

THE EPOCH TIMES

ARTS & CULTURE

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"The Fall of the Rebel Angels," before 1685, by Charles Le Brun. Oil on canvas. On loan from the Musée National du Château in Versailles.

FINE ARTS

The Unacknowledged Genius: The 17th-Century French Artist Charles Le Brun

JOHANNA SCHWAIGER

The question pulls at the mind as tight as a stretched canvas: Given his legacy as an exceptional painter, art theorist, and founding member of the French Royal Academy of Painting and Sculpture, why is Charles Le Brun (1619–1690) not given attention on par with Nicolas Poussin or Peter Paul Rubens?

Anyone in love with the rich paintings of Baroque art will inevitably engage with its

Looking up into the worlds he created, we see glimpses of genius.

grand masters such as Poussin, Rubens, or Anthony van Dyck. Vast numbers of exhibitions, publications, and even films have shaped our perception of biblical and mythological scenes, further branding these scenes into our collective consciousness.

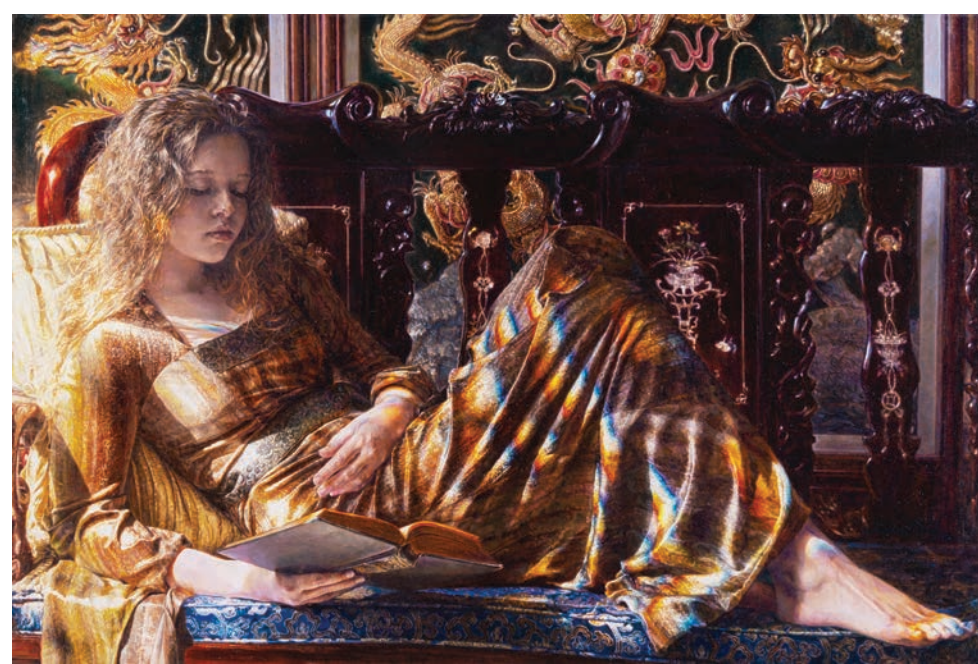
But what about the influential powerhouse of the Baroque era: Le Brun?

Louis XIV and the Palace of Versailles
Although the Baroque style originated in Italy, it expanded west and soon dominated the French court, centered at the palace of

Versailles. The grandeur of the palace itself also fills volumes of books, with no name more mentioned than Louis XIV.

Louis XIV was no ordinary king. His entire life revolved heavily around the classic arts. For example, he was essential as one of the four people to have paved the way for French ballet. In fact, Louis appeared on stage in 1653 as the sun god Apollo, and this event led to the coining of his nickname the Sun King.

Continued on Page 4



Ying and Yang by Sandra Kuck

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Although there is a danger in looking at the past through rose-colored glasses, time travel through literature is often pleasurable.

The Future Dreamed, the Past Imagined: Time Traveling and Literature

JEFF MINICK

"I'm gonna build a time machine So I can go back and make the scene I'm gonna make some time with my Egyptian Queen In my little old time machine."

Those lyrics from the 1960 hit song "Time Machine," performed by Dante & the Evergreens, are just the tip of the proverbial iceberg when it comes to humankind's fascination with time travel.

Hollywood has pumped out dozens of movies, like "Back to the Future," "Kate & Leopold," "Groundhog Day," and "Terminator," in which the protagonist travels back to the past or zips into the future.

The ancients told stories of human beings transported across the centuries. In the "Mahabharata," for example, the epic poem of ancient India, King Kakudmi takes his daughter to meet the creator god Brahma, seeking advice on arranging a suitable marriage for her. Though they are in that place with the Brahma for only a brief time, they find that meanwhile ages have passed on earth.

Fast-forward to the present day and Cedar Creek Battlefield near my Virginia home. Recently, I attended a reenactment on that battlefield. Spread in a valley below me were more than a hundred tents, all looking as they might have more than 150 years ago. A Union general's staff clattered by on horseback—among them, the young woman wearing her blue uniform was the only anomaly—and I chatted briefly with one of the officers who had copy-catted a member of Sheridan's staff. He had reproduced his uniform, Van Dyke beard, and hairstyle so closely that he might have been the major in the photograph he showed me.

These events honor our history, but they are also exercises in time travel.

Desktop Time Machines

In the last two centuries, writers as well have given us a veritable library of time travel adventures.

In Washington Irving's "Rip Van Winkle," a man under a spell sleeps for 20 years and wakes on the other side of the American Revolution. "A Christmas Carol" by Charles Dickens gives us the old miser Ebenezer Scrooge, whose journeys into the past and the future change his life forever. Mark Twain's "A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court" yanks a man of the 19th century back to the days of knights, tournaments, and superstition.

"Golf in the Year 2000" is J. McCullough's 1892 novel in which Alexander Gibson, inveterate golf player, is transported from 1892 to the year 2000, where he finds such marvels as bullet trains and digital-like watches. He also discovers that women have taken over the jobs of many men, leaving them to play golf full time. And then of course there's "The Time Machine," H.G. Wells's 1895 novel about a future in which human beings are divided into the gentle Eloi and violent Morlocks.

In the 20th century, writers contin-

ued to explore time travel, what the past meant and what the future might bring. Ray Bradbury's "A Sound of Thunder," a short story about hunters transported into the distant past to stalk and kill a Tyrannosaurus rex, raises the dire consequences of changing history. Audrey Niffenegger blends romance and science fiction in "The Time-Traveler's Wife," her story of a husband who involuntarily travels through time and his long-suffering and anxious wife. And then there's Jack Finney (1911–1995).

Writers as well have given us a veritable library of time travel adventures.

About Time

An advertising executive turned science fiction writer—his novel "The Body Snatchers" was a hit and was made into several films—Jack Finney is best known for his 1970 novel, "Time and Again."

It's 1970, and Si Morley, who works as an advertising illustrator, receives an invitation to join a secret government project aimed at sending human beings back in time. Morley passes muster with the project's directors and is then ensconced in The Dakota apartment building, with everything in his accommodations, including newspapers, from 1882. Through this device and hypnosis, Morley finds himself transported back to a New York in the late 19th century.

In his journeys back and forth through time, Si undergoes several adventures. He meets a blackmailer, narrowly escapes death from a catastrophic fire, makes numerous drawings of the people, streets, and buildings of the city—the book includes these along with period photographs—and falls in love

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In Jack Finney's novel "Time and Again," set in 1970, illustrator Si Morley travels back in time to 1882. This photograph of New York's The Dakota, built between 1880 and 1884, appears in the novel.

with Julia Charbonneau, the niece of the landlady of the boarding house where he rents a room.

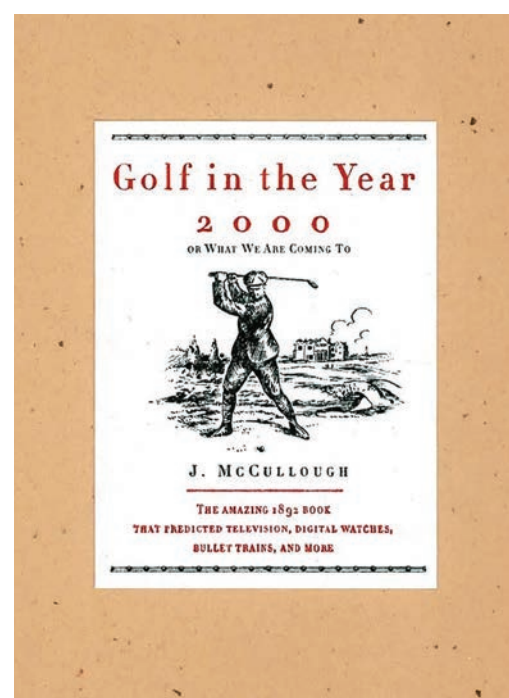
Eventually, he discovers that the government is less interested in exploring the past than in changing it. As one official explains to Si, "To correct mistakes of the past which have adversely affected the present for us—what an incredible opportunity."

The creator of this time travel project, Dr. Danziger, has resigned his post in protest against this evil project and pleads with Si to nullify these plans. Si then faces several dilemmas. Should he obey his superiors or follow Danziger's plea? If he chooses the latter, how will he kill the project? And should he stay in 1882 to be with Julia or return to his life in Manhattan?

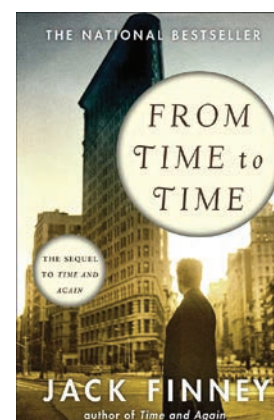
Magic

What is as impressive as the plot and the characters from "Time and Again" is Finney's meticulous re-creation of Old New York. From clothing to street cars, from his descriptions of buildings to haberdasheries, meals, and entertainment, he brings this city to life for readers as few novelists can.

And in the people themselves, Si finds a great deal of difference from our own time: "I'm certain it wasn't a matter of clothes, of makeup or its absence, or of hair styles. Today's faces are different; they are much more alike and



Jack Finney's "Time and Again," an illustrated novel, meticulously re-creates Old New York.



Finney's followup to "Time and Again" is his novel "From Time to Time."

J. McCullough's 1892 novel brings his protagonist to nearly our time.

much less alive. ... It was in the faces of women moving along the Ladies' Mile and into and out of those splendid lost stores. ... You could look at their eyes as they passed and see the pleasure they felt at being outdoors, in the winter, in a city they liked. ..."

What is amusing in this comparison between 1882 and 1970 is how much more we have changed in the last 50 years.

Speaking of the modern world, Si found, "Faces don't have that look now; when alone, they're blank, and closed in." What might he think today, when so many pedestrians are more isolated than ever, captive to their cellphones and earbuds?

In addition to "Time and Again," Finney wrote a sequel to that novel, "From Time to Time," and published a collection of short stories regarding time travel titled "About Time." In both books, as in "Time and Again," he displays a sentimental regard for the past. My personal favorite in "About Time" is "Where the Cluett's Are," in which Sam and Ellie Cluett build a house with plans from the early 1880s and then begin to live in it as if they were in the past. The story ends: "Ellie and Sam are living far back in the past; that's where they are. For their house is haunted by its old self. And its ghost has captured the Cluett's—rather easily; I think they were glad to surrender."

The Pitfalls of Nostalgia

There is a danger in looking at the past through rose-colored glasses, a temptation to which I and, I suspect, other readers as well fall prey. Yes, in so many ways life in Finney's 1882 was much simpler and less entangled with technology than our own, but would I want to live in a world without penicillin, hot showers, cars, and computers? Nope.

Edward Arlington Robinson begins "Miniver Cheevy" with these two verses:

Miniver Cheevy, child of scorn,
Grew lean while he assailed the seasons;

He wept that he was ever born,
And he had reasons.

Miniver loved the days of old
When swords were bright and steeds were prancing;
The vision of a warrior bold
Would set him dancing.

And Robinson ends with this observation:

Miniver Cheevy, born too late,
Scratched his head and kept on thinking;
Miniver coughed, and called it fate,
And kept on drinking.

We shouldn't wish to be a Miniver Cheevy.

Lessons and Pleasures

On the other hand, some researchers have found that a certain degree of nostalgia for our personal past can be beneficial, encouraging us in negative circumstances, increasing our sense of continuity with our younger selves, and pointing us with hope to the future.

The same is true when we read novels like "Time and Again" or watch films like "Kate and Leopold." Our ancestors and their ways, which sometimes seem as distant as that Egyptian Queen in the song "Time Machine," can offer us insights and wisdom if we have the ears to listen and the eyes to see.

Here's one such lesson about time from an American historian, Alice Morse Earle (1851–1911): "Yesterday is history. Tomorrow is a mystery. Today is a gift. That's why it is called the present." Sounds about right.

Jeff Minick has four children and a growing platoon of grandchildren. For 20 years, he taught history, literature, and Latin to seminars of homeschooling students in Asheville, N.C. He is the author of two novels, "Amanda Bell" and "Dust On Their Wings," and two works of non-fiction, "Learning As I Go" and "Movies Make The Man." Today, he lives and writes in Front Royal, Va. See JeffMinick.com to follow his blog.



A bronze statue of Rip Van Winkle in Irvington, N.Y. Washington Irving's folk story tells of a man who slept for 20 years and, in effect, traveled through time.

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FINE ARTS

The Unacknowledged Genius: The 17th-Century French Artist Charles Le Brun

Continued from B1

As for the art of painting, anyone who has visited the hallowed artistic halls of Versailles has surely been thunderstruck by the magnitude of the palace's frescoes. But visitors may be surprised to discover how little literature is available about the artist who created them.

The Genius of Charles Le Brun

Even photographs of Le Brun's paintings attest to the artist's genius. However, they hardly do justice to the awe-inspired walk through the Grand Gallery in Versailles.

Continued from Page 1 /ite viewers into naus that over an experience like none other. The decorative elements of the architecture merge seamlessly with the murals, which transport guests to glimpses of otherworldly, even celestial realms.

In the monumental work "The Fall of the Rebel Angels" at the Musée des Beaux-Arts de Dijon, Le Brun painted the scene from the Bible's book of Revelation. The painting shows triumphant angels surrounding Archangel Michael, who strikes rebellious angels, sending them swirling around the evil dragon and into the spiraling abyss.

The composition of the painting

The paintings tap into something more universally spiritual than society's ever-changing events.

leads the viewer from high contrasting colors of multfigurial masses toward the center of a bright open space, dramatically entangled with the dying body of the beast.

In effect, we are taken in and become part of the scene. We experience this overturning of evil and reconstruction of cosmic law as if it were unfolding in our very time and space.

We can observe the outstanding treatment of intertwined bodies falling into chaos, dramatically entangled with the dying body of the beast.

A more intimate scene, on display at the Louvre, depicts Le Brun's "The Sleeping Christ" (1655) in a masterfully arranged composition bathed in warm light. The sleeping Christ child resting in mother Mary's arms shows exceptional handling of body weight. The child is being soothed by the love of his mother and that of the surrounding figures. His marble-like appearance lays gently in an arrangement of red, blue, and white drapings, giving him an ethereal presence.

These examples give insight into the work of a genius capable of versatile techniques and subject matters, ranging from monumental, multfigurial dramas to intimate, emotional scenes executed with great mastery.

Why Is Charles Le Brun Forgotten?

Charles Le Brun, who acted as the court painter and oversaw numerous workshops, significantly impacted Louis XIV's endeavor to become the greatest art patron who ever lived.

Besides the incredible vast body of work the artist left behind, Le Brun's art theory shaped how art was taught academically all over Europe, finding its way into ateliers worldwide to this day.

Yet the last exhibition explicitly honoring Le Brun in Versailles was as far back as 1963. In English, there is only one biographical publication from 2016 by Wolf Burchard titled "The Sovereign Artist: Charles Le Brun and the Image of Louis XIV."

To answer why this genius is no longer celebrated, we need to understand how we mythologize artists and how we understand history. First, Charles Le Brun's promotion in 1664 to the position of First Painter to the King made him a dedicated and powerful man. Therefore, Le Brun's name is seldom mentioned outside of France because he is closely associated with the Sun King, and that name carries the political baggage of "absolute monarchy."

The term "absolute monarchy" later was stigmatized and used to ignite the French Revolution. With the fall of the regime, so fell the prospects and legacies of many professionals of the empire. The post-revolutionary stigma seems to have stuck with the artists behind the creation of Versailles and, above all, damaged the reputation of Le Brun.

When an artist simultaneously plays the role of a leader in his field, we seem to have been trained to doubt his artistic integrity. However, Le Brun was perfectly positioned and given free rein at the height of a flourishing art era to follow an established lineage of traditional craftsmanship. Therefore, he naturally aligned his vision with the king's grand endeavor.

The claim of art historian Anthony Blunt, who called Le Brun "a dictator of the arts in France" and therefore cast him as a second-rate artist, seems to rely on political association rather than a

Murals on the ceiling in the Hall of Mirrors at the Palace of Versailles.



PD-US

(Left) Self-portrait of Charles Le Brun, between 1651 and 1700. Oil on canvas. The Museums of the City of Paris.



PD-US

(Right) Portrait of Louis XIV, king of France, by Charles Le Brun. Palace of Versailles.



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(Above) "Everhard Jabach (1618–1695) and His Family," circa 1660, by Charles Le Brun. Oil on canvas. The Metropolitan Museum of Art.



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sincere evaluation of his art.

However, there seems to be more. Le Brun does not fit into the romanticized image of the ever-struggling artist who depends on the generosity of numerous patrons. And nothing in his biography reveals any scandalous stories that art historians could have used to embellish mystery surrounding the master's vita, such as is the case with Caravaggio or Bernini. Le Brun was honored rather than slighted in his own time.

"The Sleeping Christ," 1655, by Charles Le Brun. Oil on canvas; 34 1/4 inches by 46 1/2 inches. Musée du Louvre, Paris.

Touching Us Through Universals

What matters most in experiencing artwork in a meaningful way is through asking the question "How does the essence of the artwork affect me as a viewer?"

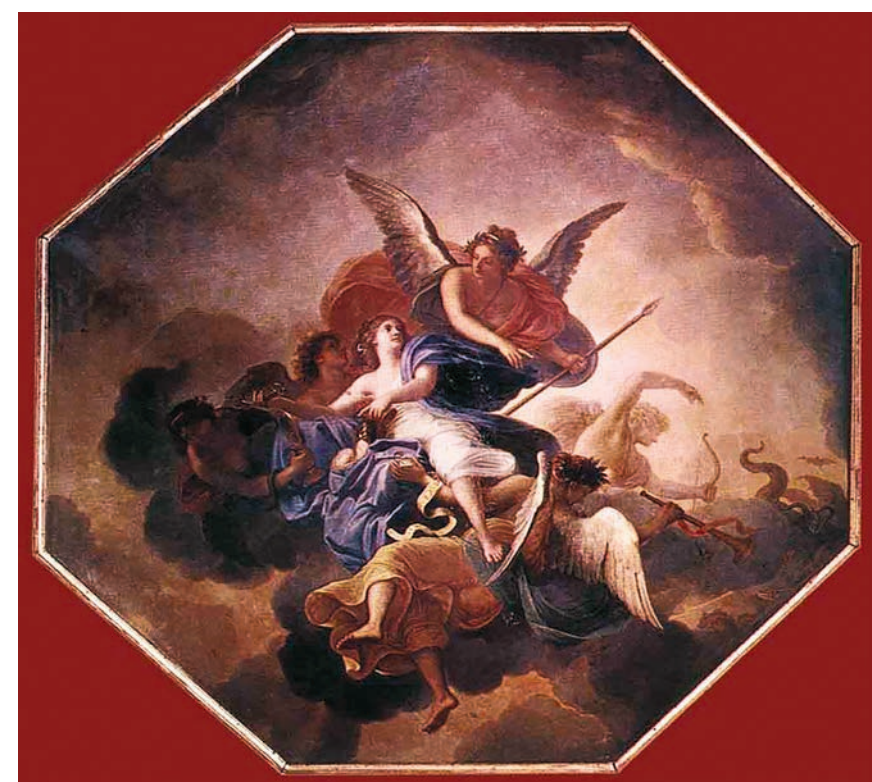
Charles Le Brun's works are not just paintings or murals. They reach deeper. Looking up into the worlds he created, we see glimpses of genius. They tap into something more universally spiritual than society's ever-changing events, which are forgotten in the noise of war and revolution.

As civilization has developed, sometimes true treasures disappear from our awareness. Yet it is only a matter of time before humanity, longing for inspiration, turns to look back and admire the many wondrous achievements that our civilization has to offer.

It's not even a matter of unearthing these treasures. All we have to do is keep our eyes and heart open and recognize when timeless beauty speaks.

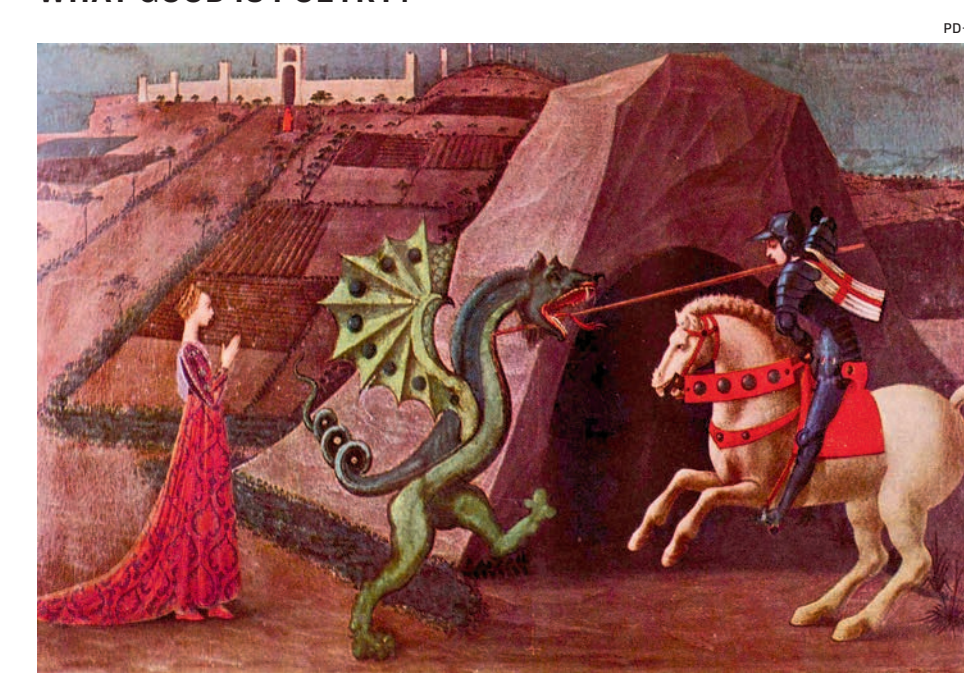
Johanna Schwaiger is a sculptor and program director at the New Masters Academy.

"The Triumph of Faith," 1658–1660, by Charles Le Brun. Art Renewal Center.



AP/WIDE

WHAT GOOD IS POETRY?



PD-US

Sometimes the nonsensical can illuminate profound truths, like the making of a hero or saint. "Saint George Slaying the Dragon," between 1456 and 1470, by Paolo Uccello. Musée Jacquemart-André.

The Noteworthy Nonsense of 'Jabberwocky'

SEAN FITZPATRICK

There exist some loose bits of lyrical nonsense so absurd that they become absolute. That is to say, there can be a foolishness so extreme

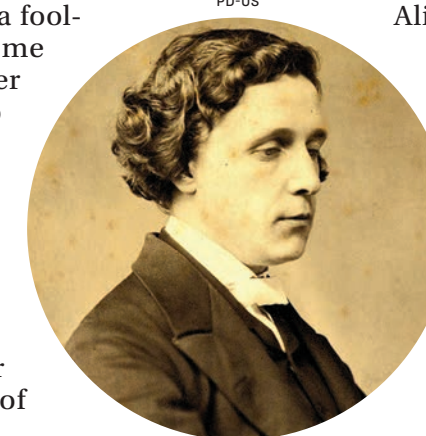
that it crosses over the equator into the gravity of philosophers, giving sages the task of meditating on owls and pussycats, or poring over the prattlings of Mother Goose instead of Aristotle.

And so, the silly and the serious need not be such strangers, for it is in the lightness of a somersault that the heaviest truths can sometimes find a comfortable tumbling down to earth, and that tripping triviality can somehow manage to plumb some of the depths of eternal profundity.

Such is the happy position of much of the nonsense in Lewis Carroll's works—or larks, as we should call them—with none so nonsensical and sublime as the eloquent jibber-jabber titled "Jabberwocky."

the metaphors in honor of the material, we mustn't dissect.

Let us, then, rely on our instincts and imaginations and say with head-scratching delight, as Alice said:



Photographic portrait of author Lewis Carroll.

"It seems very pretty ... but it's rather hard to understand!" (You see she didn't like to confess, even to herself, that she couldn't make it out at all.) "Somehow it seems to fill my head with ideas—only I don't exactly know what they are! However, somebody killed something: that's clear, at any rate—"

Somebody did kill something, indeed. That much is clear, and nothing needs further clarification, for in these dancing sounds truth leaps out. In "Jabberwocky" is embedded all the schemes and tropes and themes of any traditional epic, bearing all the elements that make literature lovely and living.

The silly and the serious need not be such strangers.

In "Jabberwocky" booms the perilous yet perfunctory quest to seek and slay a monster. It is a wild coming of age and a wacky coming into heroism. It exults in rustic goodness conquering outlandish evil. The burbling Jabberwock with eyes of flame is the dragon, the beast, the villain. Our beamish boy is Jason, he is Sigurd, he is Beowulf and Gilgamesh and St. George.

The neologisms, coinages, and verbal blendings of the poetry are more eloquent than the words they mimic and morph. And it took a bumbling, stolid mathematician-logician famed for writing farcical fiction—whose name, Charles Lutwidge Dodgson, stands on his head to become Lewis Carroll—to bring these senseless frivolities to sensible fruition.

There is something here lurking and laughing in "Jabberwocky" that strikes at the pure power of poetry. It can teach new languages to those with an ear to hear, a heart to thrill, and a snicker-snack" reason ready to draw the zigzags that connect the dazzling chaos of the stars. And it rejoices in the ingenuity to confound through the craziest of impossibilities in order to stand firm in the glories of common sense in the wild, wide world of uncommon nonsense.

Sean Fitzpatrick serves on the faculty of Gregory the Great Academy, a boarding school in Elmhurst, Pa., where he teaches humanities. His writings on education, literature, and culture have appeared in a number of journals, including *Crisis Magazine*, *Catholic Exchange*, and the *Imaginative Conservative*.

Tw'as brillig, and the slithy toves
Did gyre and gimble in the wabe:
All mimsy were the borogoves,
And the mome raths outrabe.
"Beware the Jabberwock, my son!
The jaws that bite, the claws that catch!
Beware the Jubjub bird, and shun
The frumious Bandersnatch!"
He took his vorpal sword in hand;
Long time the manxome foe he sought—
So rested he by the Tumtum tree
And stood awhile in thought.
And, as in uffish thought he stood,
The Jabberwock, with eyes of flame,
Came whiffling through the tulgey wood,
And burbled as it came!
One, two! One, two! And through and through
The vorpal blade went snicker-snack!
He left it dead, and with its head
He went galumphing back.
"And hast thou slain the Jabberwock?
Come to my arms, my beamish boy!
O frabjous day! Callooh! Callay!"
He chortled in his joy.
"Tw'as brillig, and the slithy toves
Did gyre and gimble in the wabe:
All mimsy were the borogoves,
And the mome raths outrabe.

Now, we could, as Alice did, apply to the venerable Humpty Dumpty to explain this particular and peculiar piece of poetry, for he claims to be able to explain every poem that has ever been invented—and a good many that haven't been invented yet—and he does a fine job translating, or untangling, the opening words in "Through the Looking Glass."

But words left alone almost have more meaning, or at least they are more meaningful. Like any murder mystery, the problem is always more intriguing than the solution. And to add a dash of Wordsworth and mix

French Courty Finesse in New York: 18th-Century Luxury Books

Exhibition: 'Bound for Versailles: The Jayne Wrightsman Bookbindings Collection' at The Morgan Library & Museum

LORRAINE FERRIER

In 1966, Vogue photographer Cecil Beaton captured renowned art collector and philanthropist Jayne Wrightsman's portrait. Just a year earlier, in 1965, Wrightsman had been added to the International Best Dressed List Hall of Fame. Fittingly, in the photograph, Wrightsman is pictured elegantly poised on a settee in her Versailles-esque New York apartment.

It was around 1950, in admiration of the art and interiors of 18th-century France, that Wrightsman and her husband, Charles, decided to decorate their homes in the French courtly fashion. They filled their homes with exquisite French paintings, sculptures, gilded furniture, and objets d'art—many once owned by kings, queens, dukes, and duchesses.

Among their displayed treasures, the Wrightsmans kept the most incredible book bindings, artworks in and of themselves and absolute monuments to fine French printing, illustration, and book binding. Mrs. Wrightsman was even admitted to The Roxburgh Club, an exclusive book and publishing society of only 40 international members.

The Wrightsmans interacted with their art and book collection in a unique way, explained The Morgan Library & Museum's associate curator of Printed Books & Bindings, John T. McQuillen, in a video. "They really lived with their collections in a way that most collectors do not."

McQuillen and his colleagues curated the Morgan's exhibition "Bound for Versailles: The Jayne Wrightsman Bookbindings Collection" to celebrate Wrightsman's bequest of books that were bound for the highest echelons of 18th-century French society. The exhibition highlights the importance of books in the French court and, in turn, showcases the virtuosity of the artists and artisans who made the opulent books, from their bindings to the engravings within. Visitors can meander their way through a series of rooms decorated with Wrightsman's lavish books, and furniture similar to pieces once found in the Wrightsmans' homes.

"As a whole, the collection highlights the best bookbinders of the era. It's not only the book, the binding itself, but the decoration applied. And these are the best examples of this really highly specific, specialized skill," Pine Tree Book conservation fellow Lydia Aikenhead says in a video.

The Book Collection

In 18th-century France, exquisitely decorated books were meant to be seen, while understated books with highly decorative spines were intended for bookshelf display. The ornamental patterns on the borders of book bindings were even reflected in the motifs on the palace's wood-paneled walls.

The opulent books in the Wrightsmans' collection combine the highly regarded arts of literature and engraving alongside the fine craftsmanship of luxury binding. Many of these books were once used to gain influence and express appreciation. Nobles gifted bound volumes to their supporters and retainers; and authors, keen to garner favor at court, often dedicated their books to nobles.

Courtly life and notable court figures and events were commemorated in some books. A rare example in the exhibition is the sole surviving copy of "The Princess of Crete," a music manuscript by court composer André Danican Philidor.

The exhibition highlights the importance of books in the French court.



The back cover of the "Royal Almanac, year M. DCC. LXV," 1765, bound for Pierre-Louis-Paul Randon de Boisset by binder Nicolas-Denis Derome. Cut binding in cream and black Morocco leather, with individual gilt tooling, and gold, silver, and red foil under mica.



The front cover of "David's Psalter," 1725, bound for Queen Marie Leszczynska by binder Jacques-Antoine Derome. Mosaic binding in cream, black, and red Morocco leather, with individual gilt tooling.

Group of seven French miniature books with elaborately decorated bindings, bound between 1774 and 1792.



Mrs. Jayne Wrightsman in the New York apartment, on Oct. 1, 1966. Photograph by Cecil Beaton, Vogue.

Engravings were particularly desirable. French fashion, architecture, and court spectacles were published in large-format volumes dedicated to illustrations alone. These publications were testimony to highly skilled engravers, such as father and son Charles-Nicolas Cochin the Elder and Charles-Nicolas Cochin the Younger. They could reproduce the subtle textures and shadings of drawings from great painters such as François Boucher and Jean-Baptiste Oudry.

Making Beautiful Books

In the 18th century, Paris was full of bookbinders' ateliers (workshops), where teams of skilled artisans worked together to create exuberant book bindings. Attributing book bindings to particular ateliers is problematic, however. Artisans rarely signed their work, and binding tools were often shared among family members.

Traditionally, armorials (heraldic arms) were prominently displayed on the front cover. A man's book was decorated with his armorial alone, while a woman's book cover would display her family armorial on the right and her husband's on the left.

The armorials were created with a variety of different tools to build up the design or they could be created using a single tool, a "plaque," an engraved plate that when used with a press, gold-stamps the covers in a single impression. Armorials could also be painted, rather than impressed into the leather.

Commonly, book artisans applied gold leaf to the book cover in a process called "gilt tooling," whereby gold leaf is laid on the cover and impressed into the leather by different tools, creating myriad patterns. The gilt-work process appears seamless, but there's immense skill and craftsmanship involved, Aikenhead says in a video.

Other embellishing techniques led to equally lavishly bound books. Artisans

created mosaic bindings, whereby contrasting colors or grains of leather were inlaid or overlaid on the leather book cover. For "inlay" mosaics, artisans cut a piece of leather from the book cover and inlaid a leather piece of the same size and thickness. For "onlay" mosaics, they added pieces of leather over the leather book cover to create a relief effect, similar to sculptural reliefs.

Some book covers were even more innovative: Pieces of leather were cut out, and gold and silver foil was impressed into the leather on a background of red foil. A protective layer of mica, which is a clear silica, was added on top of the reflective foil and painted decorations.

Artisans elaborately embellished every surface of a book, the spine, the page edges, including the inside cover. Lavish book linings or "doublures" were made of silk, vellum, leather, or gilt or marbled paper. Blue silk was a particular favorite.

Popular Books

In late 18th-century France, miniature books became popular gifts and fashionable accessories. Some of the tiny books even contained silk pockets or small mirrors.

To efficiently re-create and produce popular books in miniature, bookbinders streamlined the bookmaking process, creating a binding plaque.

Book designs ranged from simple to ornate, often echoing the opulent designs nobles owned. The small books were quick and inexpensive to make, and the production of pocket almanacs appealed to a new consumer keen to own these little, affordable luxuries.

The Morgan Library & Museum exhibition: "Bound for Versailles: The Jayne Wrightsman Bookbindings Collection" runs until Jan. 30, 2022. To find out more, visit TheMorgan.org

JANNY CHIU, 2021/THE MORGAN LIBRARY & MUSEUM



"The Princess of Crete," music manuscript, 1688, by composer André Danican Philidor.



ALL PHOTOS BY VERTICAL ENTERTAINMENT

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.

The fictitious Ivy League Belleston University varsity crew team, getting ready to try and upset Harvard's dominance, in "Heart of Champions."

FILM REVIEW

'Heart of Champions': A Perfectly Fine Rowing Movie for Young Athletes

MARK JACKSON

The collegiate rowing movie "Heart of Champions," currently in movie theaters, got destroyed immediately on Rotten Tomatoes by critics. It's a ridiculous skew—Critics: 18 percent, the People: 90 percent. Critics tend to be allergic to formulaic sports dramas with clichéd character types, such as heroes carrying secret burdens that need healing, or obstacles that need overcoming, in order to win the big game and show character growth.

"I'm more, 'So what?'" about this. The notion that "new and innovative" be synonymous with "good" when it comes to storytelling is overrated. There's a reason that young children want to hear "Little Red Riding Hood" 800 times and will correct your reading if you get one word of it wrong. So in terms of sports movies, the question of "Is it new and improved?" is much less important than "Is it boring?" I don't have a problem with this particular movie genre being somewhat clichéd. Why? Because these films are not really made for me.

"Heart of Champions," a sports movie about college kids, is for college kids who actually play sports. So, while certain storylines may be predictable to me, they're not necessarily predictable to 19-year-olds, and if it teaches them life lessons that I, in my elderhood, already happen to know—excellent. Sometimes the elders have to sacrifice the need to be continually surprised, so that the kids can learn the fundamentals. And in light of that, "Heart of Champions" is a perfectly fine, fun movie. A little overly long.

Crew

College crew teams (competitive rowing) are impressive; they're the ones up at dawn, working hard in the "tank." Crew is a tough sport. And like lacrosse in "Crooked Arrows," rowing crew is generally the province of former prep schoolers attending Ivy League colleges and universities. Does this privilege mean underprivileged moviegoers can't learn from this story? In a word, no.

Originally titled "Swing," "Heart of Champions" happens to be brought to you by ex-

ecutive producers Cameron Winklevoss and Tyler Winklevoss, who rowed for Harvard and went on to compete in the Olympics. It's highly likely that these are the self-same Winklevoss twins who invented Facebook and had it stolen out from under their noses by Harvard classmate Mark Zuckerberg, the story of which is related in "The Social Network."

Winklevoss production gives street cred to the crew jargon. Crew teams are recognizable by their developed pulling muscles: lats, biceps, and forearms. But their lesser-known, diminutive teammate—the boat's jockey, as it were—who oversees the eight tall, oar-hauling muscleheads is known as the "coxswain."

In "Heart of Champions" we're also introduced to the positions of the "stroke," the "seven," and what "catching a crab" means: "To fail to clear the water on the recovery stroke accidentally, thereby unbalancing the boat or impeding its movement."

You'll learn about the concept of "swing" in crew: when the team shifts into an extra-sensory mode and syncs and breathes as one, altering time and space. (Space in this case usually means blowing the doors off the competition.) You'll appreciate how insanely tricky it is to balance these thin skulls, and see what the need to dig deep and deliver on the coxswain's demand for a "power 10" is about. You'll learn that a crew race is probably the most intensely painful lactic acid "burn" in all of sports. What else? You'll learn about the crew tradition of the loser team surrendering their collective jerseys to the winners (and being roundly verbally shamed).

The Story

Alex (Alexander Ludwig of "The Hunger Games") is the rich-kid crew member whose dad (David James Elliott) is doing major string-pulling to make sure his kid will glorify him by making the 2000 U.S. Olympic rowing team. His crew-captaining son is an entitled, teammate-bullying, ex-girlfriend-stalking, perennially-placing-blame-elsewhere brat.

John (Alex MacNicol) is the teammate who's got it all. He's a nice guy and a natural leader. Former alumnus-turned-new-crew-coach Jack Murphy (Michael Shannon) is tempted to yank Alex's captain status and give it to John. John could conceivably lead the team in their attempt to beat Harvard, but John's got a lurking Achilles heel named alcohol.

Movie poster for "Heart of Champions."



John (Alex MacNicol, L) and Alex (Alexander Ludwig) are competitive crew team captains.



Chris (Charles Melton) is a talented rower with demons to conquer.

Chris ("Riverdale" alum Charles Melton) plays a transfer student from the University of Wisconsin. He's got life-destroying grief that he's carrying around. He must be wheeled and cajoled to go drinking with the boys. He is aloof. He hates rowing but is a rowing phenom nonetheless.

It's the Coach's Show

Yup, pretty clichéd so far, rather paint-by-numbers, but the saving grace here is coach Jack Murphy, the new, ex-Army, no-nonsense coach of the fictitious Belleston University, who turns the boys' 1999 crew season into a powerful life lesson.

Shannon's a natural in this sort of role, being always imminently watchable due to having a quiet (and sometimes not so quiet) intensity that comes across as bordering on mentally unhinged. You can't look away. The boys certainly can't. "Why are you here?" he wants to know during the first practice and after seeing the team lose a sizeable lead in national title race and get trounced. "No man is an island!" hollers the coach.

This is a movie about teamwork, and crew requires more precision teamwork than just about any sport, except maybe synchronized swimming. Rowing an eight-person scull competitively requires exquisite balance, massive stamina, cardio, coordination, and above all—cooperation. One self-centered individual's desire to win above all else can scuttle a boat. Which is why the line "Leadership is measured in the hearts of those who follow" will resonate with you long after the movie, especially with Shannon delivering it.

Other Stuff

In terms of the inevitable campus romances, Ash Santos, who plays Chris's girlfriend Nisha, has a bit of a star-is-born presence. David James Elliott as Alex's father—also responsible for recruiting Coach Murphy—usually plays nice guys and here goes against type to good effect.

A few movies have been made about crew—"A Most Beautiful Thing" and "Oxford Blues"—but the stars have always been team members and not the coach. A movie that fleshed out the main team characters more would have been top-notch, but ultimately, it's about the character arc: Did the bad character improve? Was there a raising of the moral standard? Yes? And was it boring? No? Then it's a good movie. It's not rocket science. Director Michael Mailer isn't trying to challenge Ingmar Bergman or Francis Ford Coppola here; it's a good enough movie to have a positive effect on young viewers. Watching a scull move across the water in perfect synchronicity is, as the popular saying goes these days, a "curiously satisfying experience."

My personal takeaway: When the disgruntled Chris, who thinks rowing is merely mathematical, claims that his teammates are just slowing him down, coach Murphy has all Chris's boatmates jump in the river and swim to shore. "OK row the boat!" One man floundering in an eight-man scull gives a fun new slant to the lyric "Michael row the boat ashore."

One last thing—another way of thinking about "clichés" is "tried and true." Would you really want your mom fiddling all the time with the tasty-tasty-tasty traditional Thanksgiving pumpkin pie recipe she got from your grandmother? Or would you want it exactly the same way every year?

'Heart of Champions'

Director: Michael Mailer

Starring: Michael Shannon, Alexander Ludwig, Alex MacNicol, Lance E. Nichols, Lilly Krug, Andrew Creer, Ash Santos, David James Elliott

Running Time: 1 hour, 59 minutes

MPAA Rating: PG-13

Release Date: Oct. 29, 2021



Army veteran and coach Jack Murphy (Michael Shannon, front C) has an arrogant team member try to row the boat by himself, while his teammates enjoy the result.

DEAR NEXT GENERATION

Are You 'Real' or Are You a 'Fake'?

➔ Advice from our readers to our young people

I was born in 1960 and remember the rebellion against authority that spawned from the Vietnam War. That was an unsettled time when people turned away from God and their parents, grandparents, teachers, and governing authorities. The respect for family and moral values was forever changed.

Since that time, television, computers, the internet, and social media have poisoned the American family, which is now hanging on only by the prayers of the last godly generation, my parents, who are in their 80s. How did this happen so fast? Well, we are all to blame. The internet has globally broadened our reach, and local communities are no longer enough validation for young people. Teenagers look to global peer groups of people they will never meet and who may not even be real.

Now, children at the age of 2 are given cellphones for entertainment and exposure to dangerous images, even worse, predators. Dads and moms both work, and the children grow up seeing and participating in activities that are damaging to their young undeveloped brains. Children, in an effort to please, lie to their parents daily, make up stories to tell their friends and teachers, and thus begins the world of fantasy over reality. The children never really learn to cope.

When my daughter was in high school, she asked me how to find a “real” friend; everyone seemed to be acting. I told her to look for friends who tell the truth, in any situation. If they are honest, they are worth having as a friend. She admitted that would not be easy. I remember when telling a lie was catastrophic and left a person feeling guilty and ashamed. The only way to feel better was to ask for God's forgiveness and undo the lie by telling everyone the truth, even if it hurt. The healing began with repentance to God. No one wants to carry guilt, shame, or anger; these things steal our joy and destroy our lives. God is grooming us for better things. Sure, we will make mistakes, look at King David, not so perfect was he, but David loved God with all his heart and God loved him back tenfold.

Now we are getting to the crux of the matter. Are you “real” or are you a “fake”? To stand up for what is true is not always easy



Getting work experience while still young—under 18—offers many lessons.

ELENA EFMIMOVA/SHUTTERSTOCK

“**Strive unceasingly to be the person that your friends and family automatically think of when they need honest and effective help.**”

Mick Wenlock, Colorado

but it is essential to creating a generation of people who value honesty and integrity. Integrity is earned, not bought or fake.

The rebellion in the '60s is minor compared to today's racial division and overreaching by the government on our personal freedoms. We are essentially attacking each other within our own borders, and making up stories to justify our actions as we go. If you watch the news or social media and are confused about the truth, you are not alone. We are losing our jobs, losing our schools, and losing our liberties, with no real justification.

Well, the good news is, things are so unsettled that people are turning back to God for truth. During this force down, for lack of a better term, our eyes are being opened. America needs God. Be the generation that repents to God to save our country. We need God to forgive our sins, restore our path, and make America great again!

—Laura Volkman, Washington

Be willing to admit when you have made a mistake and offer a sincere apology to anyone who was damaged by your actions. Not an apology that starts “If I have” but a straightforward apology and, where possible, make amends.

Refuse to be driven or inspired by the baying mob. Take the time you need to make your own decision based on your observances and knowledge of what is good. Then stand by your decision, even if you are the only one who does.

Learn what logical fallacies are and how to spot them.

Strive unceasingly to be the person that your friends and family automatically think of when they need honest and effective help.

—Mick Wenlock, Colorado

Don't wait until you are 18 to experience the working world. In my early teens in the late '60s, my friend and I shoveled snow from driveways during one snowy winter. It all went well each time until one homeowner reneged on the \$4 dollar price that was agreed upon to shovel his driveway from garage doors to the road. My friend was the price negotiator and he successfully held the scowllow to the terms of the agreed price. These working skills are better learned at a young age, so as to be ahead of the curve at age 18.

My father did not ask me if I wanted a paper route. At age 12, he told me I was going to have a paper route. And so I delivered an average of 75 newspapers a day, six days a week plus Saturday collections for over four years. I made only two cents a newspaper. But Dad made sure I saved most of it in the bank and that two cents a newspaper eventually bought my first car and the insurance to drive it.

Don't be like the local high school students that I see now in my neighborhood. They and their parents stand at an intersection nearby that has four stop signs. A handwritten sign indicates their cause:

Graduation fund, football team, cheerleaders, etc. They stand in the road with a can waiting for strangers to fill the can with cash. My father would never have allowed me to do that.

—Dan Pryor, New Jersey

My family immigrated from Lebanon. My siblings and I are the first generation to be born in America. We were raised in Texas. We were always taught to stand up to greet people who walk into your home (or presence), to look them in the eye, and offer a firm handshake (or hug, depending on the situation) as a warm welcome or greeting.

We were also taught to offer our chair to someone older. A young person would never sit and leave an adult, especially a lady, standing.

My family always taught males to hold the door for females; be it a car, elevator, or entry, a gentleman honored ladies first and offered an elbow when appropriate. Same with an elderly man, they were offered the courtesy of being first through the door, or to sit down after any ladies. Men took their hats off at the table, too!

All these were simple, common courtesies we lived by that one rarely sees anymore. I miss those.

Also, we always wrote a thank you note for gifts received. Always.

—God bless you and God bless America, Susan Rossi

Recently my wife and I celebrated our 108th anniversary (54 years for my wife and 54 years for me). We have been often asked, “What is the secret to a long marriage?” The answer is very simple, in fact, just two words: communicate and compromise. When my wife communicates, I compromise.

—Charles Stoddard, Michigan

It's OK to be wrong. Being right all of the time is way overrated. Stop defending your position without listening to an alternative perspective. You might realize that you were wrong about something and you now have a chance to adopt a better perspective. If you don't, others will realize that you are just a fool and you will be stuck in a fantasy world by yourself where you are always right.

Listening and thinking critically for yourself are important to develop humility, which is a rare commodity in today's world. Set yourself apart, be humble, always learning from mistakes and growing in wisdom. The world needs that version of you!

—Elsom Family

What advice would you like to give to the younger generations?

We call on all of our readers to share the timeless values that define right and wrong, and pass the torch, if you will, through your wisdom and hard-earned experience. We feel that the passing down of this wisdom has diminished over time and that only with a strong moral foundation can future generations thrive.

Send your advice, along with your full name, state, and contact information to NextGeneration@epochtimes.com or mail it to:

Next Generation, The Epoch Times, 229 W. 28th St., Floor 7, New York, NY 10001

A True Original

Kansas woman, 84, sells Ford truck that has been in the family since 1937

EPOCH INSPIRED STAFF

An 84-year-old Kansas woman last month auctioned off her Ford truck for \$16,000—that's not unusual.

What is unusual is that her Ford has been in her family since before she was born in 1937. The original “barn find” workhorse of a truck was originally bought by the father of Great Bend woman back when horse and buggy were still the main mode of transportation.

“Dad was pretty proud of this pickup because he farmed with horses and trailers,” Genie told Chad Ehrlich of F&E Collector



ALL PHOTOS COURTESY OF CHAD EHRLICH

“The 1937 Ford truck was bought at a time when horse and buggy was still the main form of transportation.”

What's so amazing about the antique pickup, though, is how well it's preserved. And it's amazingly still ran (until recently); albeit the motor (the only part that isn't original) was remanufactured and replaced.

The survivor Ford still has its original paint job, with just a smidgen of rust. The same sideboards which once increased the bed's capacity to haul more grain are still in place. And the V-8 still has its original title from July 1937.

“I was born at the end of July,” Genie added. “[Dad] got that before he got me.” After two decades working the fields, it was parked in a garage in 1957—after Ge-

tire for it,” she added. “My mom didn't lose her temper very much, but she sure did that time.” And it's scarcely seen the light of day since then, some 64 years ago.

“It's a pretty amazing truck,” Chad said. “These were utilitarian vehicles, they were bought for a purpose, that purpose was to work. This truck does show some battle scars of those days, but back then, it's what you had to do.

“No, it's not perfect, because it's original, and you don't find original very often.”

Share your stories with us at emg-inspired@epochtimes.com, and get your

“**Dad was pretty proud of this pickup because he farmed with horses**”

GOLDEN AGE FILMS

Heroes of the Unacclaimed War

‘The Bridges at Toko-Ri’ from 1954

TIFFANY BRANNAN

World War II themes dominated American films for its duration and remained popular through the 1940s. Since then, World War II has been the most common setting for war films because of its long duration, dual fronts, and huge impact on American culture. Following in its wake, the Korean War, lasting only from 1951 to 1953, without the same cultural impact and patriotic appeal, has been largely forgotten. Interestingly, it also lacked the previous war's media coverage. In fact, so few movies were made about the Korean War during its duration that it's easy for classic film fans to forget it even happened. One of the few 1950s movies about the Korean War is “The Bridges at Toko-Ri.”

Released in December 1954, “The Bridges at Toko-Ri” was made just after the war ended and provided an honest, realistic look at Americans' role in this fight. It was based on the 1953 novel of the same name, which was inspired by events witnessed firsthand by author James A. Michener during his time aboard aircraft carriers as a news correspondent. The film sticks closely to the novel's plot, partly due to William Holden's insistence that it not be given a “Hollywood” ending.

A Patriot's Story

This isn't your typical war film from Hollywood's Golden Era. It doesn't focus exclusively on American soldiers who are proud to be serving their country and eager to fight the enemy without reservations. Instead, “The Bridges at Toko-Ri” focuses on the reluctant Lt. Harry Brubaker (William Holden), a young lawyer from Denver, Colorado.

An excellent fighter bomber in World War II, Brubaker has been called back to active service but feels he has already given for his country's cause. Like any man, Harry wants to be with his wife, Nancy (Grace Kelly), and their two young daughters (Nadine Ashdown and Cheryl Callaway). When his family travels all the way to Tokyo to be with him, they only have a week together.

This isn't your typical war film from Hollywood's Golden Era.

Rear Adm. George Tarrant (Fredric March) is Harry's commanding officer aboard aircraft carrier USS Savo Island. He sympathizes with Brubaker's patriotic dilemma, and is particularly fond of the young man, who reminds him of his son who died in active duty.

Although an experienced military man, overall, Tarrant is kind and accommodating. He is understanding of Brubaker's frustration and supports his decision to bring his family to Tokyo, against protocol. He is also lenient toward his other men, including the renegade Mike Forney (Mickey Rooney), who insists on wearing a non-protocol green hat and scarf when flying his helicopter to rescue downed pilots.

Admiral Tarrant is a wise man, who urges others to be honest with themselves. When he meets Nancy, he sees that she can't bear the possibility of her husband's death. However, his own personal bereavement, losing two sons to the previous war and his wife to insanity, has taught him that avoiding pain doesn't help. He encourages Nancy to mentally face the dangers with her husband. Taking his advice, she asks Brubaker to tell her about his mission to bomb the bridges at Toko-Ri, so he reluctantly outlines all the perils. Afterward, she feels better, since, as she says, she had to face the bridges, too.

Tasteful Realism

The main difference between classic war films and more recent combat pictures is the amount of violence onscreen. Through the mid-1950s, the thorough enforcement of the Motion Picture Production Code kept violence in war productions at a minimum. However, that didn't mean that the old movies lacked action, intensity, or dramatic peril.

“The Bridges at Toko-Ri” is particularly realistic. Without showing one drop of



PUBLIC DOMAIN

➔ In “The Bridges at Toko-Ri,” pilot Lt. Harry Brubaker is assigned to bomb bridges in the Korean War. A USAF F-86F Sabre jet, in this file photo.

blood, it brings the grim, terrifying realities of warfare to life. Its combination of lifelike color film, stark background music, and neutral wide angles makes viewers feel they are in a Korean trench instead of safely observing the action on a screen.

This movie won the Academy Award for Best Special Effects, and it was well-deserved. The convincing action footage shows shots of bombers dodging explosions midair while bombing the titular bridges could make modern filmmakers green with envy. Without the use of any CGI or other electronic post-production manipulation, director Mark Robson and his team created an intense reality.

The film's magic was crafted with the cooperation and help of the United States Navy. As well as filming new scenes aboard naval vessels, the production utilized large scale models and real combat footage. Unlike the war footage used in many earlier movies, which is usually in black-and-white and noticeably grainier than the Hollywood footage, these color war shots blend seamlessly with the rest of the film.

With this impressive technology for creating realism, the filmmakers easily could have gone too far and made the film disturbingly graphic. However, taste and discretion were used, so this is a masterpiece which anyone can enjoy. Much of the realistic and often authentic aerial footage shows training or reconnaissance work. Very little of the film's runtime shows actual combat. When fighting is shown, no unnecessary violence is included. The story's emotional impact shows how unnecessary gratuitous violence is in crafting a compelling film. If the plot, acting, and cinematography are effectively and artistically planned, the result can be more memorable than a bloody shocker.

The ‘Wrong’ War

The Korean War lacked the patriotic appeal of World War II because Americans felt that it wasn't our war. We were reluctant to give up our hard-won peace to join another skirmish which didn't directly involve the United States. Precisely because “The Bridges at Toko-Ri” dealt with these feelings honestly—presenting candid conversations between the characters, servicemen fighting in the war, and about the nation's and individuals' roles in the conflict, it succeeded.

Early in the film, Brubaker faces death because of a chance accident, and later candidly discusses his bitterness about the war with Adm. Tarrant. In response to his question of why he's in Korea, Tarrant wisely reminds him:

“Whatever progress this world has made has always been because of the efforts and the sacrifices of a few.”

“I was one of the few, Admiral,” Brubaker replies, listing the places he fought in World War II. He demands, “Why does it have to be me again?”

“Nobody ever knows why he gets the dirty job,” Tarrant says. “And this is a dirty job. Militarily this war is a tragedy.”

“I think we ought to pull out,” Brubaker says. “Now that's rubbish, son, and you know it. If we did, they'd take Japan, Indochina, the Philippines. Where'd you have us make our stand, the Mississippi? All through history men have had to fight the wrong war in the wrong place, but that's the one they're stuck with. That's why one of these days, we'll knock out those bridges at Toko-Ri.”

This simple conversation between two honest servicemen summarizes the unglamorous, unpraised, yet deeply patriotic legacy of Korean War veterans. The Americans who fought in this war may not have departed or returned with the fanfare of previous battles. However, American servicemen risked and gave their lives bravely in the cause, the hope for a world free of communism and tyranny. Like the characters of Harry Brubaker, Mike Forney, and their comrades, these men fought and died as heroes, even if they believed they were fighting in the wrong war.

“Where do we get such men? They leave this ship, and they do their job. Then they must find this speck lost somewhere on the sea. When they find it, they have to land on its pitching deck. Where do we get such men?” —Rear Adm. George Tarrant

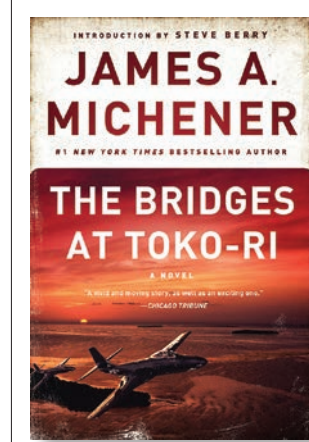
Tiffany Brannan is a 20-year-old opera singer, Hollywood history/vintage beauty copywriter, film reviewer, fashion historian, travel writer, and ballet writer. In 2016, she and her sister founded the Pure Entertainment Preservation Society, an organization dedicated to reforming the arts by reinstating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



▲ A 1950 publicity photo of William Holden. PD-US



▲ An MGM photo of Grace Kelly in 1954. PD-US



➔ The best-selling book upon which the film is based.

POPCORN AND INSPIRATION

Life on the Homefront During World War II

IAN KANE

I've always found it interesting to look at movies that offer alternative perspectives to the straight-line affairs of their genre. World War II films are a case in point. In 1946's "The Best Years of Our Lives," for example, we don't see military men fighting it out on foreign soil, but three veterans as they come back home to the United States. An earlier film, titled "Since You Went Away," gives us yet another spin on how World War II affected folks on the homefront.

"Since You Went Away" was produced in 1944 while the war was still underway. This multifaceted, episodic-drama film by uber-producer David O. Selznick (here also screenwriter) and director John Cromwell is studded with both established and budding stars. It reminds us of how different things used to be.

After the Hilton family's patriarch, Tim, goes off to serve his country as an officer in the U.S. Army, he leaves a vacuum in the lives of his family members. Wife Anne (Claudette Colbert) and the couple's two teenage daughters, Jane (Jennifer Jones) and

Brig (Shirley Temple), are saddened by Tim's abrupt departure. Anne is the most affected but presents a strong façade, hiding her tears whenever her girls are around.

While Tim was a successful advertising man before joining up, his military pay means that the family's upper-middle-class lifestyle can't be maintained. Their large Midwestern home soon becomes a financial burden, and Anne must do some belt-tightening, which includes rationing food and laying off their loyal maid Fidelia (Hattie McDaniel). She also puts out an ad for a boarder to rent Tim and Anne's bedroom—preferably to an officer.

When an older gentleman shows up in civilian clothes and wearing a lengthy beard, Anne thinks he's made a mistake. But the man assures her that he is a retired colonel by the name of William Smollett (Monty Woolley). William is a rather stuffy old fellow, but Brig's infectious, cheery nature and sly sense of humor begin to thaw him out of his self-imposed igloo.

Tim's good friend Lt. Tony Willett (Joseph Cotten), who was the best man at the Hiltons' wedding, drops by. Through his flir-

tatious behavior with Anne, we discover that he's always had a crush on her, despite being her husband's pal. It's all pretty light and playful stuff, though, and Anne doesn't seem to mind. She considers him to be a mostly stand-up guy, who signed up for the Navy to fulfill his patriotic duty.

Meanwhile, Anne's teenage daughter Jane blushes whenever Tony's around, although he would never take advantage of her crush. Anne's hoity-toity friend Emily Hawkins (Agnes Moorehead) is also enamored of Tony. But whereas Anne is wholesome, loving, and good-hearted, Emily is her opposite—condescending, prissy, and making no effort to help the war effort.

Another interesting subplot involves Cpl. Bill Smollett (Robert Walker), who pops up while on leave to visit his grandfather, Col. Smollett. While Bill desperately seeks his grandfather's love and acceptance (his father has passed away), the colonel acts coldly toward him.

Women on the Homefront

Perhaps because of its domestic setting and lack of action, the film plays out in an episodic, almost soap opera-ish fashion. And, as with "The Best Years of Our Lives," "Since You Went Away" is another long film that almost cracks the three-hour mark, yet neither film ever feels drawn out or overly long. If anything, I wish "Since" would have taken the serial TV route so that we could enjoy the well-paced and well-written narrative, with all of its intricate parts and fantastic acting performances.

While the supposed strong women in many of today's films overemphasize women acting like men in order to be perceived as tough, the great Claudette Colbert's depiction of Anne shows us where real feminine strength lies. Anne is emblematic of the days of yore: a loyal and dutiful housewife who struggles valiantly to keep her offspring safe and secure, all the while balancing a multitude of complex relations with disparate personalities. Yet she somehow has the wherewithal to hold it all together.

As the yule logs burning at the beginning of the movie symbolize, she keeps the fire burning on the homefront.

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

'Since You Went Away' was produced in 1944 while the war was still underway.



The young and charming Brig (Shirley Temple) goes to work on softening up Col. William Smollett (Monty Woolley).

'Since You Went Away'

Directors: John Cromwell, Edward F. Cline (uncredited), Tay Garnett (uncredited)

Starring: Claudette Colbert, Jennifer Jones, Joseph Cotten, Shirley Temple, Robert Walker, Monty Woolley

Running Time: 2 hours, 57 minutes

Not Rated

Release Date: July 20, 1944



Tony Willett (Joseph Cotten) and Anne Hilton (Claudette Colbert) in a film that celebrates the true strength of women.



ALL PHOTOS BY UNITED ARTISTS

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