

THE EPOCH TIMES

ARTS &

CULTURE

TRADITIONAL CULTURE

Memory and the Arts

Mnemosyne reminds us of what is good, true, and beautiful

JAMES SALE

The Greek myths are full of insightful and explanatory details that help us understand not only how to conduct ourselves in this world, but also about how things came to be and how things work. This latter point—how things work—is really important if we want to achieve anything. As we know, success and achievement can be very fleeting. The individuals whom the world lauds today, so often become the villains of tomorrow or worse: the forgotten ones.

Politically, it would be easy to list dozens of forgotten and inconsequential statesmen who were highly acclaimed in their time. But take poetry, not politics. Who remembers now Thomas Watson, who was THE poet and sonneteer of Elizabethan England? And Albertinus Mussatus, a contemporary of Dante? According to Swiss historian of art and culture Jacob Burckhardt, Mussatus, “crowned poet at Padua by bishop and rector, enjoyed a fame which fell little short of deification”! Poor Dante never achieved the laurel he sought—at least, not in his lifetime.

And this is the point: Who do we remember, and what is the role of memory in all of this?

Mnemosyne, the Greek Titaness

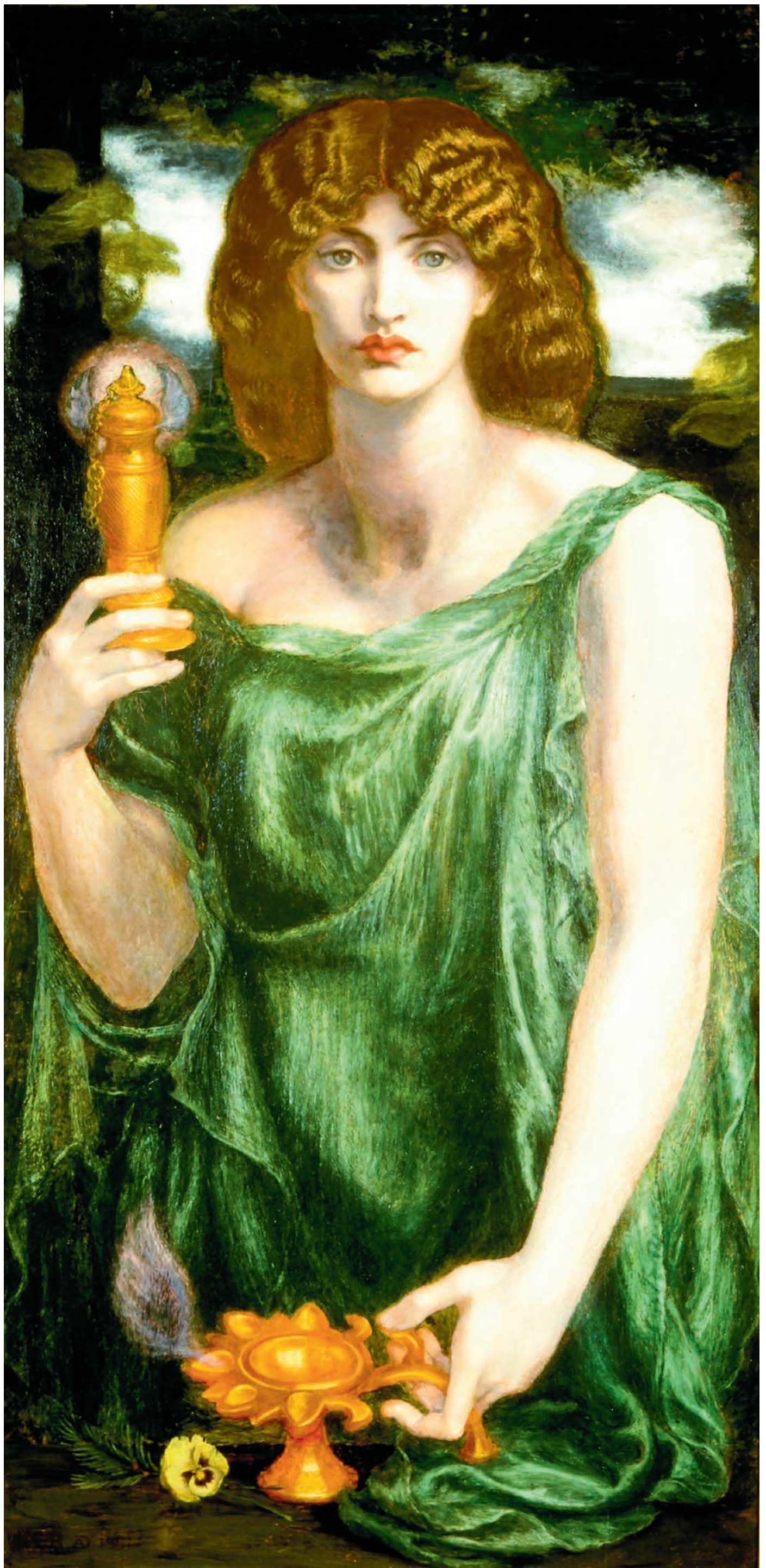
According to the ancient Greeks, memory has a very big role to play, not only in the act of remembering, but also in the creation of all art forms. Rather than, perhaps, the modern view that might see memory as some sort of passive function of the mind (similar to a hard drive on which we store data), memory has primeval powers, which are essential for our well-being, health, and creative capabilities.

Mnemosyne, in Greek mythology, is the goddess of memory, but to say she is a goddess is a misnomer because she is actually a Titaness, or female Titan. Titans were and are older than the Greek gods and existed before them. Indeed, it was Zeus leading the revolt against his own father, the Titan Kronos, which upset the cosmic apple cart and led directly to the rule of the Olympian gods.

But unlike her male counterparts and siblings, Mnemosyne was never overthrown. Indeed, she subsequently spent nine nights in Zeus’s bed (in some traditions, this becomes Apollo’s bed) and gave birth to the nine Muses through him.

As a Titaness, Mnemosyne was the daughter of Uranus (Heaven) and Gaea (Earth). Given this lineage, it is not surprising to learn that Titans had three qualities they all shared.

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The beauty and power of memory: “Mnemosyne” (aka “Lamp of Memory”), 1881, by Dante Gabriel Rossetti. Oil on canvas; 49 3/4 inches by 24 inches. Samuel and Mary R. Bancroft Memorial, 1935, at the Delaware Art Museum.



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Statue of Wynken, Blynken, and Nod in Washington Park, Denver, here with only two figures shown. The statue was inspired by Eugene Field's poem for children by that name.

LITERATURE

'The Poet of Childhood': Remembering Eugene Field

JEFF MINICK

Most journalism is ephemeral.

The news reports, opinion columns, and commentaries on sports, fashion, health, and dining are brushed aside by tomorrow's headlines and shifting interests. Here today and gone tomorrow are the usual watchwords in the Fourth Estate.

We readers may have our favorite writers—I, for example, particularly relish the editorials by Conrad Black, Roger Kimball, and Joy Pullmann—but nearly all their observations, like mine, are written in water rather than on stone.

Of course, there are exceptions. Some still read the journalism of George Orwell or Ernie Pyle, who was a World War II chronicler of American foot soldiers and sailors. The literary and cultural pieces by Joseph Epstein, one of the finest essayists of the past century, are collected in a number of books. We read these older newspapers and magazine articles because they strike a chord or possess a timeless theme.

In general, however, we take momentary pleasure in such pieces and then move on.

Here's an excellent example. Suppose someone asked you which writer holds the title as America's first columnist. Had you asked me that same question just a couple of days ago, even though I write columns, I would have shrugged, shaken my head, and said "No clue."

Let's go exploring.

The Man

Eugene Field (1850–1895) was born in Saint Louis. His mother died when he was 6, and his father, who passed away when Field was a teenager, had sent him and his brother to live with relatives in Massachusetts. Field later enrolled in three colleges, but never attained a degree. At the age of 23, he married Julia

Comstock, age 16. Together they had eight children, five of whom survived into adulthood.

During this time of his life, Field worked for several papers before he finally landed a position with the Chicago Daily News. Here he began putting out a light, humorous column called "Sharps and Flats," where he focused especially on the actors and actresses of his day and on baseball players. These pieces brought him wide renown and were eventually collected into books, which remain available from online suppliers.

"Sharps and Flats" accounts for Field's being dubbed "America's first columnist," but popular as they once were, those largely forgotten columns fail to explain the many honors bestowed on him following his early death.

The Poet of Childhood

While at the Chicago Daily News, Field was also writing scores of poems, some of them either aimed at or about children. In 1888, he won wide acclaim for "Little Boy Blue" and went on to write other poems for boys and girls. These verses captured the hearts and imaginations of the public, and it is for them that Field is best remembered today.

Even during his lifetime, Field was called "The Children's Poet." Others called him "The Poet of Childhood," which in my opinion comes closer to the mark regarding the subject of his poetry. Some of his poems appeal to children, but others such as "Little Boy Blue," which recollects a child who has died, are clearly intended for adults.

Several of his poems are still found in collections for children today, or in beautifully illustrated stand-alone volumes. Four of his best-known works are "Little Boy Blue," "The Duel," "Jest 'Fore Christmas," and "Wynken, Blynken, and Nod."

Angel Song

In Field's lifetime, the death of babies

and toddlers was not at all uncommon, and many poets in the Victorian Age wrote sentimental verse about these heartbreaking departures.

Field was no exception. In "Little Boy Blue," he opens his poem with a stanza about dust and rust appearing on a child's toy dog and toy soldier. We then learn that one night the little boy goes off to his trundle bed, falls asleep, "And as he was dreaming, an angel song/ Awakened our Little Boy Blue."

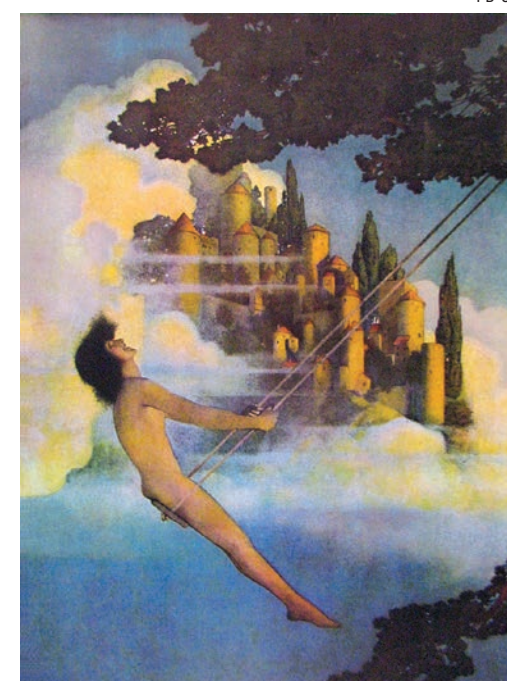
At the poem's end, we find the toy dog and soldier faithfully waiting for his return:

"And they wonder, as waiting these long years through,
In the dust of that little chair,
What has become of our Little Boy Blue,
Since he kissed them and put them there."

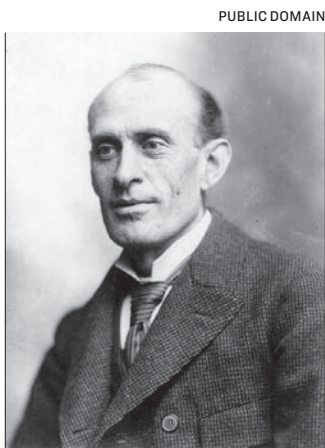
A confession: This poem, which I read so long ago in my childhood, left me misty-eyed when rereading it for this article. Like Winston Churchill, sometimes I am a blubberer.

On a Lighter Note

Like "Little Boy Blue," at least two more of Field's poems—"Jest 'Fore Christmas" and "The Duel"—were in the 1954 "Childcraft" series my parents purchased for our home. Unlike "Little Boy Blue," two of these were humorous pieces of verse.



One of eight color plates by Maxfield Parrish, from the 1904 collection of Eugene Field's "Poems of Childhood." The plate illustrates "The Dinky Bird," a poem about the freedom of children's play and imagination.



Eugene Field was America's first columnist and a writer of children's poetry and humorous essays. U.S. Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division.

"The Duel" tells the story of the gingham dog and the calico cat, and how one night they get into a terrible fight. Here's the final stanza:

"Next morning where the two had sat
They found no trace of the dog or cat;
And some folks think unto this day
That burglars stole that pair away!
But the truth about the cat and pup
Is this: they ate each other up!
Now what do you really think of that!
(The old Dutch clock it told me so,
And that is how I came to know!)"

But one of my favorites of all the poetry in this "Childcraft" collection was "Jest 'Fore Christmas." The first stanza provides a wonderful sample of the boy's personality and Field's use of vernacular, both of which made me smile then and still do:

"Father calls me William, sister calls me Will,
Mother calls me Willie, but the fellers call me Bill!
Mighty glad I ain't a girl—ruther be a boy,
Without them sashes curls an' things that's worn by Fauntleroy!
Love to chawnk green apples an' go swimmin' in the lake—
Hate to take the castor-ile they give for belly-ache!
'Most all the time, the whole year round, there ain't no flies on me,
But jest 'fore Christmas I'm as good as I kin be!"

That last line acts as the refrain to the poem as the boy recounts his mischievous behavior, but then tells readers: "For Christmas, with its lots an' lots of candies, cakes and toys, / Was made, they say, for proper kids, an' 'not for naughty boys." The voice of the boy and his word usage are spot on in this poem.

Lullaby

In "Wynken, Blynken, and Nod," Field has put together a poem that is as much a sedative as a baby's pacifier. Read aloud the first few lines:

"Wynken, Blynken, and Nod one night
Sailed off in a wooden shoe,—
Sailed on a river of crystal light
Into a sea of dew."

And then Field delivers this sweet and charming ending:

"Wynken and Blynken are two little eyes,
And Nod is a little head,
And the wooden shoe that sailed the skies
Is a wee one's trundle-bed;
So shut your eyes while Mother sings
Of wonderful sights that be,
And you shall see the beautiful things
As you rock in the misty sea
Where the old shoe rocked the fishermen three:—
Wynken,
Blynken,
And Nod."

Given its hypnotic power, we can well understand why there are a dozen or more children's books devoted to this poem alone.

Homage

After Field's death, several of the communities in which he'd lived honored him. His Saint Louis house is now a museum, and several parks and schools across the Midwest bear his name. Statues erected to remember him include one of Wynken, Blynken, and Nod, which stands in Denver's Washington Park near the house where he once lived.

In his last days, Field was working on his book "The Love Affairs of a Bibliomaniac," in which he recounts his lifelong passion for ink, paper, and the printed word. Here in Chapter V, "Baldness and Intellectuality," he writes: "Books, books, books—give me ever more books, for they are the caskets wherein we find the immortal expressions of humanity—words, the only things that live forever!"

By no means do all our words live forever. But those that do, including those verses by The Poet of Childhood, are gifts to the human spirit.

Jeff Minick has four children and a growing platoon of grandchildren. For 20 years, he put together a poem that is as much a sedative as a baby's pacifier. Read aloud the first few lines:

Virtue of the Brush in a Time of Chaos

"When things are chaotic to the extreme,
order must be restored."
— "The four books" by Zhu Xi

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TRADITIONAL CULTURE

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Mnemosyne reminds us of what is good, true, and beautiful

Continued from Page 1

One was immortality—they could be defeated but not destroyed. Another was superhuman energy and power—hence the word, “titanic.” And finally, according to French philosopher Luc Ferry in his book “The Wisdom of the Myths,” they also had “consummate beauty... terrifying and fascinating... born in the depths of the earth... close to the primordial chaos from which Gaea herself emerged.”

Then, it is clear that art itself—poetry, music, pictorial art, dance, drama, and more besides—each of which has some specific, operative Muse behind it, has, too, as its point of origin or mother, memory. And this mother is “close to the primordial chaos” from which her own mother, Gaea, sprang. And lest we forget, Mnemosyne is characterized by that superhuman energy and power, as well as terrifying, fascinating beauty; and, of course, immortality—the eter-

If we could but remember Mnemosyne now, we should bring to life again all of her primeval energy and beauty.



“Jupiter, Disguised as a Shepherd, Tempts Mnemosyne,” 1727, by Jacob de Wit. Rijksmuseum.

nal nature of memory.

This eternal nature is forward- as well as backward-looking. In his book “The White Goddess,” the poet Robert Graves talks of “memory of the future” too. Indeed, Mnemosyne has complete control of all memories that have ever or will ever occur, including the memories of the dead. This is how the dead are able to subsist in their Greek-style afterlife in Hades: Their spirits—their “shades”—can remember, sometimes tragically (as, say, Achilles reflects in the “Odyssey”), their former life and experiences. Without Mnemosyne, there could be no meaningful afterlife, for without memory, no individual could be held accountable for what they had done in this life.

We have a situation, then, in which we could use Chinese terminology to account for the creation of art and poetry: The yang, or masculine principle of the supreme god of light and thunderbolts (Zeus), meets the yin, which is the feminine principle of energy and dazzling beauty (Mnemosyne). But this dazzling beauty that the Titaness represents is what we take for granted. It’s our old, humdrum memory.

Looking to the Best Times

And here’s the point: Mnemosyne, or memory, draws us back to “first things.” “First things” point to what has gone before; they influence us to consider earlier sources. Part of the reason for this is that the earlier sources—contrary to what the modern world believes with its simplistic notions of “progress”—are better, that is to say, stronger, more beautiful, more accomplished. This is a truism in most cultures, especially the Greek, whereby the world had a Golden Age; and this passed, with each succeeding age—Silver, Bronze, Iron—to become more corrupt and decadent.

A simple example of the power of “first things”—that is, things that come before and which memory can recall—is shown when we talk of role models. For example, these can be our parents, grandparents, teachers, artistic or scientific greats, and so on. Many, if not most, of these people have gone before us, yet when we recall their examples and imitate them, we derive massive strength from the process.

Indeed, it is difficult to see how anything great could be achieved without memory recalling the past. Remember

The parents of Mnemosyne were Uranus, the god of heaven (who is standing inside a celestial sphere) and Mother Earth, or Gaea. She is shown with four children, who possibly represent the four seasons. Part of a large floor mosaic from a Roman villa in Sentinum (now known as Sassoferato, in Marche, Italy), circa 200–250.



PUBLIC DOMAIN

FINE CRAFTSMANSHIP

Exceptional French Gold Embroidery

Master Artist Sylvie Deschamps and her Le Bégonia d’Or atelier



Master Artist, gold-thread embroiderer Sylvie Deschamps at work.

LORRAINE FERRIER

For the past 26 years, gold-thread embroiderer Sylvie Deschamps has headed Le Bégonia d’Or, a gold-embroidery workshop in the historic town of Rochefort, just south of La Rochelle in the west of France.

The town dates back to the 11th century, when Rochefort Castle was built to prevent a Norman attack. But the modern fortified town of Rochefort was established in the late 17th century, when the Sun King Louis XIV’s minister, Jean-Baptiste Colbert, founded an arsenal and military port there. To embellish the men’s military attire, gold-embroidery workshops were established in the town.

Deschamps continues the town’s gold-embroidery tradition. She holds the prestigious title of Master Artist, an honor bestowed by the French Ministry of Culture and Communication to fine craftspeople who are recognized by their peers as virtuoso artists, and who are capable of passing on the embroidery heritage to future generations.

There are only 89 master artists in France, and Deschamps is currently the only gold-thread embroiderer with the title. Recalling the day she received the honor in 2010, Deschamps said in a telephone interview, “It was one of the most memorable days of my life.”

The Master Artist title brought Deschamps and Le Bégonia d’Or much media attention, and many illustrious commissions from luxury companies such as the fashion houses of Hermès, Cartier, and Valentino; the perfumer Guerlain; the Swiss

watchmaker Piaget; and the shoemaker John Lobb.

Besides the luxury brands, the Le Bégonia d’Or atelier also undertakes commissions to design and create unique embellishments for interiors of private jets, yachts, and homes. In addition, Deschamps and her team restore and repair gold embroidery on many items, from ecclesiastical banners to customers’ couches.

An important part of the atelier is ensuring that the tradition of gold-thread embroidery is taught to future generations. Deschamps’s apprentice, Marlène Rouhaud works alongside her, and the atelier runs classes throughout the year for different skill levels.



The gold thread used for this rose, for a Piaget watch face, was hair-thin and had to be handled with extreme care.

PIAGET/COURTESY OF LE BÉGONIA D’OR

Alexander the Great? His great role model was Homer’s Achilles, and Alexander went on to conquer the known world at that time. Julius Caesar looked back to Alexander the Great, and when he reached the age of 30, he wept because he hadn’t conquered the world as Alexander had.

Disavowing the Past and Memory

Perhaps this may seem somewhat academic: talking of a Titaness whom few “remember” or know about. But her relevance today could hardly be clearer. Unfortunately, Ezra Pound, an extremely influential poet (most of whose poetry might charitably be described as incomprehensible), defined in the early 20th century one of the guiding principles of all modernist art. He said, “make it new.”

In other words, Pound said to forget the past and turn our backs on tradition, ignore the achievements of the greats who came before, and be original by intellectually fiddling with language. He suggested negating memory. This could be said of every other modernist art form. The result? Create elitist products that no ordinary person wants to read (or view or listen to). Then, in a coup de grâce of irony, because they have abandoned all rules, modernists call this kind of art democratic and empowering.

The recipes of modernism have had a hundred years or so to flower, and they have largely produced non-art. The reason is clear: They have no memory of what went before, which, at its best, was good, true, and beautiful.

Of all things that the greats before had, preeminently—we remember—they had form. We remember these forms: the forms of Homer, Virgil, Dante, Spenser, Shakespeare, and others we could name. If we are to have art—poetry—that will be remembered in the future, then we all now need to remember the art that has gone before us, and its forms, rather than denouncing or deconstructing form to irrelevance.

If we could but remember Mnemosyne now, we should bring to life again all of her primeval energy and beauty. To be clear, our civilization depends on remembering all that is great—the good, true, and beautiful—from what went before, not trashing it and believing foolishly that we can create from the rubble of our own ideas.

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

Mastering Gold-Thread Embroidery

As a teenager, Deschamps once set her heart on becoming a lingerie maker, as she loved different types of delicate lace. Her love for lace remains, but her professional lingerie-making hopes were dashed when she was 15 years old. A lack of students interested in learning to make lingerie meant the course she wanted to take didn’t run that year.

The school also specialized in gold-thread embroidery, and when Deschamps saw some of the finished pieces, she knew that was what she wanted to study.

“The gold thread chose me, rather than me choosing the material,” she said. For six years, Deschamps learned from the best embroiderer in Lyon, Lucie Teston, at Bouvard & Duviard. Under Teston’s strict tutelage, she perfected her embroidery skills, learning all kinds of embroidery techniques—some of which date back to the 15th century.

In 1995, Deschamps was approached to be director of the new atelier, Le Bégonia d’Or. The atelier is the only state-funded gold-embroidery workshop in France, Deschamps said. The atelier was established to serve the local school for its gold-embroidery students to gain work experience, as per traditional training.

Meticulously Made in France

All the materials used in the atelier are made in France. And the gold thread itself is made by the historic gold-thread maker in the country, Ets Carlhian.



GUERLAIN/COURTESY OF LE BÉGONIA D’OR



A mosaic mural of Mnemosyne in the National Archaeological Museum of Tarragona, in Catalonia, Spain.



Memory bore the nine Muses. A sarcophagus known as the “Muses Sarcophagus,” shows the nine Muses and their attributes. Marble, first half of the 2nd century A.D. Albani Collection, then Musei Capitolini; seized by Napoleon Bonaparte; exchanged in 1815; Louvre.

PUBLIC DOMAIN

Gold thread differs from normal embroidery threads such as silk. Gold thread consists of a little spring of gold which is cut to size and then strung on a thread, like stringing pearls. The precious metal thread isn’t as supple as normal thread, and it requires delicate, expert handling since it can easily be damaged, Deschamps explained.

“When you touch gold thread, it’s smooth and cold... and it’s wonderful to handle and have between your fingers,” she said.

Many of Le Bégonia d’Or’s commissions demonstrate Deschamps’s exquisite skills, and indeed her patience. For instance, Swiss watchmaker Piaget approached Deschamps to make 350 limited-edition watch faces for its exclusive Altiplano ultrathin watches.

The Altiplano watches are wafer-thin, and Deschamps and her assistant Rouhaud had to work with hair-fine gold thread to embroider several different designs: for instance, a rose in pink silk and white-gold thread, and a laurel branch in white-gold thread. Deschamps explained that they had to stop many times due to the gold thread snapping. Each rose took 35 hours to create, and each laurel branch took 10 hours.

In 2013, the French cosmetic company Guerlain celebrated the 160th anniversary of its iconic perfume L’Eau Impériale. The company organized a competition for master artists to

create a limited-edition embellished perfume bottle or its packaging. Nine designs were selected.

One of those selected was Le Bégonia d’Or’s entry. Deschamps along with Rouhaud took 135 hours to embroider the bottle, which is on display in Guerlain’s boutique on the Champs-Élysées in Paris.

To discover more about Le Bégonia d’Or, visit Broderieor.com

Evelyn Combeau acted as translator from French to English.

Sylvie Deschamps and her assistant Marlène Rouhaud took 35 hours to hand embroider each rose for this limited-edition Piaget watch.

Le Bégonia d’Or gold-thread embroiderers Sylvie Deschamps and Marlène Rouhaud took 135 hours to embellish the iconic Guerlain perfume bottle, to celebrate the 160th anniversary of Guerlain’s perfume L’Eau Impériale.



PIAGET/COURTESY OF LE BÉGONIA D’OR

FILMS

Katharine Hepburn in ‘Woman of the Year’ and ‘Adam’s Rib’: Femininity Over Feminism

TIFFANY BRANNAN

Katharine Hepburn is remembered as a feminist icon because of her liberal views on gender equality and the strong roles she played in movies. However, her personal ideology was rarely reflected in the Golden Era movies she made. If you actually watch her movies from the 1930s to the '50s, you'll find that most of the stories don't promote feminist messages. In fact, while she often played very strong women, most of Hepburn's characters show us through their experiences that being an independent career woman is no substitute for being traditionally feminine.

Few of her films depict this message more clearly than her movies with Spencer Tracy. These two great actors, both Academy Award winners, made nine movies together over the course of 25 years. In these films, they usually played characters who were married or who planned to get married.

Many of Hepburn's collaborations with Tracy show that women have little to gain by winning the battle of the sexes. This started with their first movie together, "Woman of the Year" (1942). The theme was most notably repeated in "Adam's Rib" (1949). Both movies focus on a married couple whose relationship is threatened by professional competition.

Similar Stories

In "Woman of the Year," Tess Harding (Hepburn) is a woman about town and international columnist. Sam Craig (Tracy) is a down-to-earth sportswriter. They have nothing in common besides working for the same New York newspaper. When these two writers battle in their respective columns over the value of sports during wartime, their editor (Reginald Owen) brings them together for a truce. They feel immediate chemistry with each other, and Sam invites Tess to her first baseball game.

Each of the women loses her husband in her pursuit of equality.

Getting to know each other, they don't find much in common except an overwhelming attraction. After just two dates, they decide to get married. However, as they struggle to squeeze the wedding into Tess's hectic schedule, Sam wonders if this is an example of how their married life will be.

In "Adam's Rib," Adam (Tracy) and Amanda Bonner (Hepburn) are married lawyers. Adam is an assistant district attorney, while Amanda is a private lawyer. They seem to have a happy Manhattan marriage until a controversial news item starts an argument.

The spouses argue about the most sensational case of the day. Doris Attinger (Judy Holliday), a young wife and mother, shot her husband, Warren (Tom Ewell), when she found him in another woman's apartment. While Adam believes that no one is entitled to break the law, Amanda argues that Doris was defending her marriage, as any man would defend his home. The issue goes from a casual disagreement to a full-fledged battle when Adam is assigned the case. Eager for Doris to receive justice, Amanda decides to represent her. As Adam and Amanda go head-to-head in court, their marriage is on



Katharine Hepburn, circa 1945, portrayed glamorous women in the films that first made her famous.

trial as much as the Attingers'.

From this point on, the movies progress similarly. Each wife wins a great victory, but she goes too far. Then, her husband leaves her. At that point, she realizes that all her professional success is empty without the man she loves.

You could almost consider "Adam's Rib" a continuation of "Woman of the Year." If Tess and Sam didn't solve their problems early on in their marriage, they undoubtedly would have come to a similar juncture as Amanda and Adam face, although in different professions.

Career Women With a Cause

Both Tess Harding and Amanda Bonner are more than career women. They are proud, outspoken feminists. Tess Harding's beloved aunt and mother figure, Ellen (Fay Bainter), was a leader in the women's suffrage movement; Tess obviously idolizes her.

Early in the film, we see Tess speaking at a women's emancipation meeting about ladies' chances to prove themselves during the war. When Sam asks her to marry him, she admits that she never thought she would marry because she hates to be tied down.

Once they are married, it becomes obvious that Tess doesn't plan on changing her life to accommodate Sam. He moves into her apartment, which is flooded with European dignitaries on their wedding night. Time for each other is sandwiched between her international events. She can't cook. She shows little genuine interest in her husband's work.

Sam tries to be understanding of how busy she is, but their difficulties reach a climax when she is named "Outstanding Woman of the Year." He harshly states, "The 'Outstanding Woman of the Year' isn't a woman at all." It's then that he realizes that their relationship is "neither perfect nor a marriage."

At the beginning of "Adam's Rib," the Bonners seem to have a happy marriage. Having been married for several years, they have found time and ways to be together despite their careers. Adam respects his wife's career, and vice versa.

The trouble starts with the Attinger case. Adam tries to get out of prosecuting Doris Attinger, knowing his wife's feelings on the

her husband's displeasure. These women's whole lives are contradictions, since they enjoy the advantages of femininity while demanding the rights of equality. Yet, when Adam objects to Amanda's using "sly and feminine hints" in court, she refuses to concede until the word "feminine" is struck from the record.

Tess wins her accolades, speaks to international leaders, and calls the president by name. Amanda wins the case, proving her point and gaining acclaim in the papers. However, the laugh is on each of the women when she loses her husband in her pursuit of equality.

In essence, these two films show that feminism cripples women, leading them to selfishness and dishonesty. Tess, for example, is a self-absorbed human being. It's not even a matter of being a good wife but of just being a human with the barest consideration for another person, made more poignant because the person she ignores is a loved one. Amanda basically cheats her way to winning the court case, using cruel feminine tricks to unnerv Sam. These characters lack basic decency and kindness; that is, instead of gaining self-worth, they lose what makes humans worthy.

Tess understands this truth only when her aunt explains how she, at long last, is finding true happiness by marrying Tess's father (Minor Watson). "You can't live alone in this world, Tess. It's no good. Success is no fun unless you share it with someone. I'm tired of winning prizes. They're cold comfort. This time I want to be the prize myself!"

These two movies show that traditional femininity and marriage bring more happiness than fighting female nature ever can. Ultimately, these two characters that Katharine Hepburn plays learn that it's better to be a man's helpmate than his competitor and focus on the wonderful differences between men and women. As Adam Bonner says, "Vive la difference!" or "Hooray for that little difference!"

Tiffany Brannan is a 20-year-old opera singer, Hollywood history/vintage beauty copywriter, film reviewer, fashion historian, travel writer, and ballet writer. In 2016, she and her sister founded the Pure Entertainment Preservation Society, an organization dedicated to reforming the arts by reinstating the Motion Picture Production Code.

Femininity Versus Feminism

While proponents of femininity seem to embrace the differences between men and women, feminists often try to erase them in their quest for equality. However, the leading ladies in these movies certainly don't look unfeminine. On the contrary, they are very womanly, which makes them far more powerful. Both Tess and Amanda wear glamorous clothes and hats, feminine hairdos, and the delicate makeup that characterized female fashion in the 1940s. Tess sports one rather boyish pant outfit around the house, but her hairstyle and pretty face declare her fully female.

These outward appearances are merely the icing on the feminine power that these women have. While shunning the softer virtues long attributed to the fair sex, the career women in these movies use womanly wiles to manipulate men. They deny gender characteristics in terms of gifts or duties, yet they still use their feminine charms to their advantage. Whenever Sam is frustrated by Tess's selfish behavior, she gazes at him flirtatiously; a few kisses quickly melt his anger.

Amanda similarly uses affection to cool

her husband's displeasure. These women's whole lives are contradictions, since they enjoy the advantages of femininity while demanding the rights of equality. Yet, when Adam objects to Amanda's using "sly and feminine hints" in court, she refuses to concede until the word "feminine" is struck from the record.

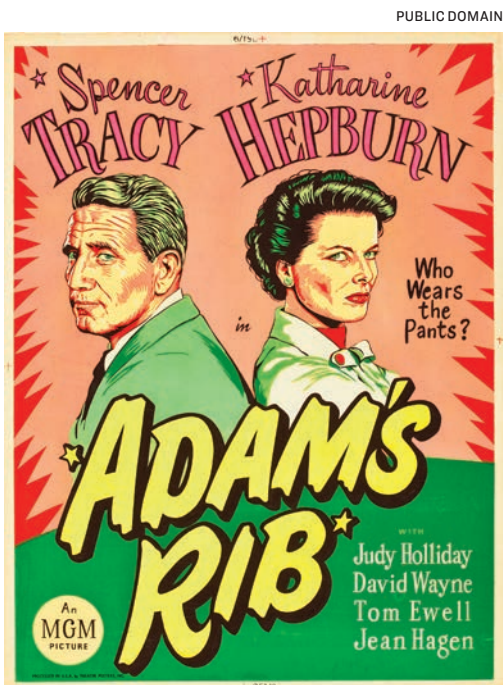
Tess wins her accolades, speaks to international leaders, and calls the president by name. Amanda wins the case, proving her point and gaining acclaim in the papers. However, the laugh is on each of the women when she loses her husband in her pursuit of equality.

In essence, these two films show that feminism cripples women, leading them to selfishness and dishonesty. Tess, for example, is a self-absorbed human being. It's not even a matter of being a good wife but of just being a human with the barest consideration for another person, made more poignant because the person she ignores is a loved one. Amanda basically cheats her way to winning the court case, using cruel feminine tricks to unnerv Sam. These characters lack basic decency and kindness; that is, instead of gaining self-worth, they lose what makes humans worthy.

Tess understands this truth only when her aunt explains how she, at long last, is finding true happiness by marrying Tess's father (Minor Watson). "You can't live alone in this world, Tess. It's no good. Success is no fun unless you share it with someone. I'm tired of winning prizes. They're cold comfort. This time I want to be the prize myself!"

These two movies show that traditional femininity and marriage bring more happiness than fighting female nature ever can. Ultimately, these two characters that Katharine Hepburn plays learn that it's better to be a man's helpmate than his competitor and focus on the wonderful differences between men and women. As Adam Bonner says, "Vive la difference!" or "Hooray for that little difference!"

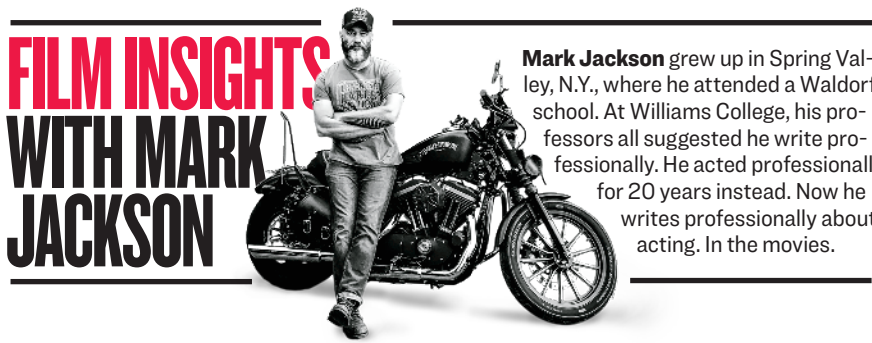
Tiffany Brannan is a 20-year-old opera singer, Hollywood history/vintage beauty copywriter, film reviewer, fashion historian, travel writer, and ballet writer. In 2016, she and her sister founded the Pure Entertainment Preservation Society, an organization dedicated to reforming the arts by reinstating the Motion Picture Production Code.



Defense attorney Amanda Bonner (Katharine Hepburn) uses feminine wiles against the prosecuting attorney—her husband (Spencer Tracy).



Released in 1942, "Woman of the Year" shows a couple just starting out.



Mark Jackson grew up in Spring Valley, N.Y., where he attended a Waldorf school. At Williams College, his professors all suggested he write professionally. He acted professionally for 20 years instead. Now he writes professionally about acting. In the movies.

REWIND, REVIEW, AND RE-RATE

‘An Officer and a Gentleman’: A Precursor to ‘Pretty Woman’

MARK JACKSON

"An Officer and a Gentleman" was the fourth highest grossing film in 1982, after "E.T. The Extraterrestrial," "Rocky III," and "On Golden Pond." I saw it at least five times. It set the stage for "Pretty Woman" eight years later.

Both "An Officer and a Gentleman" and "Pretty Woman" contain the Cinderella and antihero archetypes, but in "An Officer and a Gentleman," the antihero story dominates, and the Cinderella story is secondary. In "Pretty Woman," it's the other way around. The antihero is played by Richard Gere in both movies; the Cinderellas are played by Debra Winger and Julia Roberts, respectively.

What's an antihero? They don't have traditionally heroic qualities, but ones more befitting villains, such as greed and dishonesty. And their struggles to rectify themselves of inner moral corruption, and to recognize the delineation between right and wrong, make them relatable to audiences.

In "Star Wars," the antihero is Han Solo—an arrogant, bad-boy smuggler with a hot-rod spaceship who eventually overcomes his own self-interest to help the Rebel Alliance. The antihero in "Pretty Woman" is Edward Lewis, a ruthless corporate shark. The antihero in "An Officer and a Gentleman" is Zack Mayo, who overcomes a very rough upbringing.

Navy Brat

Young Zack Mayo's (Tommy Petersen) mom committed suicide when he was 13. He went to live in the Philippines with his disinterested but ultimately game, alcoholic sailor dad, a Navy boatswain's mate at U.S. Naval Base Subic Bay. A motherless, latch-key military brat, Zack psychically picks up his father's emotional unavailability by osmosis, along with a disregard and mistrust of women born of growing up around hookers. He also gains street-fighting prowess, probably something close to a 2nd Degree black belt in karate.

After college, Zack sets his sights on Aviation Officer Candidate School (AOCS). He wants to fly jets, teasing his dad about trying to talk him out of it because dad doesn't want to have to salute his son in the future. Then, slapping a bandage over his eagle tattoo, Zack hops on his motorcycle and splits.

Officer Candidate School

Arriving at AOCS, Zack and his classmates are in for a rude awakening in the form of drill instructor Marine Gunnery Sgt. Emil Foley (Louis Gossett Jr. in an Oscar-winning role), probably the toughest military taskmaster to ever hit the silver screen. Gossett really put the classic, in-your-face, ego-destroying, military induction scene on the map: "Where ya been all your lives?! Listenin' to Mick Jagger music and badmouthin' your country, I'll bet!!"

Trivia: Gosset was coached by R. Lee Er-

ney, the real-deal Marine drill instructor who, five years later, achieved fame for his role as Gunnery Sgt. Hartman in the 1987 film "Full Metal Jacket," when he immortalized that same type of induction scene all over again, taking it up a notch since he didn't really have to act it.

Sgt. Foley warns the men about the so-called Puget Sound Debs, the local girls from across the bay whose primary goal in life is to snag a naval aviator and have him basically airlift her out the mind-numbing paper factory work she'll otherwise be slave to till her dying day. Foley furthermore warns the men that these girls will blatantly lie about being pregnant and easily go as far as neglecting their birth control in order to trap an officer candidate.

The best (and incredibly apropos) description of the type of factory work depicted in the movie is by singer-songwriter James Taylor in his song "The Millworker." His lyrics provide a better understanding of the motivation and sometimes devious behavior of the Puget Sound Debs.

‘The Millworker’

... My father was a farmer
And I his only daughter
Took up with a no good mill-working man
From Massachusetts
Who dies from too much whiskey
And leaves me these three faces to feed

Millwork ain't easy
Millwork ain't hard
Millwork, it ain't nothing
But an awful boring job
I'm waiting for a daydream
To take me through the morning
And put me in my coffee break
Where I can have a sandwich
And remember ...

It'll be me and my machine
For the rest of the morning
And the rest of the afternoon, gone
For the rest of my life."

Zack soon becomes best buds with fellow alpha Sid Worley (David Keith), a legacy candidate from Oklahoma. Then, at a Navy Ball, they meet two paper factory workers: Paula Pokrifki (Debra Winger) and Lynette Pomeroy (Lisa Blount). Sid, the more forward of the two, asks Lynette to dance, leaving Zack to pair up with Paula.

Learning Teamwork

When Sgt. Foley figures out that Zack has a surreptitious side gig selling preshined shoes and belt buckles to desperate classmates and is not a team player, he creates a mini-version of Navy SEAL Hell Week, just for Zack. Foley destroys him with face-in-the-mud pushups and water-hose-in-the-face jumping jacks, nonstop, all weekend long, to get him to quit the program.



Paula Pokrifki (Debra Winger) has her factory shift gloriously cut short, forever, by Zack Mayo (Richard Gere), in "An Officer and a Gentleman."

Zack Mayo goes from a self-centered, suspicious, mean, cutthroat, mercenary user of others for his own ends, to a team player

Sid and Lynette

Meanwhile, Lynette's been hinting to Sid that she might be pregnant with his child. After experiencing a claustrophobic anxiety attack during a high-altitude simulation in a pressure chamber, Sid comes to the realization that he's been trying to be a pilot out of a sense of shame and obligation, being forever the lesser son as compared to his dead brother, in his father's eyes. Sid quits the program and heads to Lynette's house to propose. Tragedy ensues, which I won't spoil.

Zack and Paula

Ensign Zack Mayo, showing mental toughness in Foley's weekend beat-down, and demonstrating that he's learned teamwork and how to put others' needs before his own, is finally commissioned into the Navy with his graduating class. He now has orders to undertake flight training. He'd thought that he'd made a clean break with Paula, but his heart has other plans. He heads to the paper factory, which results in the scene for which this movie is known; the same scene inspired the ending of "Pretty Woman."

From Anti-Hero to Officer and Gentleman

Lou Gossett Jr., playing his role with incredible élan and authority, does such a fine job fine-tuning the line between his professional standards and his personal emotions that the performance absolutely deserved its Academy Award.

The one thing that's really dated in the movie are the fight scenes. They were absolutely electrifying in '82, since Bruce Lee was still fresh in everyone's minds and martial arts were still fairly exotic. Now, with mixed martial arts having been a staple of sports and entertainment since the first Ultimate Fighting Championship bout in 1993, Gere's fight scenes look quaint and even somewhat amusing.

The fetching Lisa Blount plays a mash-up of Cinderella's ugly sisters and evil stepmom; she's got all of the deviousness and entitlement, but none of the physical unattractiveness. Debra Winger's Deb, Paula, is the Cinderella character, who, by being emotionally available, nurturing, sweet, nonvindictive, and committed to complete honesty, is rescued by the prince. Which is incredibly satisfying.

What's just as satisfying and inspiring (since, after all, it's the main course of the movie) is watching Zack's transformation. He goes from a self-centered, suspicious, mean, cutthroat, mercenary user of others for his own ends, to a team player who can demonstrate loyalty (to Sid) and gratitude (to Sgt. Foley), and who's learned to honor, cherish, and accept the love of a woman and to recognize a good thing when he sees it.

The movie demonstrates that grace and compassion can, sometimes, arrive unexpectedly and raise one out of dire and depressing life circumstances—for both Zack and Paula.



Zack Mayo (Richard Gere) and drill instructor Marine Gunnery Sgt. Emil Foley (Louis Gossett Jr.) in a mini-Hell Week.



Lynette Pomeroy (Lisa Blount, foreground) a long-term paper factory employee on her coffee break.



Zack Mayo (Richard Gere, L) and Sid Worley (Keith David) scope out the possibilities at the Navy Ball.

REACHING WITHIN: WHAT TRADITIONAL ART OFFERS THE HEART

The Grass Is Not Always Greener: 'The Sword of Damocles'



"The Sword of Damocles," 1812, by Richard Westall. Oil on canvas, 51 3/16 inches by 40 9/16 inches. Ackland Art Museum, North Carolina.

ERIC BESS

The "Sword of Damocles" is a moral tale that comes from the Roman scholar Cicero. Damocles was a servant to a fourth- and fifth-century king named Dionysius II. Dionysius II was a miserable king who ruled his empire with a cold heart, making many enemies in the process. He was always afraid of being assassinated, and because of this, he surrounded his abode with a moat. He even went as far as to let only his daughters trim his beard.

Once, a court servant and flatterer named Damocles annoyed the king with his compliments. Damocles told the king that he must have one of the most amazing and pleasurable lives. Frustrated with Damocles's naivete, Dionysius II responded: "Since this life delights you, do you wish to taste it yourself and make a trial of my good fortune?"

Of course, Damocles was astonished at the king's response and immediately accepted his proposal. At first, Dionysius II sat Damocles on a golden couch and had servants wait on him like he was king. Damocles was treated to the best food, drink, and pleasures of a king's life.

As soon as Damocles was beginning to enjoy his new life of luxury, though, he saw that he was threatened by a sword hanging from the ceiling. Above Damocles's head, Dionysius II had suspended by a single strand of horse's hair an extremely sharp sword.

Keeping a watchful eye on the sword, Damocles could no longer enjoy the luxuries around him. It wasn't long before he asked if the king would excuse him from his newfound fortune.

Richard Westall's 'The Sword of Damocles'

Richard Westall, the 18th- and 19th-century English painter and drawing master for Queen Victoria, painted a great scene depicting the climactic moment in the story.

The focal point of the painting is King Dionysius II, who, dressed in a red robe, stands in the middle of the composition. One of his hands rests on what appears to be a scepter, and the other hand gestures toward the hanging sword at the upper left of the composition.

The sword leads our eyes to Damocles, whom Dionysius II watches. Damocles is dressed in ornate clothing like a king, sits on a golden throne, and reaches for a glass of wine presented to him by a maidservant. He has just noticed the sword hanging above his head as he reaches for the glass.

In the foreground is a wreath of flowers and a scepter. It looks as if Damocles once donned the wreath and held the scepter, both of which likely fell as he looked up at the sword.

Damocles is surrounded by luxury. There are beautiful dishes, golden furniture, and ornate artworks around him. There's fruit on the table beside him, and other maidservants wait to bring him a dish. Women in the background on the left side of the composition hold musical instruments, and we can assume that they were playing for Damocles. In the background to the right, an older man and a soldier are watching the scene unfold.

The Grass Is Not Always Greener

Westall depicts Damocles at the moment he realizes that the grass is not always greener on the other side of the fence.

Damocles had believed that the king's life was more pleasurable than his own. It was only upon experiencing the difficulties of the king's life that he came to appreciate his own, which came with its own comforts.

I think Dionysius II gestures toward the sword not only to prove his point that being a king is not as pleasurable as Damocles thinks, but also to be understood. Though a coldhearted king, Dionysius II provides Damocles with a lesson in compassion: Even a king like Dionysius II wants someone to understand him and consider his difficulties.

It took Damocles's confronting his potential death for him to appreciate his life.

Sometimes, we see people who seemingly live the good life and who have all of the things that we want. We want that type of life, too. But we might fail to really think about what they went through to achieve that type of life; we might fail to understand their suffering.

As human beings, everyone suffers, and no one is above receiving compassion; the rich, the powerful, the famous, and the royal all wish to be understood.

With that said, the painting offers another nugget of wisdom: All of the things that

we think we need to make our lives more pleasurable are ephemeral.

Damocles realizes that his recently acquired pleasures are worthless when his potential death is on the horizon. He can't even look at the wine for which his hand reaches, and he doesn't realize that his flower wreath has fallen off his head or that the music has stopped. All of the pleasures around him are unimportant compared to that hanging sword.

We can't take any of our material possessions, pleasures, fame, or power with us when we die. Maybe it's wise to take these things a little more lightly in our day-to-day lives. It took Damocles's confronting his potential death for him to appreciate his life and to no longer think that the grass is greener elsewhere. Hopefully, we don't need such extreme measures to have deep gratitude for our own lives.

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 our 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).

MUSIC

The Musical Leaves of Autumn: A Short Playlist

MICHAEL KUREK

The changing seasons of the year have always inspired artists, just as they tend to refresh us all. In music, the seasons have inspired great popular songs and classical compositions alike. As far as the classical composers, Antonio Vivaldi, Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky, Joseph Haydn, Alexander Glazunov, Vaughan Williams, and several modern composers titled one of their compositions "The Seasons," or "The Four Seasons," or some other variant.

For now, let us consider a handful of popular and classical compositions devoted to autumn, each as differently hued as the season's leaves.

'Autumn Leaves' by Jozsef Kozma

It's hard to think of a more poignant popular ballad than "Autumn Leaves," whose first version was in French ("Les Feuilles Mortes"). Hungarian composer Jozsef Kozma (1905-1969) wrote it in 1945 after moving to France in the 1930s. During World War II, he was put under house arrest by the Nazis near the Mediterranean coast of France and forbidden to compose, but he enjoyed many musical successes in France thereafter, including this song.

New lyrics in English were soon written by the great American lyricist and songwriter Johnny Mercer, and "Autumn Leaves" had its first American recording, sung by Jo Stafford, in 1950. Mercer's version and the instrumental version together went on to be recorded over a thousand times, including versions by all the big-name singers and jazz players of the day. Roger Williams had the very first No. 1 hit for a piano solo on the pop charts with his fluttering arrangement of it in 1955.

The minor key of this beautiful song well suits its nostalgic lyrics: "Since you went away the days grow long/ And soon I'll hear old winter's song/ But I miss you most of all my darling/ When autumn leaves start to fall." Those unfamiliar with this song may want to begin with a classic version by Ella Fitzgerald or Frank Sinatra, but those who already love it will find a beautifully fresh arrangement for acoustic guitar and voice by Eva Cassidy.

'Autumn' From 'The Four Seasons' by Antonio Vivaldi

More people may have heard the popular concertos titled "The Four Seasons," published in 1725, by Antonio Vivaldi (1678-1741) than know their titles, so often have they been heard in movies, on TV, and at weddings. Vivaldi, an Italian Baroque contemporary of J.S. Bach, wrote these four concertos, each in three movements and named after a season of the year.

Vivaldi conceived them as depictions of landscape paintings by Marco Ricci and then wrote a sonnet himself for each movement. Phrases from these poems are peppered through the margins of the scores, in places where the music attempts to sound like what is described. This is one of the very earliest and most famous examples of "program music" (a term coined a century later), that is, music depicting a specific story.

In the case of the third concerto, "Autumn," the three movements (fast-slow-fast) portray a harvest Bacchanalia, a peaceful sleep, and a rousing hunt complete with hounds, guns, and horns.



PUBLIC DOMAIN

Let us consider a handful of popular and classical compositions devoted to autumn.

For more arts and culture articles, visit TheEpochTimes.com



CAT RODNEY/THE EPOCH TIMES

Enjoy music to match the autumn landscape.



PD-US



HULTON ARCHIVE/GETTY IMAGES

(Left) American jazz clarinetist and band leader Woody Herman, circa 1943.

American jazz and pop vocalist Jo Stafford, here circa 1945, was the first to record Jozsef Kozma's "Autumn Leaves."

'Autumn in New York' by Vernon Duke

This nostalgic and poetic song with its equally exquisite melody is especially loved by New Yorkers and fans of that city, which is fondly idealized. It was penned by songwriter Vernon Duke (1903-1969) in Westport, Connecticut, in the summer of 1934. This followed his similar hit, "April in Paris" of 1933.

Duke's autumnal song was not written for a show but made it into one called "Thumbs Up!" that ran for five months in 1935. Otherwise, it has stood the test of time well on its own. While the song versions by Frank Sinatra, Billie Holiday, and (as a duet) by Ella Fitzgerald and Louis Armstrong remain classics, "Autumn in New York" has also been a popular instrumental jazz classic, recorded by such notables as Charlie Parker, Stan Kenton, and Bill Evans.

'Autumn' From 'The Seasons' by Alexander Glazunov

While we have seen that some autumnal music has a pensive tone, the take on the season by Alexander Glazunov (1865-1936) begins quite the opposite—as an exuberant explosion of riotous color. His ballet "The Seasons, Op. 67," dating from the end of the 19th century and premiering in 1900 in St. Petersburg, Russia, is squarely in the Romantic style in the mold of Tchaikovsky and Alexander Borodin.

His vision of fall (in the ballet's Tableau 4) begins with a lively dance that fills the skies with cymbal-, triangle-, and tambourine-colored leaves. This is followed by a lovely, slow (Adagio) section whose

KEAN COLLECTION/GETTY IMAGES



tune may be familiar to some from its use in film and television in Canada and on the BBC. Finally, the work is rounded out with another colorful melody in moderate tempo, sure to please.

During the 20th century, Glazunov became a vocal opponent of modernist composers like Stravinsky, calling this kind of music "recherché cacophonists," meaning the product of scientific research in noise.

'Early Autumn' by Woody Herman

In 1949, the band leader Woody Herman (1913-1987) co-wrote the music for this song with his arranger, Ralph Burns, and recorded it successfully as an instrumental. Then in 1952, Herman asked Johnny Mercer to provide some lyrics, and even greater magic happened when the song was recorded by Jo Stafford, Ella Fitzgerald, Mel Tormé, Johnny Mathis, and more recently Diana Krall. Mercer's picturesquely and poetic lyrics sum up the feelings of the season that are often found in these and other songs about autumn.

"When an early autumn walks the land and chills the breeze
And touches with her hand the summer trees,
Perhaps you'll understand what memories I own.
There's a dance pavilion in the rain all shuttered down,
A winding country lane all russet brown,
A frosty window pane shows me a town grown lonely.
That spring of ours that started so April-hearted,
Seemed made for just a boy and girl.
I never dreamed, did you, any fall would come in view
So early, early.
Darling if you care, please, let me know,
I'll meet you anywhere, I miss you so.
Let's never have to share another early autumn."

All of these recordings can be found streaming at no cost on the internet.

American composer Michael Kurek is the composer of the Billboard No. 1 classical album "The Sea Knows." The winner of numerous composition awards, including the prestigious Academy Award in Music from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, he has served on the Nominations Committee of the Recording Academy for the classical Grammy Awards. He is a professor emeritus of composition at Vanderbilt University. For more information and music, visit MichaelKurek.com

(Left) Most will be familiar with Antonio Vivaldi's "Four Seasons." A portrait generally believed to be of Vivaldi, circa 1723.

(Right) Russian composer Alexander Glazunov (1865-1936), circa 1900.

FILM REVIEW

Jessica Chastain Gives an Acting Clinic

MICHAEL CLARK

Given Hollywood's dismal track record when it comes to the unbiased portrayal of organized religion, it's a near-miracle that the content found in "The Eyes of Tammy Faye" is so clear-eyed and nonjudgmental. While many of the characters in the film "spreading God's word" are dutifully and rightfully hung out to dry, religion itself emerges largely unscathed.

As much of an American 1980s icon as Ronald Reagan, Madonna, Michael Jackson, and Harrison Ford, Tammy Faye Bakker (Jessica Chastain)—for good and bad—became the face of televangelism and for the entirety of her tumultuous career was regarded as an overly made-up, largely talentless Pollyanna.

It didn't help that she was married to Jim Bakker (Andrew Garfield), a lowly snake-oil huckster and one of the most corrupt men to ever call himself a preacher.

Born and raised in Minnesota, Tammy Faye had "the calling" from an early age. Despite the odd and relentless discouragement from her mother, Rachel (a sublime Cherry Jones), Tammy Faye was determined to dedicate her life to God and found a welcomed ally in Jim.

After meeting at a Bible class, the pair became inseparable and were quickly married, much to Rachel's chagrin. Not exactly an "A-type" personality, the frequently aloof Jim wisely recognized the power of Tammy Faye's unadulterated enthusiasm and viewed her as little more than a stage prop in achieving his lofty financial goals.

Tammy Faye Never Loses Her Calling

While Jim went through the motions on the pulpit, Tammy Faye was working the crowd and passing the metaphorical collection plate via a bank of blue touch-tone phones. The more Tammy Faye appeared on-screen, the fatter the Bakker coffers would become.

Using Tammy Faye worked in another way for Jim. Anytime his misdeeds came to a head—which was often—he'd trot out Tammy Faye to increase donations while he played the part of an aw-shucks supportive partner.

To the filmmakers' credit, screenwriter Abe Silvia (adapting the 2000 documentary film of the same name by Fenton Bailey and Ran-



Andrew Garfield as Jim Bakker and Jessica Chastain as Tammy Faye Bakker in "The Eyes of Tammy Faye."

dy Barbato) and director Michael Showalter don't let Tammy Faye off the hook, but not in a manner most would expect. After many years in the limelight and having grown accustomed to the nonstop adulation, Tammy Faye eventually became a somewhat willing participant in the perpetuation of the ruse. However, while she certainly enjoyed the spoils of the lavish lifestyle, she never lost sight of her original mission: doing God's work and spreading the gospel.

And that's the rub.

Tammy Faye often viewed her part in the enterprise as a required inconvenience. She knew that money kept the PTL (Praise the Lord) juggernaut humming along. Perhaps recognizing her financial importance to PTL, Tammy knew she could broach subjects and embrace individuals that didn't fit conveniently underneath the traditional WASP umbrella. Her subscription to the ages-old concept of "hate-the-sin-love-the-sinner" flew directly in the face of every teleministry and megachurch of the time and always kept her on their fringe.

God seemed to be a pesky afterthought for Jim and an entity simply there to cover his mounting legal bills. He went as far as to suggest that his followers would meet dubious spiritual and possible physical fates if they didn't pledge ever more increasing amounts of money to his church. This "fear-of-God" method of religious extortion was

especially deplorable and was akin to mobsters demanding protection money.

Chastain Delivers

An actress of incredible range and immense talent, Chastain has stated recently that this was the role she was born to play, and after watching the film, it's easy to understand her position. Playing Tammy Faye from her teens through her 60s, Chastain is charged with donning dozens of body types, wardrobes, wigs, makeup, and psychological pathos—all while maintaining some semblance of consistency, believability, and conviction.

While exterior embellishments certainly aid any performer in their quest to capture the essence of a well-known public figure, nothing can provide a substitute for nuance or variety. And on that level, Chastain completely owns the film.

Garfield and Vincent D'Onofrio (as Jerry Falwell) both turn in excellent, measured performances, yet despite all of their best efforts, they still come up comparatively short when sharing screen time with the force of nature that is Chastain.

To label what Chastain has done here as career defining would be an understatement. This is a performer whose output in the years between 2010 through 2017 would be, for any other actress, enough to fill a career and then some. It was during this time that Chastain appeared in no less than 26 features, including "The Debt," "The Tree of Life," "The Help," "Lawless," "Zero Dark Thirty," "Interstellar," and "The Martian," every one of them a gem covering a multitude of disciplines and genres.

With the awards season about to hit full stride, Chastain has quickly become the front-runner in virtually every critic's poll, which is all the more impressive for a performance in a movie receiving so many overall lukewarm reviews. The Oscar—and every other major industry accolade—is Chastain's for the asking.

Originally from Washington, D.C., Michael Clark has written for over 30 local and national film industry media outlets and is ranked in the top 10 of the Atlanta media marketplace. He co-founded the Atlanta Film Critics Circle in 2017 and is a regular contributor to the Shannon Burke Show on FloridaManRadio.com. Since 1995, Mr. Clark has written over 4,000 movie reviews and film-related articles.

Tammy Faye Bakker (Jessica Chastain) — for good and bad — became the face of televangelism.

'The Eyes of Tammy Faye'

Director
Michael Showalter

Starring
Jessica Chastain, Andrew Garfield, Vincent D'Onofrio, Cherry Jones, Sam Jaeger

Running Time
2 hours, 6 minutes

MPAA Rating
PG-13

Release Date
Sept. 17, 2021

★★★★★

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Puritang plant based Omega-3,6,7,9 is made from purslane and perilla seeds. It contains over **61%** concentration of omega-3 — the highest possible without chemical additives, not possible to derive naturally from fish or other plants, and this combined with omega-6,7,9, accounts for more than **90%** of product content!

- Raw material 100% natural, free from pollution
- The vegetable softgel is made of natural edible seaweed
- The original medicinal properties are preserved by applying patented method of extraction

Puritang Green Vegetable Omega 3, 6, 7, 9 *Inspired by Nature. Made from the Heart.*

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