

THE EPOCH TIMES

ARTS & CULTURE

COURTESY OF WAYNE BARNES



“Stepped Rocks With Water,” 1984, by Nancy Conrad. A scene of the Pedernales River near Johnson City, Texas. Oil on canvas; 66 inches by 66 inches.

TAKING YOU THERE

Stepping Into ‘Stepped Rocks With Water’

WAYNE A. BARNES

After 29 years in the FBI, I investigate privately, including cases of recovering stolen art. That puts me on email lists for major auction houses. Occasionally, I bid and am fortunate to add a piece to my own collection.

One painting from last year was “Stepped Rocks With Water,” a 1984 oil painting by Nancy Conrad, a Texas artist. She was commissioned by the Texas Commerce Bank to create 10 paintings, one for each branch, with the largest being the one I bid on successfully. I imagined I wouldn’t have much competition as the piece is 5 1/2 feet square, large for a painting today.

The auction house in Houston, Simpson Galleries, thought the opening bid would be around \$1,000 and that it would eventually go for

Some pieces of art move me so I am compelled to write about them.

around \$2,000. They had a lot of experience with Conrad paintings. When the bidding was almost over—and I only had so much money for this—I was sweating bullets as the numbers went up, past my then limit of \$3,500. It finally stopped at \$4,750. The gavel slammed down and it was mine. Another few hundred more shipped it to me in Florida, putting the figure just over \$5,000.

On the phone, Nancy said she had been paid \$100,000 for the 10 paintings, so this one, if divided equally—and she said this was the largest, best, and her favorite of them all—was valued at \$10,000 in 1984. Translating that into 2020 dollars, it is worth just over \$25,000 today. But I don’t plan to sell it; I hope one of my five children will have a wall in a house big enough to display it when I am gone.

Some pieces of art move me so I am compelled to write about them—

what they look like, but more often, how I see the scene in its own history.

A Texas Landscape

You see the rocks, and you can feel them. They are as hard as they look, yet warm to the touch of your bare feet, and your shoes and socks are nowhere to be seen. If they get too hot, you can always wade into a shallow pool of soothing cool, and you will be refreshed.

A spring, just up the hill, slowly pumps out heartbeats of water, which run as rivulets down the flat face of the stone to join the flow downstream.

You spin back around and observe just about every color of rock there is, from the white and pale yellow at your feet, up to charcoal striations through the rough edges, and then solid blackness that few rocks can claim. Above and beyond is a red-

orange hue. The progression over the millennia that gave us this formation—an outcropping—worked its magic to make this scene among the most dynamic and picturesque.

For more than a thousand years there were Native American tribes here, many nomadic and proud. They did not build great cities, and left little mark on the land, for they lived with the land. They were the Karankawa, Caddo, Apache, Comanche, Wichita, Coahuiltecan, Neches, and Tonkawa. And this was well before Spanish missionaries came north to write their own history in Texas.

Then the Americans, in the youngest country at the time, began spreading west and fought their way through thicket, and over hill and dale.

Continued on Page 5



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THE EPOCH TIMES
TRUTH AND TRADITION

LITERATURE

Book Lists: What Our Students Are Reading and Why It Matters

JEFF MINICK

So there I was at the Outer Banks of North Carolina late this summer, ensconced like a prince in the house of my friend's brother. The weather was muggy but clear, the food and the conversation plentiful and nutritious, the pace of life slow and sweet. For four days, I went nowhere outdoors but the beach, the front porch, the patio, the swimming pool, and an outdoor shower, and never once put on a mask, which for me was a pandemic record. The online sites I daily visit were abuzz with news, but these pieces, most of them unread by me, were no more a pest than the yappy little dog next door.

Life for a change seemed as bright as a tidewater sun.

Then a casual conversation led me to investigate the summer reading lists at some of our elite private schools.

Extremes

Ninth graders at the Potomac School in MacLean, Virginia, were to select one book from a list featuring such titles as "The Hate U Give," "I Am Not Your Perfect Mexican Daughter," and comedian Trevor Noah's autobiography "Born a Crime." Only Anne Frank's "The Diary of a Young Girl" might be considered a classic. Though rising 10th graders were assigned "Cry, the Beloved Country," which I once taught, English 11 students had a choice of four books: Chang-rae Lee's "Native Speaker," Julia Alvarez's "How the Garcia Girls Lost Their Accents," Junot Díaz's "The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao," and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's "Americanah."

Because I have read and taught F. Washington Jarvis's "With Love and Prayers," a collection of addresses he delivered to Boston's Roxbury Latin School, I have long felt an abiding affection for that institution. In these talks, the headmaster gave wise advice about life and virtue to his students and readers alike, and I was certain the young men of that school must be reading inspirational material. Not so. That ship has left the dock.

The Roxbury Latin reading list for the summer of 2020 might serve as a template for a course in brainwashing. Every week, the makers of this list required their students to watch videos or listen to podcasts on racism in America, and to read short articles with titles like "White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack" and "What White Children Need to Know About Race." Students were also required to read Robin DeAngelo's "White Fragility," Ta-Nehisi Coates's "Between the World and Me," and Ibram X. Kendi's "How to Be an Antiracist."

Middle of the Road

Some schools I looked at offer a less lopsided and more eclectic list. Deerfield Academy, for example, gave its 11th-grade students the option of reading not only contemporary writers, but also such well-known American authors like F. Scott Fitzgerald, John Steinbeck, and Sylvia Plath. As I skimmed these titles, however, I realized that very few authors from the 19th century or earlier, writers like Mark Twain and Nathaniel Hawthorne, were in supply. Only Stephen Crane with "The Red Badge of Courage" and Edgar Allan Poe short stories made the cut.

When I stumbled across Richmond's Saint Mary's Catholic School, which does not belong to America's elite private schools, I found at last a more balanced selection. Eighth graders must choose one book written by contemporary authors and must also read a classic like "Around the World in Eighty Days," "Little Women," or "The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes."

Why the Classics?

When I taught literature and history to seminars of home-educated students, every year someone would ask me why I selected so many "old-fashioned" books for their reading. Why did my list include such works as "Treasure Island," "Antigone," and "Doctor Faustus"?

Always my reply was the same. By entering into these classics of literature, I would explain, students were also entering into the "great conversation," a term used to describe thinkers through the ages discussing or referencing the work of their predecessors and thereby refining Western values and ideas. Writers like Homer, Sophocles, and Jane Austen endure because they address truths about human beings that resonate with us today. By reading their books, we not only travel into the past

but also bring the gifts of that past into the present. Subsequently, these writers enlarge our humanity.

Moreover, I would tell my students, if you don't read these classics while in school, the odds in favor of your reading them as an adult sharply decline. Once out of the classroom, most of us read for pleasure and would be unlikely to pick up Dostoevsky's "Crime and Punishment" or Kipling's "The Man Who Would Be King."

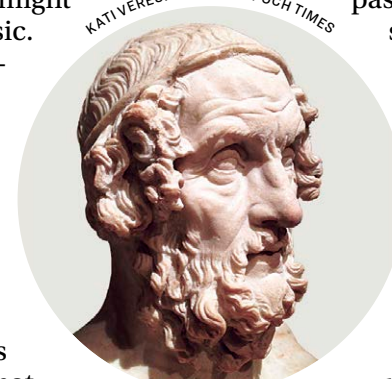
The Sound of Silence
Having looked at the lists from five or six schools, I now wonder whether the

great conversation will someday fall silent for lack of education and interest. If teachers at such institutions as Potomac, Roxbury Latin, and the Deerfield Academy are giving up the literary classics, if those students are no longer reading Charles Dickens, George Eliot, or even moderns like Flannery O'Connor or William Faulkner, what will become of our past and our culture? A true liberal arts education means some familiarity with literature and history, and yet so many of our secondary schools, and the great majority of our colleges, focus on the contemporary.

Surely these schools do teach literary classics during the academic year. It's also possible that many of the instructors who compose these lists avoid the classics of literature because they underestimate the abilities of the young, believing that teens are unable to grasp the beauty of Shakespeare's plays or the irony and wit in the poetry of John Donne. Instead of leading students through "Hamlet" or "Beowulf," they find it easier to give students a simpler book set in the modern world. Such works, they doubtless believe, will appeal to the young and will improve the chances they will read them. Yet without realizing it, these teachers are making their students prisoners of their own time and place.

The Usual Advice

Readers of my articles here at The Epoch Times frequently find me arguing that only we as individuals or as members of



By studying authors like Homer, students can participate in a conversation that has engaged readers for centuries. Bust of Homer, Roman, early imperial period, first century. The British Museum, London.



What books did your teen's school include on its summer reading list?

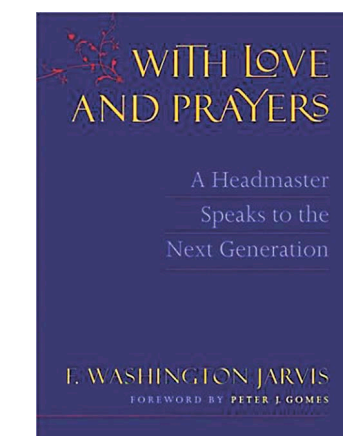
small communities can bring changes to our culture, that we must stop looking to our schools and our government to revive virtue and instead set ourselves the task of providing our children with the education they deserve.

Well, once again I must sound that same trumpet call. It's up to us to fight and to stand for culture and learning. In the case of literature, we should steal President Obama's campaign slogan in 2012, which he in turn lifted from writer Alice Walker: "We are the ones we've been waiting for." If our culture is to be passed to the next generation, we who revere and love our civilization must be the ones who pass its values along to our children.

A final note: Whether you're paying tens of thousands of dollars for your 16-year-old to attend some prestigious academy or whether your child attends public school free of charge, take a few minutes to see what they're reading, and then ask yourself: "Is this the education I want for my children? Are they being exposed to the great books of our 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.

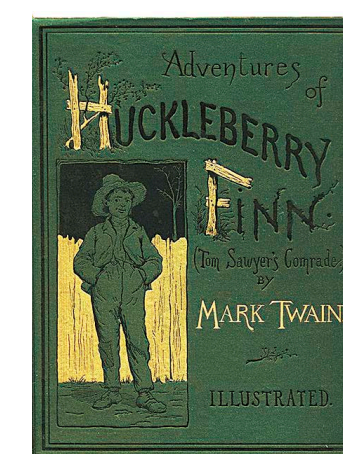
Writers like Homer, Sophocles, and Jane Austen endure because they address truths about human beings.



"With Love and Prayers" is a compilation of addresses delivered by Headmaster F. Washington Jarvis to his students at Boston's Roxbury Latin School. Highly recommended for high school students and their parents.



Less elite schools may offer more balance in their offerings, including books like "Little Women."



Some schools offer some classics, but nothing from the 19th century or earlier. Mark Twain did not make the list.

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THE EPOCH TIMES

TRUTH and TRADITION



(Above) Portrait of Queen Charlotte, circa 1776, by American artist Benjamin West. Active in England 1738–1820. Oil on canvas. Lent by the Berger Collection Educational Trust.

(Left) Edward, Prince of Wales (later Edward VI), circa 1538, by Hans Holbein the Younger and studio. Oil paint on panel, 22 3/4 inches by 17 inches. Promised gift of the Berger Collection Educational Trust.

FINE ARTS

For the Love of Britain: Denver Art Collectors' Beloved British Paintings

'Treasures of British Art: The Berger Collection,' at the Denver Art Museum

LORRAINE FERRIER

This royal throne of kings, this sceptred isle, This earth of majesty, this seat of Mars, This other Eden, demi-paradise, This fortress built by Nature for herself Against infection and the hand of war, This happy breed of men, this little world, This precious stone set in the silver sea, Which serves it in the office of a wall Or as a moat defensive to a house, Against the envy of less happier lands, This blessed plot, this earth, this realm, this England

—from Shakespeare's "Richard II," the last line of which is in the wall text of the exhibition "Treasures of British Art: The Berger Collection"

Delightful glimpses of Shake-

peare's glorious idea of England can now be seen in Denver, courtesy of Denver-born art collectors late William M.B. and Bernadette Berger.

The Bergers were great advocates of the arts. "We have always believed that art, as well as music, poetry, and literature, refreshes and enriches our lives," they said, according to the Denver Art Museum website.

The couple only collected works of art they "truly loved" and always intended to share those beloved treasures with the public.

In the exhibition "Treasures of British Art: The Berger Collection," at the Denver Art Museum, over 60 paintings are on display through Dec. 6. The paintings are a selection of the 65 European old master paintings the Berger Collection Educational Trust presented to the museum in 2018. Curated by Berger Collection curator Kathleen Stuart, the exhibition celebrates the prestigious gift while exploring 500 years of British history.

The exhibition demonstrates just

how important a nation's art is in charting its history. From the late 1400s to the late 1800s, the exhibition explores Britain's cultural changes through the beautiful art of some of the world's greatest painters. British-born artists, including Thomas Gainsborough and John Constable, are featured alongside non-British artists who spent a considerable amount of time in Britain, such as Flemish artist Anthony van Dyck and American artist Benjamin West.

'Reforming' Art

The exhibition begins in the Late Middle Ages in Roman Catholic Britain, with some rare examples of British Catholic art. Few religious paintings survive from before the Reformation because in 1534 King Henry VIII created the Church of England (the Anglican Church), banning Catholi-



"Papirius Praetextatus Entreated by His Mother to Disclose the Secrets of the Roman Senate," circa 1775–80. Oil paint on canvas; diameter: 24 1/16 inches. Gift of the Berger Collection Educational Trust, 2019.

cism. All traces of the Catholic Church were ordered to be destroyed, which involved the desecration of many sacred artworks.

Under the Reformation, all religious art was banned, and artists who had relied on church commissions such as altarpieces had to adapt to portraiture. The first portraits were of royals. A wonderful early example in the exhibition is of Edward, Prince of Wales (later King Edward VI), painted circa 1538, by German artist Hans Holbein the Younger and his studio.

In the painting, an adorable baby Edward is dressed in regal red and gold, holding a golden rattle similar to the scepter he would hold in the future. The painting includes a Latin inscription by the humanist scholar Richard Morison, Henry VIII's propagandist, which translates as "Little one, emulate thy father

and be the heir of his virtue; the world contains nothing greater. Heaven and earth could scarcely produce a son whose glory would surpass that of such a father. Do thou but equal the deeds of thy parent and men can ask no more. Shouldst thou surpass him, thou has outstripped all, nor shall any surpass thee in ages to come."

Portraiture for the People

Following the royal lead, merchants and landowners after 1700 commissioned artists to paint their portraits. The patrons were often painted among objects symbolic of their growing wealth and societal standing. For instance, they'd be dressed in the latest fashion, holding an object to show their profession.

During the same period, wealthy merchants and landowners began to commission portraits of themselves and their families with their country home in the background. They also commissioned paintings of their home and even portraits of their favorite horse.

Preeminent British horse painter George Stubbs was a favored choice for these horse portraits. One of Stubbs's horse paintings, "A Saddled Bay Hunter," is in the exhibition. Stubbs's anatomically accurate renderings were the result of his fastidious and remarkable studies.

Landowners also commissioned portraits of the royal family for their home. One endearing example in the exhibition is by American painter Benjamin West. In his painting, a charmingly contemplative Queen Charlotte, dressed in sumptuous gray satin, takes a break from her embroidery cloth. The portrait differs from official portraits, which are often formal, but the sentiment is no less regal. The portrait is thought to have been paired with a portrait of the king.

British Artistic Renaissance

British art in the 1700s echoed the growing interest in history that the Enlightenment brought. Referencing the art of ancient Rome and Greece, British artists

embraced a neoclassical style of painting and architecture.

Throughout the 18th and 19th centuries, wealthy Britons traveled to Europe for Grand Tours, exploring the ancient Roman sites, which were being excavated. The tourists eventually visited Greece, which was excavated later due to the sites being less accessible.

Inspired by the Italian landscape paintings created for those who visited places such as Rome, British artists created the first British landscape paintings in the late-17th century. A few mid-18th-century British landscape paintings are in the exhibition.

Swiss painter Angelica Kauffman painted such souvenir paintings in Rome, where she'd traveled with her father, who was a portraitist and fresco painter, to study old master paintings and Renaissance art and architecture. Kauffman began to paint in the neoclassical style in Rome, influenced by the German art historian and archaeologist Johann Joachim Winckelmann, who is thought to have started the neoclassical movement.

In the exhibition, Kauffman's "Papirius Praetextatus Entreated by His Mother to Disclose the Secrets of the Roman Senate" is a wonderful example of neoclassical painting. The painting illustrates the Roman tale of how Papirius protected the senate's secrets by refusing to reveal them to his mother. The subject matter of these paintings showed righteousness when confronted with temptation, espousing good morals.

At the same time, Britons looked back at Shakespeare's work, reviving performances. Publisher John Boydell created a Shakespeare gallery, where he showed the works he had commissioned by famous artists of scenes of Shakespeare's plays.

To find out more about the exhibition "Treasures of British Art: The Berger Collection" at the Denver Art Museum, visit DenverArtMuseum.org

TAKING YOU THERE

Stepping Into 'Stepped Rocks With Water'

Continued from Page 1

The hill country soon became their Hill Country.

Now stand before this scene, and breathe it in. Take yourself back—far back.

It is the dry season, and the river has become a stream. But there is still the music of water flowing over rocks and past boulders, then swirling in eddies.

Around the bend on the right comes an Apache brave and his young son. They walk without a sound, as few know how, but it is their nature. They stare into the shallows.

The brave unslings a bow from his shoulder and draws an arrow from his soft leather quiver. His son stands to his side and back a step, always learning from his father's every move. Then, there, in the water, a dark shape moves, curving back and forth, its fins flashing in the midday sun. He is a beauty, and the boy can almost smell his dinner cooking over an open fire.

You see the rocks, and you can feel them. They are as hard as they look.

The father freezes, then signals the boy to come around him. The older man slides his bow into the boy's hands, and he grasps it firmly. He notches the arrow his father gives him, and now it is he who looks down the shaft. His father makes silent hand signals, referring to the boy's eyes and the spot where he must aim. It is a few inches closer than directly at his mark.

The boy is concentrating as he watches the movement of his quarry several feet away. After three similar motions, he sees a pattern. Slowly, ever so slowly, he draws back the string and takes aim at an unaware fish.

The arrow slashes through the surface, bending its trajectory toward the target, and then through the fish. After a moment of deathblow struggle, the fish is quiet and is raised from the water. The pride of the father in his son cannot be hidden, and he places his hands on his small, bare shoulders. Their family will eat well tonight, and the boy will feed his own family in the years to come.

A hundred years later, American pioneers, whose ancestors had settled in Georgia well before it became a state, have moved west a thousand miles. They are a small part of the manifest destiny that unfolded in the westward expansion. Now, from around that very same bend shrouded by yellow-white steps of rocks, and walls of layered stone in orange and black, a father and son pick their way to the edge of the stream.

The father holds a fishing pole that has the spring of a freshly cut sapling. A long string leads from its end down to a small, barbed hook. The lad and his dad survey the scene. The boy lets out a shout of glee

when he sees a long, dark shadow in the shallows.

His father steps back a few feet and pulls up a clump of grass. He shakes out the dirt to find a worm. He shows the boy how to set it on the hook. He ties a little piece of wood a couple of feet up the line that will tell them when a fish is curious about their bait.

To the boy's surprise, his father hands him the rod and points to where he should cast his line.

This is a big day for the young man. He grasps the thick base of the wood firmly. He swings the line out over the water, and the end kerplunks into the slow-moving stream. Then he waits.

In a few minutes there is a nibble, and the bobbing wood stirs as something toys with the worm. Patience, patience—and the boy looks to his father. He gets a confirming nod and looks back at the line in the water, the float still bobbing. Then he yanks the rod to the right.

The float goes under and the rod bends down toward the water, the boy holding on in all his excitement. After a few moments of battling, the small boy pulls the fish to shore. It is plenty enough for dinner for their entire family.

It was a special moment, one a father and son share, and so will this boy, in another generation, with his own son, perhaps at this very same magical spot. These steps of rock, and walls of red-orange and black, and dozens of decades of slow-growing, overhanging trees will be witness to what no one man could see. For the nature around, man's passing through is but the blink of an eye. This picturesque and age-old terrain has drawn people to the shores of this stream, and it will do so for generations.

Hear the blowing breeze through the windswept trees and the music of flowing water. Feel the warmth of smooth, yellow-stepped rocks beneath your bare feet. Cool them off in a shallow pool at the water's edge. And don't be surprised if you find an ancient arrowhead in the pool by your toes.

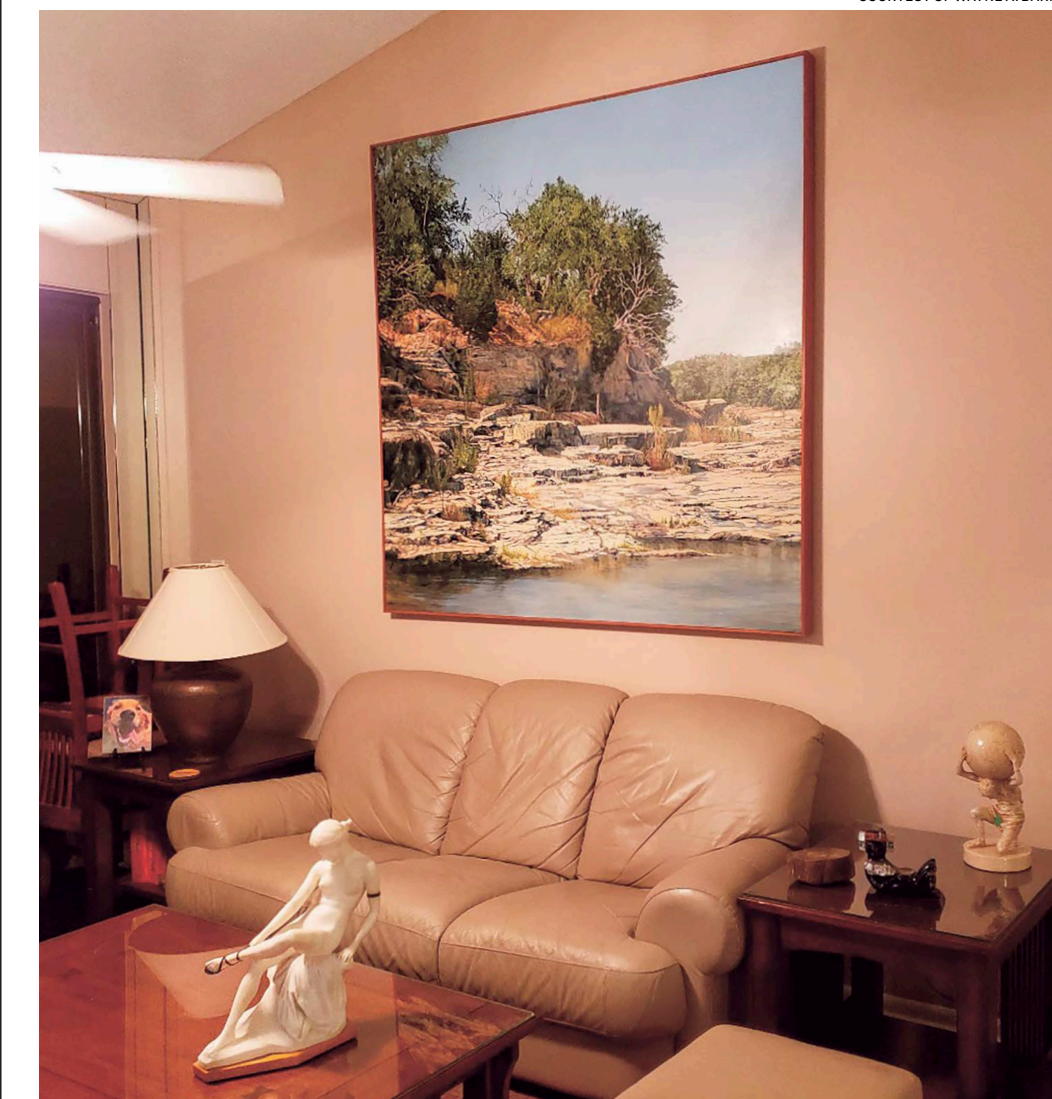
Breathe in this special place. You might see a flash of light in the water, a reflection from the shiny side of a big old fish, whose many great-grandfathers fed the people who came before you and settled this land.

Some pieces of art move me so that I am compelled to write about them—what they look like, but more often, how I see the scene in its own history. This is what the series "Taking You There" is about.

This article, reprinted with permission, was originally published on WayneBarnesWriting.com

Wayne A. Barnes was an FBI agent for 29 years working counterintelligence. He had many undercover assignments, including as a member of the Black Panthers. His first spy stories were from debriefing Soviet KGB defectors. He now investigates privately in South Florida.

COURTESY OF WAYNE A. BARNES



The massive painting "Stepped Rocks With Water" found a home.

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The Morgan Library & Museum: A Treasure Trove of Culture Inside and Out

J.H. WHITE

During quarantine, I've found online exhibitions to be particularly inspirational. Classical culture continues to remind me that history and tradition are long and fortifying. Art imbued with beauty and righteousness has always carried humanity through the most trying times.

One such online exhibition is The Morgan Library & Museum's "Explore J. Pierpont Morgan's Library." It illustrates the museum's legacy through archival photography expounded upon with audios punctuated by recorded snippets by experts, some of whom are related to those who built the museum.

The museum's founder, American financier Pierpont Morgan, understood that his rare collection of books and manuscripts needed a home of equal significance and beauty. In 1903, when his literary collection had outgrown his townhouse on Madison Avenue, he built The Morgan Library & Museum on a parcel of land adjacent to his home.

"The East Room is one of the great library spaces in the world," says John Bidwell, who is the Astor curator of printed books and bindings. "This was one person's personal library, which is astonishing."

Stacked in the East Room are three tiers of bookcases filled with early Gutenberg Bibles (the earliest printed, non-handwritten editions), classics of French and American literature, and first editions of Copernicus and Galileo, among others.

Originally, only one tier had been planned, but Morgan's collection grew as the building was being constructed over four years. Many prized works are also kept in the West Room's solid steel vault.

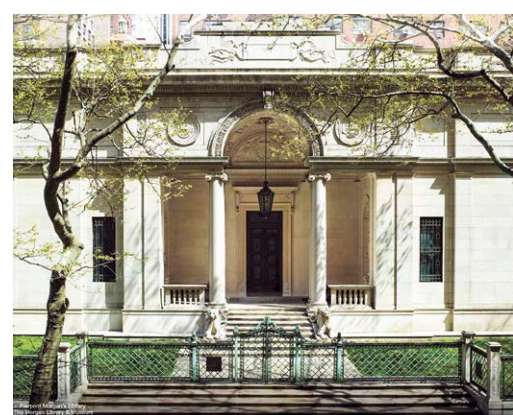
"I don't think anybody complains that Morgan had too many books, because that meant he got to build more of these bookcases, [which] are just incredibly beautiful," says architect Samuel White.

Samuel White is the grandson of Stanford White, a partner in the architectural firm of Charles McKim, the architect of the museum. White highlights that the bookcases have Renaissance motifs in

(Above) The East Room of The Morgan Library & Museum.

(Right) J. Pierpont Morgan's Library. In 1902, American financier Pierpont Morgan (1837–1913) chose architect Charles Follen McKim (1847–1909) of the prominent firm McKim, Mead & White to design a library to house his growing collection of rare books and manuscripts.

(Far right) Rotunda ceiling paintings.



a light-colored wood inlaid into a darker wood base. "Every detail has been thought out to make this whole interior sing," bookcases have Renaissance motifs inlaid in a light-colored wood into a darker wood base.

For the Morgan, the treasures aren't just the rare books and manuscripts showcased inside. The museum's architecture and decorative design invite the Golden Age into modern-day Manhattan. The building was created in the style of a grand Renaissance villa worthy of one of the Medicis.

The Classics Live On

Architect Charles Follen McKim (1847–1909) designed the Morgan in the American Renaissance style, adapting elements of the Italian Renaissance for an American setting. The chosen exterior stone, for example, is Tennessee pink marble, which can be seen in many famous American landmarks, including the United States Capitol. The builder set the Morgan's marble blocks with such precision that almost no mortar was used.

As you walk past the two stone lionesses, through the recessed portico, and enter the museum, you feel like you're stepping back in time to the Italian Renaissance.

The beauty of the Rotunda reaches from the floor to the ceiling. Mosaic tiles adorn the walls between marble pilasters. Alabaster bowls rest on freestanding marble columns. Deep blue columns and a blue and white Renaissance relief frame the small door.

Looking upward, the semicircular apse is adorned with blue and white stucco reliefs depicting Roman mythology, inspired by Raphael's design for the Villa Madama in Rome. American artist Henry Siddons Mowbray also took inspiration from Renaissance artists Raphael and Pinturicchio for his ceiling paintings.

The Rotunda's ceiling paintings reflect the composition of Raphael's early 16th-century



vault decorations for the Stanza della Segnatura in the Vatican, commissioned by Pope Julius II, another great patron of the arts.

"It takes us on a tour through Western thought, mythology, and literature," the audio guide explains. The designs include the three epochs included in the museum: the ancient world, the Middle Ages, and the Renaissance. "Although Mowbray made the ceiling paintings in a studio and later mounted them in the space, these reliefs were modeled on-site so that Mowbray could study the way they interacted with the ambient light."

White explains: "The entrance is a combination of [the] monochromatic and colorful, and that's quite deliberate. The mosaics are light gray, and they're very close to the color of the marble in the pilasters that surround them. But what all this is doing is it's setting up for Morgan's treasures to really stand out."

In addition to the treasure trove of beautiful books and architecture, the Morgan also hosts valuable paintings and sculptures, such as "Madonna and Saints Adoring the Christ Child" by Pietro Vannucci (circa 1500) and the wooden altar figure "Saint Elizabeth Holding a Book" (circa 1500). Antonio Rossellino's bust of the Christ Child is one such work that especially deepens your visit to the museum.

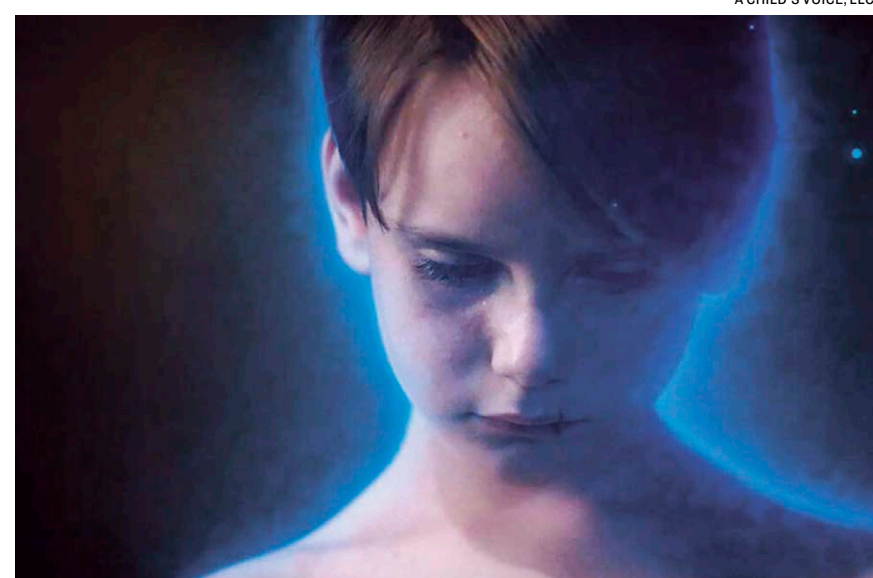
"Rossellino's Christ Child is free from imperfections. A perfect exterior was meant to suggest a similarly unblemished moral character within. These busts were in fact intended to inspire growing boys as they developed into morally upstanding men," the audio narrator states.

Classical culture can uplift us all, of any age. Now that New York life is opening up again, I can't wait to experience these cultural gems in person at the Morgan.

To take the Morgan Library & Museum online visual and audio tour, visit TheMorgan.org

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A CHILD'S VOICE, LLC



Jonathan Matthew Wilson in "A Child's Voice."

FILM INSIGHTS WITH MARK JACKSON



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.

A Call to Arms Against Child Trafficking

MARK JACKSON

A friend recently sent me a link to a film producer's verbal exposé of pedophilia and child trafficking in Hollywood. It was one of the most stunning, worthwhile, and ostrich-head-from-sand-yanking videos I've ever seen. (See link to the video at the end.)

In it, producer John Paul Rice talks about "A Child's Voice," a 2018 supernatural thriller he helped make on the topic, via No Restrictions Entertainment, which is a company that makes feature films about issues Hollywood doesn't tend to talk about. You won't find "A Child's Voice" listed on Rotten Tomatoes.

Murdering Innocence for Pleasure and Profit

In what is basically a supernatural-dramatic rendering of a child snuff film and the brutal, systematic, historic, and unspeakable horror of our time—the traf-

'A Child's Voice'

Director
Edgar Michael Bravo

Starring
Joey Burke, Angela Mavropoulos, Joseph Lopez, Jalen Vasquez, Kristian Pierce

Rated
Unrated

Running Time
1 hour, 22 minutes

Release Date
June 6, 2018

Rated
5 stars out of 5 for intention, 1 star for execution

ficking, violent sexual abuse, slaughter, and drinking of children's blood is ever so mildly portrayed.

A homeless teenage junkie (Joey Burke) hears the voice of a murdered child (Jonathan Matthew Wilson) requesting help, and, searching for the child's killer, uncovers a child-trafficking ring.

These red-robed cultists steal children off the streets and sacrifice them, drinking chalices of drained child-blood. But they don't do the abduction dirty work themselves; they farm that out to a fellow named Bill (Bailey Brenner). Bearded Bill has a young couple working for him. The girl, Kristy (Angela Mavropoulos), comes to her senses and escapes, becoming herself a loose end that will need tying up.

As mentioned, after 8-year-old Jacob was sacrificed via ritual knife, junkie Tim starts hearing Jacob's ghost's voice in his head, crying for help. As proof of his realness, Jacob gives Tim directions to a hidden backpack containing a lot of cash, a heroin stash, and a revolver. Then Jacob instructs Tim on how to rescue Kristy. Then Tim and Kristy go after the bad guys.

Not Up to the Task

Unfortunately, "A Child's Voice" contains zero tension, suspense, or anything novel or shocking beyond what one has already gleaned from cursory perusal of news headlines regarding child trafficking.

Now, I imagine that attempting to portray child trafficking in any way, shape, or form is inherently an invitation to receiving torrents of verbal abuse and accusations of exploitation. This had to be challenging for the producer.

However, to my way of thinking, a mild rendering is, if not intentionally, disrespectful. This topic inherently needs to wrench the gut and pulverize the heart; it needs to make a person jump out of their seat and grab the phone.

While the filmmakers did their due diligence in terms of interviewing trafficking survivors, FBI agents, and studying court testimony—what should have been a galvanizing, skin-crawling, outrage-sparking bombshell of a call-to-arms movie is anything but.

That said, maybe there is something to be said about mildly introducing such a vile, hideous, disgusting topic so people don't just immediately quit, stop watching, and thus remain willfully buffered to the much-needed whistleblowing. Maybe heads need to be gently pulled out of the sand instead of yanked to the point of potential traumatizing. What I'm suggesting might trigger actual trafficking survivors

and re-immersion in a world of pain.

But the film still needs to be far less amateurish. Too much of "A Child's Voice" doesn't make sense, contains implausibilities, unclear motivations, and a number of deus ex machina resolutions of an otherworldly kind that would have at least needed higher-production-value CGI rendering so as not to immediately destroy one's suspension of disbelief.

'A Child's Voice' contains zero tension, suspense, or anything novel or shocking.

Ark of Hope for Children

Ark of Hope for Children, an organization dedicated to helping trafficked children rebuild their lives, said, on Citizen Truth's website, of "A Child's Voice":

"While the movie is fictional, the basis of it that the rich, powerful, and demented of this world really do victimize, torture, and even murder children this way in our 'civilized' society truly does exist."

For those interested in volunteering: "Ark of Hope for Children brings care and awareness for those victimized as children by human trafficking, child abuse, and bullying. We are a human rights organization with programs that provide care for, and awareness of, survivors without discrimination of any kind. Ark of Hope focuses on unconditional love and transformation to help victims become empowered survivors. We are nonprofit organization #59-3585457."

Don't Watch the Film, Watch John Paul Rice's Video

According to the International Labor Organization, there are an estimated 5.5 million victims of child trafficking worldwide. Child trafficking is an estimated \$150 billion annual industry.

John Paul Rice is a special individual. His testimony is beyond compelling. What sold me was his explaining that he'd talked to Hollywood actresses he knows personally, who were outspoken and at the forefront of the #MeToo movement. He asked them if they knew about the heinous crimes that were going on with the children. They would sort of go, "Yeah, ugh, we know." But no one said anything.

To see Rice's video, visit <http://bit.ly/JohnPaulRiceMessage>

POPCORN AND INSPIRATION

A True Story of Navy SEAL Willpower

MARK JACKSON

"Lone Survivor" is Navy SEAL Marcus Luttrell's (Mark Wahlberg) harrowing, brink-of-death, true survival ordeal that re-creates the Afghanistan-based, doomed Operation Red Wings based on Luttrell's book of the same name.

Why do U.S. Navy SEALs figure so prominently in our national consciousness? There are numerous reasons, but one word sums up our fascination succinctly: forbearance. A SEAL's ability to endure pain and suffering is legendary. They're chosen because the nature of SEALs is such that they'd literally rather die than quit anything. It's an adamantium (also adamantium), diamond-

like willpower.

It's a quality that's inherently linked to integrity, truthfulness, and accountability. SEALs (along with Army, Marine, and Air Force special ops communities) therefore have more of these qualities than the average man. But it's that heroic, diamond-hard will that fascinates.

And that is why, since roughly 1990 when "Navy SEALs" (starring Charlie Sheen) debuted, they've become our favorite superheroes. We want to put them under a microscope and see if we can figure out how to get a little of that heroism to rub off on ourselves.

Operation Red Wings

Basically, four SEALs attempt to

'Lone Survivor'

Director
Peter Berg

Starring
Mark Wahlberg, Taylor Kitsch, Emile Hirsch, Ben Foster, Eric Bana, Ali Suliman, Alexander Ludwig, Yousuf Azami, Sammy Sheik

Rated
R

Running Time
2 hours, 1 minute

Release Date
Jan. 10, 2014

★★★★★

take out a head-lobbing Taliban leader and get surprised by goat-herds in the Hindu Kush mountain range. Heeding (with much agonized deliberation) the rules of engagement, they decide to let the goat-herds go.

Their mission now compromised, they decide to abort, try for higher ground to "get comms" (communication) and an Apache chopper extraction. But they reach a false peak (meaning they didn't realize there was even higher ground the enemy can climb to and thus gain the tactical advantage). "Axe" Axelson (Ben Foster) says, "This is a bad spot," and we anticipate a "Butch Cassidy"-type massacre. The film's title says it all, after all.

The goat-herds, naturally, have fled down the mountain and immediately alert the Taliban. Soon it's a four-against-a-hundred, SEALs-Taliban firefight, which takes an entire hour of the movie.

During this time, more SEALs pile into helicopters for the rescue, one of which is destroyed by an enemy rocket-propelled grenade.

The third act is Luttrell being taken in by an Afghan villager and safeguarded according to the principle of "Nanawata" (asylum), the second of the 10 tenets that make up the 2,000-year-old Afghan tradition called "Pashtunwali." The Afghan tribesmen are prepared to defend this enemy guest to the death against their fellow Afghans, the Taliban.

But the Taliban, initially shooed away (with AK-47s) from attempting to behead Luttrell, are soon coming back for more.

Real SEALs

Not as exclusively as, but similar to, the all-active-duty-SEAL cast of

"Act of Valor," "Lone Survivor" uses real SEAL instructors and sneaks Marcus Luttrell himself in there, and gives him a line to say.

Mark Wahlberg did SEAL-like training to prepare. "Lone Survivor" is as authentic as Hollywood SEAL-ness gets. And this is probably as embedded in a special operations firefight as any of us civilians will ever get.

Director Peter Berg does a tremendous job of creating a "you are there" feeling, with ricocheting, sound-barrier-breaking rounds, rock-splintering RPG explosions, and SEAL-assisted scripting of real firefight lingo: "Left is not good! Right is good! Okay, right is not good!"

The most mind-boggling is the all-or-nothing retreat technique of flinging oneself willy-nilly off 40-foot cliffs, and body slamming and cartwheeling downhill to escape enemy fire. Teeth shatter, bones break. SEAL response? "That sucked."

SEAL Lessons

The ironic thing with "Lone Survivor" is that it illustrates the futile aspects of war. Out of 20 top-flight operatives—one survives. Humans kill; no end in sight. Can war be stopped? Religion alone obviously can't get it done. Paradoxically, it would take warrior qualities, as applied to religion.

That is, the SEAL-like quality of never-quit willpower. As applied to, say, turning the other cheek. Compassion backed by mental toughness. Outer warrior becoming inner warrior, warrior-soldiers becoming warrior-monks; swords to plowshares. But that's for seekers on the path of enlightenment.

The reality is Richard Grenier's famous quote: "People sleep peacefully in their beds at night only because rough men stand ready to do violence on their behalf." And the forbearance, immense pain-tolerance, and ability to suffer, as demonstrated by SEAL warriors, can be something to learn from.



(Above) Bust of the Christ Child, circa 1460–70, by Antonio Rossellino.

(Below) A plaster model of the façade of J. Pierpont Morgan's library.

REWIND, REVIEW, AND RE-RATE

A Taut, Multifaceted Spy Drama

IAN KANE

On vacation, the McKenna family, consisting of Ben (James Stewart), his wife Jo (Doris Day), and their young son, Hank (Christopher Olsen), are on a bus from the airport to a hotel in Marrakech, Morocco. Ben's a doctor who works in Indianapolis, Indiana, and Jo's a former pop star who had a successful singing career.

Alfred Hitchcock's spy drama "The Man Who Knew Too Much" certainly opens on a dramatic note: The bus hits a bump in the road, and Hank, stumbling forward, accidentally rips off a Moroccan woman's face covering. The woman's husband takes offense and follows Hank back to his father. In a matter of moments, it looks as if an international event is about to unfold. But a stranger steps in and squashes the misunderstanding.

'The Man Who Knew Too Much' has become one of my favorite Hitchcock films.

Ben and Jo learn that their kind Samaritan's name is Louis Bernard (Daniel Gélin), a mysterious man who is vague when questioned but very interested in getting information about them. The next day during their visit

to a Moroccan marketplace, the McKennas spot Louis as he staggers out from an alleyway—he's been stabbed in the back with a very long knife. Louis manages to make it to Ben, where he collapses into the doctor's arms. He whispers his last words into Ben's ear, which details an assassination plot going down in London, England.

In order to keep the McKennas quiet about the plot, some nefarious underworld figures kidnap young Hank. Then, adhering to the kidnappers' demands, Ben and Jo, instead of relying on local authorities, decide to risk their lives to try and save their son all on their own.

This remake of one of Hitchcock's earlier works of the same title (the original was produced in 1934) is a quite daring yet believable story about a couple of ordinary American citizens who get caught up in the murky world of spies and international intrigue.

There's a twist to the film, which is quite ingenious; Ben and Jo are very visible to both the authorities and the bad guys, since they are so public about what they are doing. It's interesting to see them work with what they have, while trying to get to the bottom of the assassination plot unfolding in London, as well as rescue their son from his captors. As a result, many of the film's scenes are painted with an unusual sense of high tension and unease.

Add to that some moments of witty banter between its many interesting characters, and you've got a smorgasbord of seemingly disparate elements that somehow



come together and work. This film showcases Hitchcock's ability to combine all of these themes into a daring, two-hour spy drama that moves along at a brisk pace and never lets off the gas.

Jimmy Stewart once again steps into the role of an everyman who is deceptively resourceful (just as he did as L.B. "Jeff" Jefferies in 1954's "Rear Window"). Christopher Olsen is likewise convincing as a young boy who has been kidnapped by some really bad people. However, Doris Day really steals the show as Jo, a whip-smart woman who doesn't miss a beat (and that's coming from a lifelong Stewart fan).

To get a sense of this, watch one of the beginning scenes where she breaks down the fact that Louis basically interrogated Ben during their bus ride, without giving much information about himself in return—besides a couple of basic tidbits (such as his name, for example).

Later, she's also able to showcase her lovely voice while breaking out into song with "Que Sera, Sera," which was as big a hit as the movie. It's hard to believe that such a talented, humble, and kind soul just passed away last year (2019). But thankfully she'll live forever on the silver screen.

▲ It's an ordinary couple on vacation, Jo (Doris Day) and Ben McKenna (James Stewart), who thwart an international crime, in "The Man Who Knew Too Much."

'The Man Who Knew Too Much'

Director
Alfred Hitchcock

Starring
James Stewart, Doris Day, Christopher Olsen

Running Time
2 hours

Rated
PG

Release Date
June 1, 1956

★★★★★

The film is as easy on the eyes as Day is; Hitchcock takes his time with beautifully shot scenes of both Morocco and England, with well-placed musical pieces that only add to the stunning locales.

In the end, "The Man Who Knew Too Much" has become one of my favorite Hitchcock films (and I thought "Rear Window" couldn't be topped). It perfectly captures all of the elements that made his films so unique and fun to watch—drama, intrigue, high tension, humor—it's all there for us to enjoy.

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



Doris Day is remarkable in "The Man Who Knew Too Much."

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