the whole volume of human nature, by the hand of divinity itself; and can never be erased or obscured by mortal power."

Expertly crafted statues, imbued with the light of humanity, can remind us of those sacred rights. Made in that manner and with such noble intentions, they can forevermore enrich us in beauty, in meaning, and in purpose.


PUBLIC DOMAIN
The 1923 dedication ceremony for James Earle Fraser's bronze statue of Alexander Hamilton on the south side of the Treasury Building in Washington. Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division.

POPCORN AND INSPIRATION

# A Surprisingly Multifaceted War Movie With Outstanding Performances

IAN KANE

Movies that cover World War I have long been overshadowed by those that are made about World War II. Why? Perhaps it's that people find trench warfare lackluster or that the technology was too archaic when compared to the later war. Or maybe it's just that The Great War is lodged too far back in history. Whatever the case, it's nice to see that World War I is getting a little more cinematic attention of late, with such as the excellent 2017 film "Journey's End" as well as 2019's "1917."

But what about classic movies that covered that era in warfare? After all, many of the tropes that you see in today's war movies are based on classic films. One such movie, 1938's "The Dawn Patrol," directed by Edmund Goulding, is certainly one of those classics. It contains clichés that later films would borrow heavily from, such as undying loyalty to one's fellows, unabashed patriotism, bouts of drunken camaraderie, and sustaining both intense trauma and war-weariness.

The film is set is 1915 at the 59 Squadron Royal Flying Corps, a British air base in France. Major Brand (Basil Rathbone) is the air base commander and is wracked with guilt about having to send so many young, inexperienced pilots off to their deaths against the Germans. His second in command, Phipps (Donald Crisp), attempts to console him as they wait for the day's dawn patrol to return.

**Flynn is dashing as the pilots' leader, and Niven provides much of the film's humor.**

Five of the seven pilots soon return, including a couple of relatively seasoned pilots, Captain Courtney (Errol Flynn), who leads A-Flight, and his bosom buddy "Scotty" Scott (David Niven), as well as a greenhorn pilot, Hollister (Peter Willes). As the pilots settle in to have a few drinks, Hollister breaks down in sorrow over one of the downed pilots and becomes inconsolable despite Courtney's best efforts to cheer him up.

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David Niven in "The Dawn Patrol," a film with excellent aerial battles.

Errol Flynn (L) and David Niven play Royal Flying Corps buddies.

Brand orders some replacements for the lost men and tells Courtney that they'll arrive the next morning. Four young pilots show up, and Courtney chooses the two of them who have the most flight experience (which still isn't much).

When Courtney leads A-Flight out for the next day's dawn patrol, only four pilots return. This time, one of the pilots who doesn't make it back is Scott. This time it's Courtney's turn to wallow in sorrow, with Brand attempting to lift his spirits by offering him a drink "to him," with the other men joining in. Courtney reveals that he shot down the German pilot (who had in turn shot down Scott) behind friendly lines, but doesn't know what became of him.

In a tense scene, the German pilot in question, Hauptmann Von Mueller (Carl Esmond), is brought in by fellow military personnel, having been found. The German extends his respect to Courtney for defeating him in the air. Surprisingly, Courtney offers him a drink, and a sense of relief envelops the bar area as everyone commences to drink heavily together. But still upset over his friend's demise, Hollister attacks Von Mueller and the others must restrain him.

Later, Scott stumbles in carrying five bottles of Champagne, having successfully survived crash-landing his plane with seemingly nothing but a bump on his head. He also drunkenly reveals that he had a few drinks with the French locals on his way back to the air base (which explains the Champagne). When Von Mueller realizes that it was Scott whom he shot down, he shambles over to Scott and embraces him and everyone drinks even more.

Things eventually return to a more serious tone when a notorious German pilot named Von Richter drops a pair of boots on 59 Squadron's airfield. A note attached to the boots tells the British that they don't belong in the air. Brand forbids the men to retaliate, explaining to them that the note is meant as a trap. Courtney and Scott disregard the orders, taking off the next morning in order to exact their revenge. But will they survive?

Flynn is dashing as the pilots' leader, and Niven provides much of the film's humor. The rest of the supporting cast is also excellent, as are the remarkable aerial combat scenes.

"The Dawn Patrol" is a film that doesn't romanticize World War I, but instead shows its multifaceted aspects: suffering and anguish, selflessness and sacrifice, as well as some of the absurdities of war in general.

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

**'The Dawn Patrol'**

**Director**
Edmund Goulding

**Starring**
Errol Flynn, Basil Rathbone, David Niven

**Running Time**
1 hour, 43 minutes

**Not Rated**

**Release Date**
Dec. 24, 1938 (USA)

★★★★½

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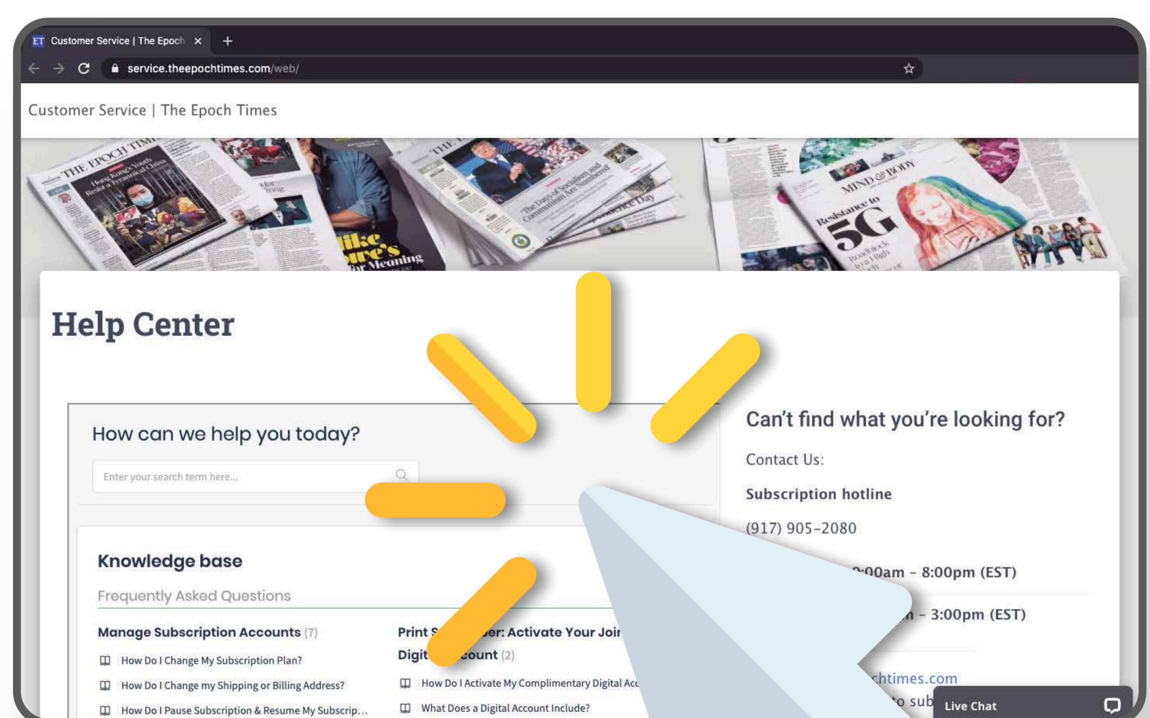


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