

THE EPOCH TIMES

ARTS & CULTURE

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Brass relief of George Washington kneeling in prayer, at Federal Hall in New York City.

TRADITIONAL CULTURE

Winter Patriots: Remembering Valley Forge

JEFF MINICK

As I write these words, the date is Feb. 2, 2021, and I am visiting my daughter in Elmhurst Township, Pennsylvania. The ground is covered by approximately 15 inches of snow, with no end in sight. Though born in this state, I was reared in the South, and though I've seen big snows, especially when living in the Smoky Mountains, like most Southerners I am awestruck by a boatload of snow.

Several times, dressed in three layers of shirts, a hoodie, and a North Face coat, trousers, and shoes and warm socks, I've stepped to the covered porch on the side of

the house to look at this ongoing bombardment. It's cold and windy, but I'm dressed warmly enough and can enjoy the beauty of the day: the gray tree trunks standing in contrast to the falling snow, the pathway and road to the nearby school erased by the accumulated flakes, the majesty of nature mantling firs, cars, and nearby houses with wreaths of whipped cream.

We're out in the country, and as I look across the broad lawn buried in snow, I find myself thinking of a place 120 miles east of us and a time almost 250 years in the past.

Valley Forge, Pennsylvania.

Continued on Page 4



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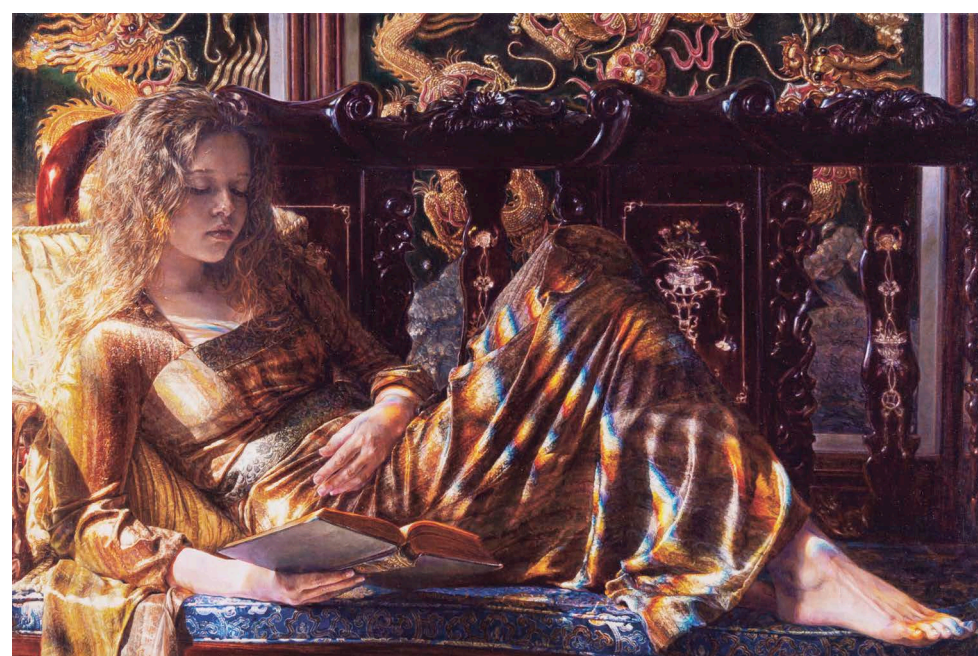
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LITERATURE

How a Lost Manuscript Revealed the First Poets of Italian Literature

MARIA CLOTILDE CAMBONI

Imagine a world where we knew the name of Homer, but the poetry of "The Odyssey" was lost to us. That was the world of the early Italian Renaissance during the second half of the 15th century.

Many people knew the names of some early poets of Italian literature—those who were active during the 13th century. But they could not read their poems because they had not been printed and were not circulating in manuscripts.

Then, in around 1477, the de facto sovereign of Florence, Lorenzo de' Medici—"the Magnificent"—commissioned the creation of an anthology of rare early Italian poetry to be sent to Federico d'Aragona, son of the king of Naples.

The luxurious manuscript became one of Federico's most prized possessions. It was exhibited to and coveted by patricians and intellectuals for half a century, until its disappearance in the early 16th century.

But it did not disappear completely. The interest aroused by this manuscript generated a paper trail of letters, partial copies, and other materials, which I, along with other researchers, have managed to piece together. These documents allow us to reconstruct not only the trajectory of the manuscript through different courts in Europe, but also—crucially—what works it may have contained.

Who Were the Vernacular Poets?
Vernacular literature—that is, literature written in the language normally spoken by the people—had only a marginal role during the Middle Ages and early Renaissance. The "real" culture was Latin. This meant that interest in the early poets who wrote in the Italian vernacular was limited, until the flourishing of the Italian language in the age of Lorenzo de' Medici.

One of these 13th-century poets, Cino da Pistoia, was loved and celebrated by Dante Alighieri in his treatise on the art of poetry, "De Vulgari Eloquentia." Dante said of his contemporary Cino: "There are a few, I feel, who have understood the excellence of the vernacular: these include Guido, Lapo... and Cino, from Pistoia, whom I place unworthily here at the end, moved by a consideration that is far from unworthy."

Guido Cavalcanti was another love poet. He and Dante were best friends, and Dante regarded Cavalcanti as an authority on poetry. Cavalcanti is mentioned in Dante's early poetry collection, "La Vita Nuova" ("The New Life").

The whole work is addressed to Cavalcanti, and Dante even implies that he is writing in Italian because of him. But despite Dante's popularity, even "La Vita Nuova" was hard to get hold of before 1576 when it was printed for the first time.

Guittone d'Arezzo was another highly regarded poet. He started as a love poet before becoming the most important author (before Dante) writing on moral and political themes.

The 'Raccolta Aragonese'
The collection of Tuscan poetry sent to Federico d'Aragona by Lorenzo de'



A page from another manuscript of vernacular poetry commissioned by Lorenzo the Magnificent in 1476. Gallica/National Library of France.

Medici in 1477 contained Dante's "Vita Nuova," as well as rare poems recovered from ancient manuscripts by Cino, Guittone, Cavalcanti, and many others. The collection was opened by a letter signed by Lorenzo himself.

The manuscript was later named after its owner and became the "Raccolta Aragonese" ("The Aragon Collection"). It became one of Federico's most prized possessions and the object of widespread interest and curiosity.

Federico took it with him when he traveled to Rome at the end of 1492 to swear allegiance to the Borgia Pope Alexander VI. During this trip, he showed it to the scholar Paolo Cortesi, who immediately wrote to Piero de' Medici—the son of the recently deceased Lorenzo the Magnificent. In this letter, Cortesi recounts that he had been shown a manuscript with poems by early vernacular poets, chiefly Cino and Guittone. The excitement is palpable: Cortesi is able to read poems by these authors whose names he had only ever heard mentioned before.

Such was the interest in these lost poets that partial copies of the "Raccolta" started to circulate. The first one was probably made by someone in Federico's inner circle before he became king of Naples in 1496. News about his collection of rare early Italian poems was spreading.



A print portrait of Cino da Pistoia, with the original drawing by Giuseppe Valiani.

The Widow Queen and the Duchess
Federico was the last sovereign of his dynasty. He lost his throne when Louis XII of France invaded Italy. When he left Naples in the summer of 1501, Federico took the books of the royal library with him. He later had to sell part of them to sustain himself and his followers during his exile in France. But the "Raccolta Aragonese" was not sold; after his death in 1504, it was passed on to his widow, Isabella del Balzo.

The widow queen then lent the collection to Isabella d'Este, the duchess of Mantua, in northern Italy, in 1512. She



King Federico of Naples portrayed on a Francesco di Giorgio medal.



"Six Tuscan Poets," circa 1544, by Giorgio Vasari. Pictured are (L-R) Marsilio Ficino, Cristoforo Landino, Francesco Petrarca, Giovanni Boccaccio, Dante Alighieri, and Guido Cavalcanti. The William Hood Dunwoody Fund, Minneapolis Institute of Art.

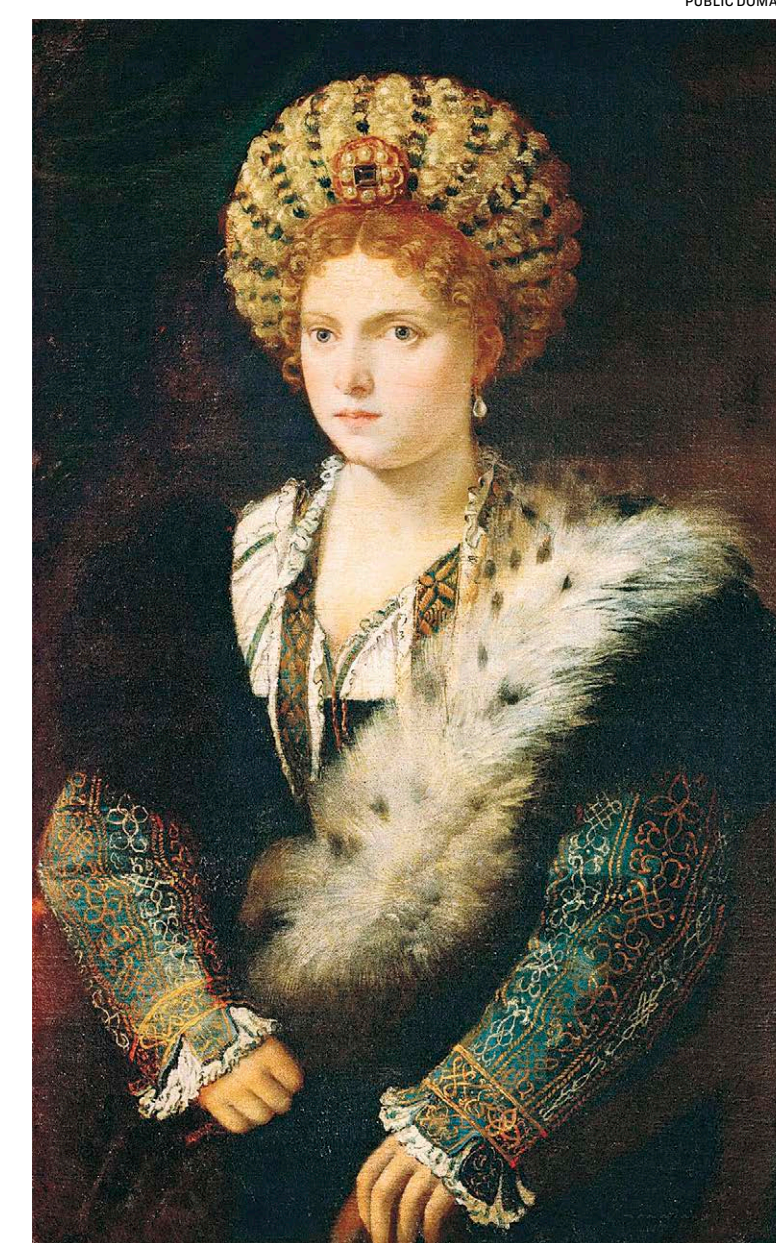
kept it for two months and, even though in her letters she promised not to leave it in other people's hands, it is likely that she commissioned a complete copy, which led to further partial copies being made.

Even though the transmission of these copies was in manuscript form—and so not widespread—several Renaissance intellectuals managed to read these "lost" works and were influenced by them in their attempts to reconstruct the history of Italian literature.

The real game changer came in 1527 when a printed collection of vernacular

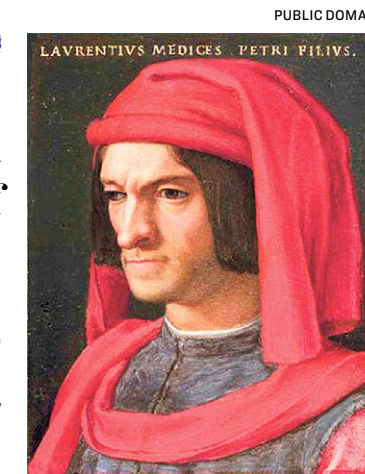
poetry finally took the works of masters like Cino, Guittone, and Cavalcanti to a much wider audience. This is when they stopped being obscure and arcane authors and finally took their place in the canon of Italian literature.

Maria Clotilde Camboni is the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellow at the Faculty of Modern and Medieval Languages, and academic visitor at Somerville College, both at the University of Oxford in the UK. This article was first published on the Conversation.

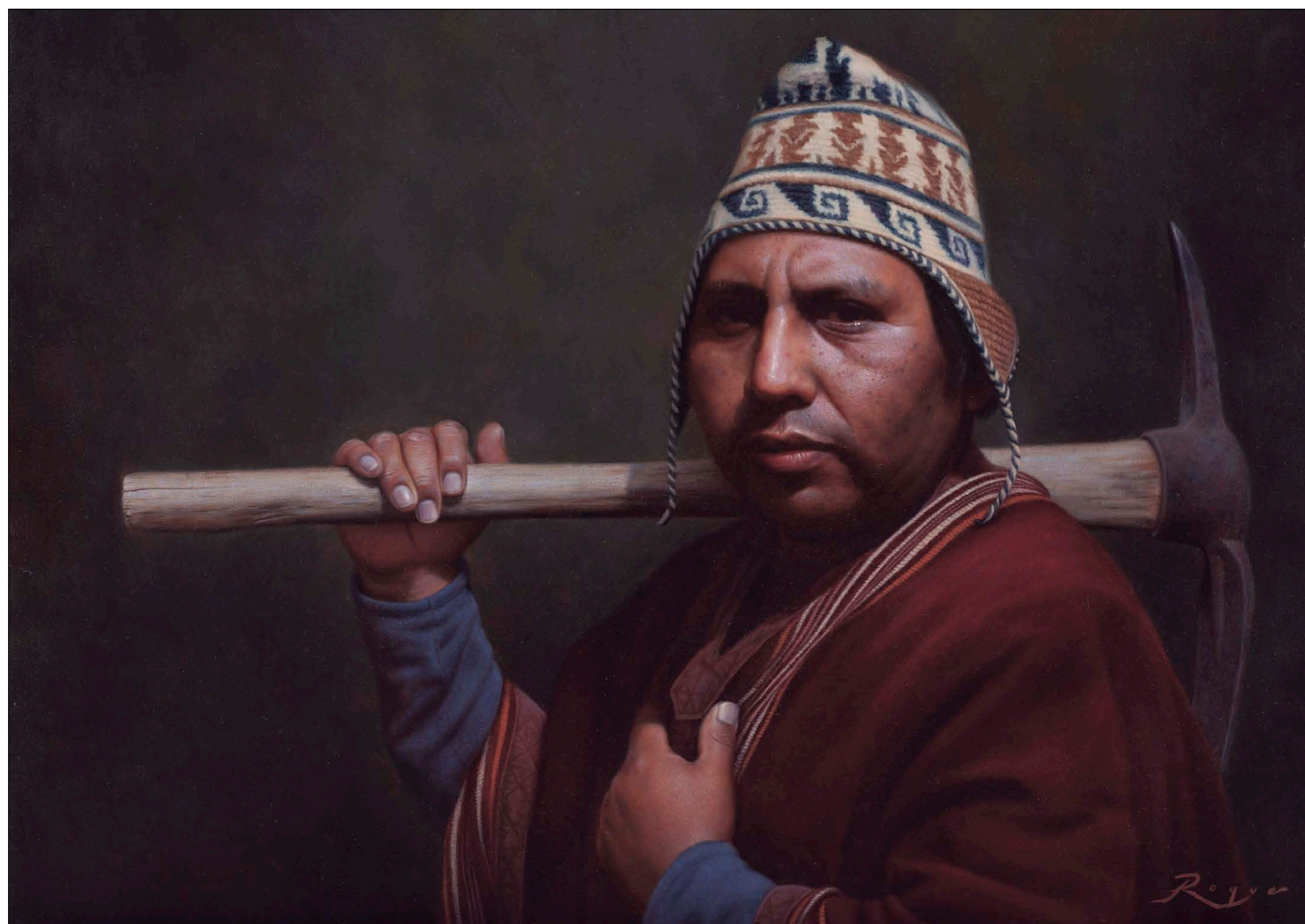


A portrait of Isabella d'Este, circa 1534-1536, by Titian. Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna.

Lorenzo de' Medici—'the Magnificent'—commissioned the creation of an anthology of rare early Italian poetry.



A portrait of Lorenzo de' Medici "the Magnificent," circa 1555-1565, by Bronzino and workshop. Uffizi Gallery.



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(Left) Truth has a malevolent twin. The statue of Veritas (Truth), by Walter Seymour Allward. Outside the Supreme Court of Canada in Ottawa. (Right) "Castor and Pollux," a copy of an antique statue, by Joseph Nollekens. Victoria and Albert Museum. (Below) "The Shepherd Faustulus Bringing Romulus and Remus to His Wife," 1654, by Nicolas Mignard. Dallas Museum of Art.



PUBLIC DOMAIN



Truth and Her Twin, Part 1: Which One Is Real?

JAMES SALE

The history of twins and our fascination with them is legendary. Although the Bible doesn't explicitly say so, Cain and Abel are often regarded as twins; and even if they weren't, Esau and Jacob, a bit later in the Genesis narrative, definitely were. Interestingly, it also says in the Book of Malachi that God loved Jacob but hated Esau. There is so often a chalk-and-cheese aspect to twins: Despite clearly being similar, their fates are very different.

We see this even in something like the founding of Rome: Romulus, the twin of Remus, gets all the credit (the name Rome gives that away) and finally gets taken to heaven by his father, Mars (Ares), although he has slain his twin brother, as Cain slew his brother Abel.

Not all twin stories show differentiation through moral virtue or turpitude, but profound division there invariably is. Pollux loved his twin brother, Castor, but they too were chalk and cheese in that Pollux was immortal whereas Castor was not. Eventually, their "twinness" was immortalized for us in the constellation we call Gemini.

Why are we so fascinated by twins? I think for two primary reasons. In our own time, they have become an inexhaustible source of inquiry for helping scientists establish whether it is nature or nurture that determines who we are and what we do. If two people have near-identical genetic codes, so the reasoning goes, then in separating them at birth, we should be able to see how much genetics versus its part in their individual destinies, versus the nurturing they have received.

Which One Is Real?

But perhaps there is a more important subconscious reason: Namely, twins represent to us, in visual form, the issue of appearance and reality. We have this insatiable hunger to know whether what we are seeing—the appearance—is real, is true, or whether it is not.

This question is true philosophically. We have all probably heard of the Buddhist aphorism about the man dreaming he was a butterfly, but on waking up wondered whether he was now a butterfly dreaming he was a man! Be that as it may, the importance of whether something is an appearance or a reality is nowhere more critical for us than in our dealings with other people.



MARIE-LAN NGUYEN/CC BY SA 2.5

A mural, by Jean-Baptiste Mauzeise after Jean-Simon Berthélemy, of Prometheus (C) who is known for creating man and giving him the gift of fire.

"Comedy of Errors: Two Dromios," 1829, by H. Richter. Folger Digital Image Collection.



FOLGER SHAKESPEARE LIBRARY/CC BY SA 4.0

sadly, wanted to take credit for both. So both models went into the kiln, were baked, and became infused with life.

Thus, a new pair of twins was born: One, Veritas or Truth, walked with steady, measured steps; and the second, her twin, Mendacium (or Falsehood), who because she had no feet, could hardly stand and certainly could not move. Aesop concluded, therefore, that although Falsehood might appear to be successful, at least initially, its footless limitation meant inevitably that Truth would prevail against it.

A new pair of twins was born: One, Veritas or Truth, walked with steady, measured steps; and the second, her twin, Mendacium (or Falsehood), who because she had no feet, could hardly stand and certainly could not move.

Our whole human history and all our important literature concerns this question. Shakespeare explored this comically in his play "The Comedy of Errors," which hinges on two sets of twins being mistaken for each other. And this plot device Shakespeare liked so much that he was to use it again; for example, in "Twelfth Night," where the twins are actually brother and sister and yet, nevertheless, are able to pass off for one another. I think what we are really talking about here is the question of truth.

Veritas and Mendacium, or Truth and Falsehood

Aesop tells a fable that explains how this came about. Prometheus created human beings and had always been their great friend. To help them further (remember, it was Prometheus who at considerable personal cost gave humans fire), he decided to sculpt a new form called Veritas or Truth. And if Truth were to come alive, then she would help people in their interactions and behavior. But as Prometheus was working on this project (he was a potter), he was summoned by almighty Zeus and so had to leave his workshop.

Because he had recently acquired an apprentice, Prometheus left Dolus (or Deception) in charge of his workshop. In the brief time that Prometheus was away, Dolus, who was ambitious, had accessed the clay and fashioned a virtually identical figure to the Truth that Prometheus had created. The only difference was that the copy did not have feet because Dolus had run out of clay.

When Prometheus returned, Dolus retired in fear, but Prometheus was amazed at the similarity of the two statues and,

Nice thought. If that only seemed true today.

The Epoch Times itself is waging a war against the twin Mendacium, which seems so similar to Veritas. However, victory is not easy and does not seem a foregone conclusion. But it is vitally important that we continue to strive for Truth, for as Dr. Johnson said, "The mind can only repose upon the stability of truth," which requires feet, in other words.

Without Truth, we are "footless"; we cannot go anywhere and of course we are not rooted, as in that Tai Chi sense of being rooted firmly to the ground so that our balance is secure. We are in short unbalanced, easy to tip over, unstable.

To recover Veritas, it would seem that we need to examine things closely, very closely indeed, so that we can spot the difference: Which is Veritas, and which the idol that seems identical but has no feet?

In Part 2 of this article, we will examine some further implications of these twins.

James Sale has had over 50 books published, most recently, "Mapping Motivation for Top Performing Teams" (Routledge, 2021). He won first prize in The Society of Classical Poets 2017 annual competition, performing in New York in 2019. His most recent poetry collection is "Hellward." For more information about the author, and about his Dante project, visit TheWiderCircle.webs.com

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.

POPCORN AND INSPIRATION

The Country That Prays Together ...

MARK JACKSON

You've undoubtedly heard the phrase "The family that prays together, stays together." The documentary "Pray: The Story of Patrick Peyton" tells of the Irish priest who made that phrase famous, and why it was his life's mission to do so.

In Peyton's own words: "I'm for God, for peace, justice, mercy, truth, love. I'm for stronger homes and loftier lives, and the better use of time. But first of all, I am for prayer, family prayer, because the family that prays together, stays together."

"Pray" should really be a biopic—I imagine it soon will be—and the late, great Philip Seymour Hoffman would have been a good casting choice to play Father Peyton. But if you can't wait for the movie, this documentary will do an excellent job as a history lesson, as well as function as a reminder about what is possibly the only solution for where our modern American culture is headed: Pray, everybody!

And it should be noted that while the form of prayer depicted here is primarily Catholic, prayer is universal to all forms of religion, and stories of miracles occurring through prayer are found across all cultures on our planet Earth.

Early Life

Born in 1909 in Attymass, Ireland, the young Patrick Peyton grew up in a large Catholic family. No one could have guessed from his general comportment and bad temper that he'd ever be a priest, and when he lit out for America, it was with visions of secular riches dancing in his head.

Patrick and his brother Thomas immigrated to the United States in 1928, staying with a sister of theirs in Scranton, Pennsylvania. There, after much pavement-pounding, Patrick landed a job as the sexton of St. Peter's Cathedral. After hearing a priest give a sermon, Patrick entered the seminary in Notre Dame, Indiana, in 1929.

The pivotal experience of his life came when, after coming extremely close to dying of tuberculosis, he turned the tide by praying to St. Mary with such passion and fervor that he could literally feel the physical shifts inside his lungs, as his body rejected the illness and miraculously rehabilitated itself.

Patrick dedicated the rest of his life to spreading the word about the power of

'Pray: The Story of Patrick Peyton'

Documentary

Director
Jonathan Cipiti

Starring
Seamus Mulligan, Steve Gibson, Liam Gillard, David L. Guffey, Dorothy Halloran, Niamh Kelly, L.S.P. Mother Marguerite McCarthy

Rated
PG

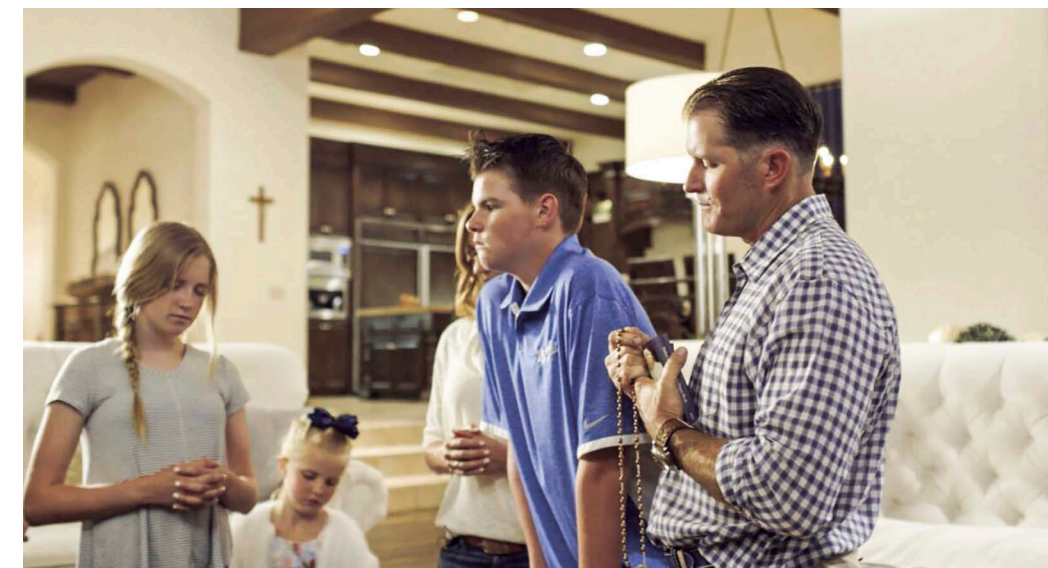
Running Time
1 hour, 11 minutes

Release Date
Oct. 9, 2020

★★★★★

“The role of prayer is like asking: What is the role of air for breathing? If we connect with God and each other, other things will take care of themselves. The family unit would then impact society. Fathers, make your wives proud that she chose you, make your children proud that they have a father like you, and prayer will transform your life. Prayer is the solution to problems of today, not just saying prayer but letting prayer change you.”

Father Patrick Peyton



ALL PHOTOS COURTESY OF FAMILY THEATER PRODUCTIONS/ARTFACTS ENTERTAINMENT

The family that prays together, stays together. Former professional baseball player Mike Sweeney (R) with his family, in "Pray: The Story of Patrick Peyton."



Father Patrick Peyton preaching to the masses, in "Pray: The Story of Patrick Peyton."

prayer, and he employed every means at his disposal in doing so. This included leveraging radio and pop culture, schmoozing like a pro, and falling to his knees and crying in front of movie stars who said no—thus ultimately revealing himself to be a to-memor-born Hollywood player.

However, that said, it is pointed out that every last bit of the entire package of his mover-and-shaker charm stemmed from a guileless, burning desire to serve God and St. Mary and to rescue modern culture from the destruction of the nuclear family, by means of his patented phrase.

The Power of Prayer, Celebrities, and the CIA

Here's a sample of Peyton's views, responding to a college student telling him her life was way too busy to pray:

"The role of prayer is like asking: What is the role of air for breathing? If we connect with God and each other, other things will take care of themselves. The family unit would then impact society. Fathers, make your wives proud that she chose you, make your children proud that they have a father like you, and prayer will transform your life. Prayer is the solution to problems of today, not just saying prayer but letting prayer change you."

Eventually, Father Peyton had Hollywood A-list stars of the era helping him spread his message of family prayer, such as Bing Crosby, Frank Sinatra, Lucille Ball, Bob Newhart, Jackie Gleason, and so on, not to mention eventually Pope John Paul II. Such a different time. It's slightly shocking to see a young, pre-fame James Dean acting in Peyton's Family Theater Production.

It's also fascinating to witness how Father Peyton's "Rosary Rallies" drew a half million people in San Francisco, one of the

bastions of the counterculture movement.

One surprising fact is that funding was funneled from the CIA to sponsor Peyton's rosary crusades in Chile, Brazil, Venezuela, and Colombia in order to battle communism. The Vatican found out about it and ordered an end to the practice.

The film's explanation is that Father Peyton was most likely unaware of where the funding originated. But it's clear that his prayers played a role in Filipino kleptocrat Ferdinand Marcos (and his wife, Imelda, with her notorious shoe addiction) being ousted. He prayed up a storm in their backyard, with oceans of Filipinos in attendance.

Faith-Based Films Needed Now More Than Ever

Family Theater Productions, which Father Peyton himself founded, produced "Pray," and so it somewhat predictably borders on hagiography, but the power of this man is akin to a Martin Luther King Jr. or a Ghandi, and speaks for itself. His cause for canonization was launched in 2001, and he was named venerable by Pope Francis in 2017, which is the first of three stages leading to sainthood.

I find it strange that I never heard of Father Peyton before viewing "Pray." The ship of Peyton's mission foundered on the rocks in the 1970s as American cultural mores reversed course, due to the creeping infiltration by the long arm of Soviet communism. The "long march through the institutions," with its intent to destroy our culture from the inside out, is well-documented.

While "Pray" is obviously aimed primarily at Christian audiences, it will hold anyone's attention; the man had that much charisma. "Pray" is directed by documentarian Jonathan Cipiti, whose vision and hope for the film is, in his own words, "That it model family prayer, and if parents have any inclination at all, to try it, even if it's awkward at first."

With communism now at our doorstep, "Pray" is the perfect film for America to watch, immediately. There's a phrase from Eastern philosophy: "It is easier to invite an immortal than to see one off." The same goes for communism. It's time to take Father Peyton's promotion of the healing, cohesive bonding effect of family prayer and open it up nationwide; turn it into "The country that prays together, stays together."

POPCORN AND INSPIRATION

The Power of Faith

MARK JACKSON

When "Salmon Fishing in the Yemen" hit theaters in 2011, a New York subway poster advertising the lottery showed a Boeing 747 with the words "Kevin's Airline" stenciled on its side. And a huge photo of Kevin's face on the rear stabilizer fin. The caption read: "That kind of rich."

In this delightful comedy-drama-romance, a wealthy sheik, upon falling in love with cold-water fly-fishing on his Scottish estate, decides that he'll just construct himself a convenient fly-fishing river smack-dab in the middle of

'Salmon Fishing in the Yemen'

Director
Lasse Hallstrom

Starring
Ewan McGregor, Emily Blunt, Kristin Scott Thomas, Amr Waked, Catherine Steadman, Tom Mison, Rachael Stirling, Tom Beard

Rated
PG-13

Running Time
1 hour, 47 minutes

Release Date
April 20, 2012 (UK)

★★★★★

CBS FILMS INC.



Sheikh Muhammed (Amr Waked, L) and Fred Jones (Ewan McGregor) discuss matters of faith, in "Salmon Fishing in the Yemen."

a Yemen desert—his homeland. What would you call that?

"That kind of rich" could have been the alternative title for "Salmon Fishing in the Yemen." However, it's not about the squandering of wealth that it first appears to be. It's about the project as a concrete manifestation of the sheik's deep and poetic understanding of faith.

If You Build It, They Will Come

When the British military inadvertently blows up a mosque in Afghanistan, the prime minister's top spin doctor, Patricia Maxwell (Kristin Scott Thomas), immediately orders her team to dig up "a good news story from the Middle East." Said story is to be exploited into a warm, fuzzy diversion of public attention away from said mosque fiasco.

The sheik's intention to reconstruct his beloved salmon-fishing milieu in the Yemen desert is quickly sniffed out. He claims that, more than anything else, it's an offering of healing, peace, and spiritual uplifting for his troubled people. Warm and fuzzy perfection!

Exceedingly uptight scientist Dr. Fred Jones (Ewan McGregor, never better) is a fisheries expert. Spin-doc Patricia saddles him with overseeing the salmon-fishing project, to which he is at first vehemently opposed due to its staggering, on-the-page, logistical and scientific impossibility.

Aided in his initial foot-dragging

efforts by the sheik's comely representative Harriet (Emily Blunt), Fred soon finds himself eventually swayed by the sheik's infectious charm, warming to the plan and, of course, also eventually warming to Harriet.

The sheik, charismatically played by Amr Waked (whom producer Paul Webster considers "the George Clooney of the Middle East," according to the press notes), is a man of moral stature, a philosopher, and a keen observer of life. He ruminates, "Fishermen only care about patience, tolerance, and humility." (Renowned fly-fishing author John Gierach would definitely have something hilarious to say about that.) But the sheik hopes that the Yemen locals will possibly benefit from such a mindset, since we see them forever patrolling about, brandishing AK-47s, and yelling a lot.

The Power of Faith

The acting in the film is all-around stellar. It's a cast of stars who excel at comedy as well as drama, and Amr Waked is a revelation.

Lasse Hallstrom, who's helmed such films as "What's Eating Gilbert Grape," masterfully steers the subtle and very funny rhythms of European humor. He also engineers very moving dramatic scenes between the male and female leads, capitalizing on their powerful chemistry.

Hallstrom also underscores the film's theme of the power of faith

with various interchanges between no-faith Fred and the faithful sheik. Remember, this Fred we're talking about is a secular guy, an atheist. He needs to take baby steps toward faith, and the sheik helps him do that. For example, Dr. Fred also loves fly-fishing, and the sheik points out, hilariously, that Fred's fishing fun (standing in a stream for hours, waving a stick, with no guarantees) is not too terribly distant from ... ahem ... faith?

Furthermore, there's the example of the dilemma of stocking the salmon run with farmed fish, which most likely lack their original wild instinct to head upstream to spawn. Fred's hunch that it's still deeply in their nature to "run" is pointed out again as being closely related to faith.

Finally, the entire apparently cockamamie project is one huge act of faith—what else could it be? There are always setbacks, but one must demonstrate faith by persistence. At one point, the sheik wonders aloud, after a setback perpetrated by angry countrymen who don't yet understand his vision, whether his project glorifies God or man.

We already know. We've seen the warmth of his hospitality, the depth of his philanthropy, the extent of his faith, and know his grand gesture to have enriched our lives. We know it by the laughter, tears, and the renewed faith in humanity's goodness that we feel.



"Pythagoreans Celebrate the Sunrise," 1869, by Fyodor Bronnikov. Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow, Russia.

REACHING WITHIN: WHAT TRADITIONAL ART OFFERS THE HEART

Reconnecting to the Goodness of the Universe: 'Pythagoreans Celebrate Sunrise'

ERIC BESS

When I lived in New York, there were nights when I would go to my building's roof to look out into the heavens. In the city, the tall buildings and their lights would obscure the night sky and dim the brilliance of its stars.

Amid the city's hustle and bustle, it often felt like we were missing a connection to what was more profound and more essential. It was like we had explained away the universe's vastness and mysteriousness.

Of course, this wasn't always the case. Ancients, such as the Greek thinker Pythagoras, placed great importance on the connection that we human beings have with the universe at large.

Pythagoreanism

Many of us know of Pythagoras through the Pythagorean theorem we learned during our primary and secondary education. Various interpretations of the life and principles of Pythagoras constitute Pythagoreanism.

But who was Pythagoras, and why was he so influential?

We believe that Pythagoras lived approximately 2,600 years ago. The Greek did not write anything himself, and what we know about him comes from secondary sources written over 100 years after his death. Because of this, there is very little about him of which we can be certain.

Yet we know that Pythagoras was actually famous for his understanding of the soul's immortality, life after death, religious rituals, supernatural abilities, and strict self-discipline. The god Apollo has been associated with him.

For Pythagoreans, moral principles and numerical relationships structured and ordered the universe. Those who investigated the universe's moral principles and numerical relationships could access its harmony.

The planets harmoniously moved, and their movement produced sounds according to mathematical ratios. These harmonized sounds were heavenly music, and the harmony of music became a way for the soul to be purified and unify with the heavens.

Pythagoreans also saw the planets as divine instruments of justice, and

the sun and moon were seen as where blessed souls would go upon death. Thus, we can assume that Pythagoreans believed that the universe rewarded good and punished evil in relation to how well a person could harmonize with the universe's moral principles and understand how it's mathematically ordered.

'Pythagoreans Celebrate the Sunrise'

"Pythagoreans Celebrate the Sunrise" is a painting by the Russian-born history and genre painter Fyodor Bronnikov (1827–1902). As the title suggests, the painting depicts a group of Pythagoreans celebrating the sunrise.

In the painting, the Pythagoreans wear light-colored, classical robes. Six of them play musical instruments, and four kneel in reverence to the sunrise. The man who is the focal point stands in front of the others with his arms outstretched as if to welcome the sun.

In the background to the right are four figures—two women and two children—who watch the celebration. In the far background is a temple, presumably the Delphic Temple of Apollo. Apollo was the god of music, harmony, and light.

The main figures situate themselves on an elevated ledge that overlooks Delphi. The sun isn't visible, but its light shines from the left of the composition. The moon is at the top far right of the composition.

Reconnecting With the Moral Mysteries of the Universe

So what wisdom might we extract from this painting for our contemporary lives?

First, to me, the leading figure who welcomes the sun with his arms outstretched represents the deep connection that we can have with the universe, a connection perhaps lost to us.

The figure stands with the bottom quarter of his body set against the earth, while the upper part is against the sky. The positioning of this figure might suggest that he is the mediator between—that is, he harmonizes—heavenly and earthly things.

Why does the figure welcome the sun? Welcoming anything suggests hospitality and gratitude. Toward what is the figure being hospitable and grateful? In other words, what might the sun represent? For the Pythagoreans, the sun was a heaven to which good people went. Thus, the sun houses all that is good concerning the human heart and mind. But the sun also

provides light, warmth, and growth here on earth by giving of itself and asking nothing in return.

Is the goodness that the sun represents a goodness through which the heart and mind give without seeking reward? Is the figure showing hospitality and gratitude toward this type of goodness? Is it this type of goodness that connects us to the greater mysteries of the universe?

Second, I see significance in the figures who play musical instruments. The Pythagoreans believed that music, if it harmonized with the sounds of heaven, could purify our spirits. Like the figure who welcomes the sun, the musicians too are situated between heaven and earth.

Though it's unclear if the first Pythagoreans spoke about the arts other than music, generally "music" was a blanket term for the arts in ancient Greece. According to Monroe Beardsley, author of "Aesthetics: From Classical Greece to the Present," "Music" (mousike) ... can mean music, or fine arts in general, or even something like general culture."

Is it the case, then, that the kinds of art that purify human beings and celebrate the heavens are like the sun in that they house all that is good concerning the human heart and mind, and they give of themselves their light, warmth, and growth here on earth without seeking reward?

What would the arts look like today if they embodied such heavenly qualities? What would civilization look like if we re-investigated an interest in the mystery of goodness itself and the mysteries of the greater universe in relation to ourselves?

The traditional arts often contain spiritual representations and symbols, the meanings of which can be lost to our modern minds. In our series "Reaching Within: What Traditional Art Offers the Heart," we interpret visual arts in ways that may be morally insightful for us today. We do not assume to provide absolute answers to questions generations have wrestled with, but hope that our questions will inspire a reflective journey toward becoming more authentic, compassionate, and courageous human beings.

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

BOOKS

Inspector De Luca: Fighting for Truth Amid Madness

BENJAMIN WELTON

In corrupt or brutal regimes, the truth is often a crime. The Inspector De Luca detective novels of Carlo Lucarelli (born in 1960) serve as a reminder of this fact. Although fun and stylish examples of the police procedural genre, these slim books are fictional examples of the eternal morality of justice and how often this morality gets perverted by politics.

While a student working on a thesis about the police during the Italian Social Republic (1943–1945, also known as the Republic of Salò), Lucarelli discovered a unique survivor—a real police officer who managed to serve Mussolini, the communist Italian partisans, and the democratic government of postwar Italy. In this man, Lucarelli found the germ of a character that would eventually blossom to become Inspector De Luca.

In the words of scholar Barbara Pezzotti, De Luca is the embodiment of apolitical professionalism, and in Lucarelli's three novels ("Carte Blanche," "The Damned Season," and "Via delle Ocha"), De Luca manages to solve his cases while simultaneously trying to keep from being swallowed up by the rapid tides of Italian politics.

'Carte Blanche'

"Carte Blanche" (published in Italian in 1990 and translated into English in 2006) sees De Luca, a veteran of the infamous Black Brigades paramilitary unit, return to regular policing duties in Bologna. This is where De Luca would rather be instead of working with the political police.

Not long after arriving in the city, De Luca investigates the murder of Rehnard Vittorio, a notorious playboy. The crime is a classic whodunit that even features a locked room. Vittorio is the archetypal "bad boy" character who seems to take pleasure in breaking female hearts. He's another type of scoundrel in that he also deals in narcotics.

The problem for De Luca is that Vittorio is a member of the Republican Fascist Party, which still rules northern Italy in 1945. Fascist politicians are convinced that interparty rivals are to blame for Vittorio's murder, and they lean heavily on De Luca to confirm their suspicions. De Luca is too honest for such tactics, and he discovers a secret network of party members, including the deceased Vittorio, trying to save their skins from postwar war-crime trials by cooperating with the Vatican and the Allies.

De Luca knows too much and is marked for assassination, but he manages to survive and solve the case.

Just as De Luca brings the guilty party to the police station, he finds the city in full retreat from the advancing Allies and the mostly communist Italian partisans. In the face of such developments, nobody cares



Inspector De Luca (Alessandro Preziosi) is billed in the miniseries bearing his name: "He's not a fascist. He's not a partisan. He's just a cop."

about a simple murder.

'The Damned Season'

In "The Damned Season," De Luca, despite being targeted for execution because of his former work with Mussolini's government, winds up working with the communist partisans. Here, in a rural Italy rife with civil war and factionalism, De Luca must solve the murder of a popular local peasant.

It does not take De Luca long at all to anger the partisans, for one of his chief suspects is a powerful local commander and hero of the anti-fascist resistance. Once again, politics interferes with De Luca's job, and once again, he solves his case but winds up facing harsh punishment for his pains.

'Via delle Ocha'

The final De Luca novel, "Via delle Ocha," has De Luca back in Bologna during the contentious 1948 Italian general election. The murder in this novel occurs in Bologna's infamous red light district (hence the novel's title).

The victim is a boxer and member of the Italian Communist Party. Several of De Luca's comrades, especially the former members of the partisans, suspect the murder to be the handiwork of right-wing radicals, including unrepentant fascists.

De Luca suspects others, including a particular "woman of the night," to whom he develops a strong attraction.

Sadly, "Via delle Ocha" turns out no different for De Luca, as he is pulled from his case and is sent to provide crowd control for a massive riot following the attempted assassination of Palmiro Togliatti, the leader of the Italian Communist Party.

From Paper to Screen

Lucarelli's trilogy was turned into an incredible Italian television miniseries in 2008. Starring Alessandro Preziosi as De Luca, "Inspector De Luca" (currently available on Amazon Prime), perfectly captures the brilliance and absurdity of Lucarelli's novels.

As for the show, it stays faithful to the original novels while also adding a dose of noir grit and 1940s glamor. One would be hard-pressed to find a better way to spend a lazy Sunday than by binge watching this incredible miniseries. It also has maybe the best tagline in television history: "He's not a fascist. He's not a partisan. He's just a cop."

A Trilogy for Today

While Lucarelli belongs to a wider culture of left-leaning detective fiction writers who enjoy complicating a "stuffy" and "reactionary" genre, and while he toys with audience expectations by muddying up the typical detective novel formula, he saw beyond those views: His De Luca novels provide insight into themes that go beyond politics.

De Luca is a hero because he is apolitical and loyal only to the truth. He earns the respect of fascists, communists, and democrats because he is honest and cannot be swayed by either strong-arm tactics or bribery. However, this same quality makes De Luca an enemy of multiple regimes, all of whom see his work as threats to their rule. This is why De Luca's cases never end cleanly, as politics trumps justice.

This is the dire warning hidden in these fun detective novels. Italy, which experienced a prolonged period of political instability and violence known as the "Years of Lead," tore itself apart because of radical politics. The United States in 2021 is on the verge of its own "Years of Lead." In such scenarios, the first casualty is often the truth; good, decent, and apolitical people tend to be caught in between and punished.

So, while you enjoy these well-written novels and the excellent television show, take the lessons and warnings of De Luca to heart.

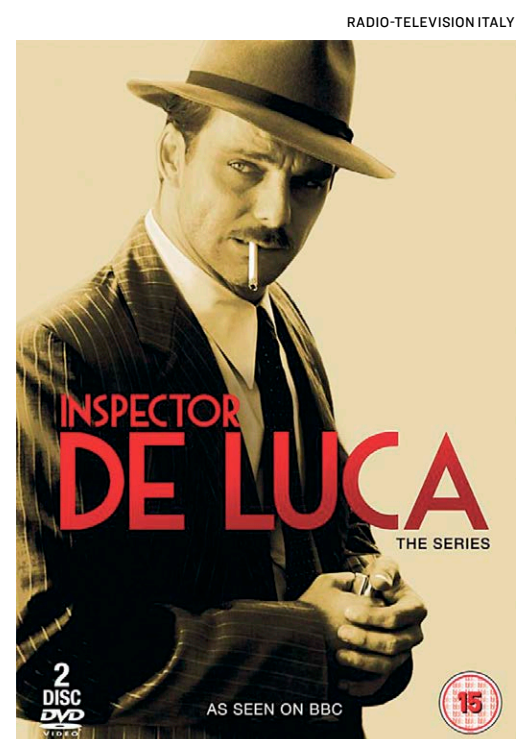
Benjamin Welton is a freelance writer based in New England.

Although fun and stylish examples of the police procedural genre, these slim books are fictional examples of the eternal morality of justice and how often this morality gets perverted by politics.

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POPCORN AND INSPIRATION

As Stirring as It Is Whimsical

IAN KANE

Films about underdogs that are sports-oriented, particularly ones that relate to the American Dream, can be tricky to pull off. Some, such as 1976's "Rocky" and 1981's "Chariots of Fire," can go on to become classics—and deservedly so. Many others, however, can feel derivative and unauthentic, and in some cases, downright manipulative.

"Breaking Away" (1979) fits among the former camp—a rare gem in a large pile of coal. It feels incredibly grounded in authenticity, as well as very earnest in its delivery. Some of today's cynics would probably even say naive.

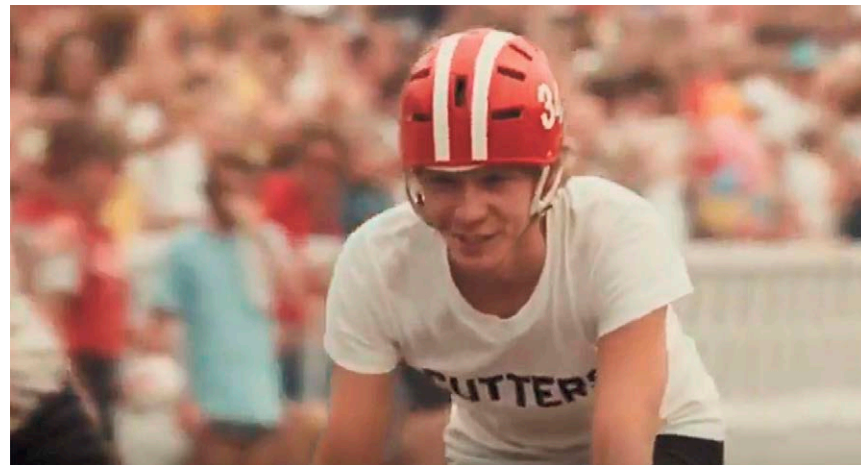
Ironically, the actor who plays the film's protagonist Dave—Dennis Christopher—was actually in "Chariots of Fire," although, sadly, only in a supporting role.

Dave and his motley band of three young buddies, Mike (Dennis Quaid), Cyril (Daniel Stern), and Moocher (Jackie Earle Haley), live in the Ivy League-ish college town of Bloomington, Indiana. Historically, the town was a center for stone quarry workers, but most of the quarries have been shut down.

One of the things that I appreciate the most about this film is its peppy writing.

The descendants of these blue-collar workers, who are known as "cutters," include Dave and his friends. The film emphasizes—early on—the wide disparity between these lower-middle-class townies and their college kid counterparts.

Dave, Mike, Cyril, and Moocher each have their own reasons for not going to college after their high school years. Therefore, much of the film is about their transitions



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to adulthood and their quests for their own little pieces of the American Dream.

The film also demonstrates class friction, as the college kids consider the cutters little more than unwanted detritus and the offspring of relics from a bygone era. Ironically, the original stone cutters had a major hand in building the town, including the gilded halls of its university.

Dave is an Italophile and not only appreciates the culture but also constantly practices his flourishing Italian-language skills on the locals. While this behavior peevs his father (Paul Dooley) to a certain degree, his mother (Barbara Barrie) doesn't mind their only son's eccentricities. What they both never doubt, however, is Dave's ability and passion for bike racing.

One day, Dave spies a beautiful college girl, Katherine (Robyn Douglass), as she mounts her scooter to travel home. She drops a notebook, and Dave picks it up and takes off after her on his bike. After they meet, a budding romance begins.

Things culminate during the film's third act as a big bike race approaches, and therein lies the crux of the movie's title, which can be interpreted in several ways. One way is that Dave begins to emerge as the leader among his small group of friends. But will his natural athletic gifts (that begin to open up options for him) be at the expense of his childhood friendships?

There are other ways in which the term "breaking away" can be viewed, but I'll

leave that to the audience. Let's just say that one of them has to do with the film's rousing climax.

Goodness at the Forefront

One of the things that I appreciate the most about this film is its peppy writing, including witty dialogue. Even the relationship between Dave and his sometimes cantankerous father has a marked lack of mean-spiritedness that we typically see in similar movies.

Also, all of the characters, including those in the supporting cast, are simply endearing. Even the supposed bad guys have their own flecks of goodness. This allows for some unusually complex characterizations that enable the characters to seem real, as opposed to cardboard cutouts or mere clichés.

"Breaking Away" is a lighthearted film that somehow conveys much deeper and thought-provoking questions. It's fun to watch and ultimately ends on a good note. Yet its feel-good vibe never devolves into saccharine drivel.

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

▲ Dennis Christopher stars as an eccentric, young Italophile in "Breaking Away."

'Breaking Away'

Director
Peter Yates

Starring
Dennis Christopher, Dennis Quaid, Daniel Stern

Running Time
1 hour, 41 minutes

Rated
PG

Release Date
July 20, 1979

★★★★★

(L-R) Jackie Earle Haley, Dennis Christopher, Dennis Quaid, and Daniel Stern play four teens grappling with adulthood.



(L-R) Paul Dooley, Barbara Barrie, and Dennis Christopher play father, mother, and son, respectively.



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