

THE EPOCH TIMES

ARTS & CULTURE



PUBLIC DOMAIN

The character of Peter Pan reminds of both the joys and dangers of eternal childhood. "The Paradise of Peter Pan," 1934, by Edward Mason Eggleston, 1934. Based on a 1932 painting, the print was published for a calendar by the Thomas D. Murphy company of Red Oak, Iowa.

Lost Boys *and* Growing Up

Messages from Neverland

JEFF MINICK

In the Victorian and Edwardian periods, writers on both sides of the Atlantic stamped their culture with iconic figures who live on in our imagination today.

In 1887, Arthur Conan Doyle's "A Study in Scarlet" introduced Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson to the world. Four years earlier, Robert Lewis Stevenson issued "Treasure Island" with its trove of pirates and riches. Just after the turn of the century, Beatrix Potter's beloved "The Tale of Peter Rabbit" snared the attention of children.

Lewis Carroll's 1865 "Alice in Wonderland" gave us the White Rabbit, the Queen of Hearts, the Cheshire Cat, and the Mad Hatter. Charles Dickens's "A Christmas

From its first performance, 'Peter Pan' was a hit with audiences.

Carol" added a new word to the language, Scrooge, to describe a miser.

In America, too, some writers left an indelible mark on culture. Mark Twain's "Adventures of Huckleberry Finn" and "The Adventures of Tom Sawyer" remain standard touchpoints of description for a free-ranging, adventurous boyhood.

In 1912, struggling writer Edgar Rice Burroughs created Tarzan, the "king of the apes," and eventually wrote more than 20 novels about this mythical man of the jungle. Most importantly of all, perhaps, Owen Wister's "The Virginian" and the scores of dime novels written about the American West created our archetypal American hero, the cowboy.

Other writers have converted these original tales into movies, plays, and television shows, embedding them even deeper into

our cultural psyche. Readers who have never opened "A Christmas Carol," for instance, are familiar with the Ghost of Christmas Past and Tiny Tim.

Hundreds of movies and TV shows have delivered Sherlock Holmes to theaters and living rooms. Hollywood Westerns have likewise made gunfighters and cattle ranchers a major part of our cultural larder.

And then, of course, there's J.M. Barrie's 1904 play "Peter Pan; or, The Boy Who Wouldn't Grow Up."

The Man and the Writer

Born in Scotland, James Barrie (1860–1937) passed through several life transformations that would eventually bring him to the writing of "Peter Pan." *Continued on Page 4*

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Participants in the Jane Austen Circular Walk through the city center on Sept. 9, 2017, in Bath, England. The event marks the 200th anniversary of 19th-century author's death. Austen set two of her six published novels, "Northanger Abbey" and "Persuasion," in Bath.



A man dressed as Capt. Wentworth, who is the love interest of Anne Elliot, the protagonist of "Persuasion," in Bath, England, on Sept. 9, 2017.



Participants in the Jane Austen Circular Walk are dressed as characters from her novels.

LITERATURE

Let Me Persuade You to Read Something About Prudence and Kindness: Jane Austen's 'Persuasion'

PAUL J. PREZZIA

A book can't be judged by its cover, true, but it should be revealed by its title. Jane Austen's "Persuasion" is a perfect example, for the title is an expertly set diamond, reflecting the plot of the novel, its theme, and its meaning. Persuading is THE action of the novel, and it is an action that uncovers the meaning of the virtues of prudence, kindness, and their connection.

The heroine of "Persuasion," Anne Elliot, is a master of every kind of persuasion: by word and example, and even, as we see in the beginning, by silence.

Sure, her goodness seems to be wasted on a family with a vain, uncaring, and pompous father and an even vainer and more uncaring sister. She has little in terms of comfort besides the children of her other sister, a hypochondriac, and her rather boorish brother-in-law.

To make things worse, the family finances are spinning out of control due to their spendthrift ways and lavish lifestyle. Anne does what the family will let her do, which is to listen, speak well of the other people who are being bashed behind their backs, and subtly encourage her family to act with more restraint in their desires and more kindness in their attitudes.

Don't underestimate this quiet way of Anne's. After she employs her gentle manner of conversation, it is not to her taste to waste more energy and emotion in direct confrontations with people who refuse to be guided by her.

Rather, she talks to the family friends who in turn can influence the family: family friends such as Lady Russell, a neighbor who actually has some sway with her profligate father and older sister. Austen suggests that the financial security of Anne's ungrateful family, at the end of the novel, is indirectly a result of Anne's quiet wisdom.

But this is all a sideshow. The main plot of the book is Anne's winning back the man she loved and lost. Before the events of the book took place, Anne fell in love with a young sailor and was engaged to be married. However, she was then pressured to break off the engagement, due to his lack of fortune and connections, by her one real confidante and friend, Lady Russell. Seven years later, the young sailor is now war-hero Capt. Wentworth.

A Story of Romance

When we first meet Wentworth, he thinks that Anne rejected him out of her weakness and cowardice. Anne first endures his prejudice; nothing could be wiser, for Wentworth will not listen to her. Then she appeals by example, as her strength of character and magnanimity shine out in a crisis.

At last it comes to words, as Anne convinces him that what he thought was weakness was in fact virtue. She gently points out that his whole idea of just about everything having to do with the relationship between men and women is quite lacking.

Persuading With Kindness

Now, what is persuasion but the art of rhetoric, and what is this art, in its highest and noblest form, but the appeal to the virtue of prudence. Wisdom sees the good, reason makes conceptual progress toward this good, and prudence is the application of this progress to the real world.

Rhetoric is always about communicating in such a way as to move people to act, and prudence is that virtue which brings wisdom and reason into action. In the novel, persuasion is the engine of the plot, and prudence is the virtue that fuels this movement.

In the novel, persuasion is the engine of the plot, and prudence is the virtue that fuels this movement. You'll see, in Anne's relationship with Lady Russell, that while there is prudence in trusting one's elders, there is later and greater prudence in realizing that one's elders might have been mistaken.

Anne's kindness to an old schoolmate, in spite of her father's and sister's snobbishness, ends up proving the prudence of being kind to all, even if it risks one's looking foolish to the outside world.

There's the prudence that maintains calm and masters an emergency, as in Anne's quick thinking when a friend has a bad fall. You will realize how calm and quick-thinking she must be, if you ask yourself how well you would perform in a crisis. Consider also, that the crisis occurs in the uncomfortable situation of her old flame being present, and the old flame is one whom she still secretly loves with all her heart!

You will also witness the prudence of holding one's tongue in many circumstances, and releasing it passionately in a few. Most importantly for this storyline, there's the prudence of an honest,

well-considered first love that is able to endure: In Anne Elliot's own words, the love that, slow and steady as it seems to be, is the one that loves "longest, [even] when existence or when hope is gone."

Passion and prudence, far from being enemies, are the best duo possible, if the one you love is really worthy—a person who is truly good as well as attractive.

Examples of the Virtue's Opposites

Perhaps even more valuable for readers than all these examples of prudence is the characterization of imprudence: the imprudence of having contempt for one's love just because she does not do what you want, and the imprudence of impatience. These are Capt. Wentworth's.

Meanwhile, Anne's father and sister, as well as another suitor (her cousin William), aptly by their own ineptness illustrate the imprudence in loving money and in squandering it, as well as the imprudence of vanity, the im-

prudence of being a fake, and above all, the imprudence of being unkind.

The importance of prudence was surprising then, and it is probably more so now in a world when people tend to think, more and more, that "power" is all that matters. Such thinking would make prudence important only as a way of using reason to gain more power, and the "power move" often means being unkind.

But Jane Austen adds her harmony to the melody of the Western tradition, encapsulated in this quote from the Bible: "Knowledge puffeth up; but charity edifieth." Not only is knowledge powerless, but even power is powerless without charity.

Don't underestimate the quiet way of the protagonist Anne Elliot.

True kindness is the most prudent

The Practicality of Kindness

True kindness is the most prudent

course. (I refer to "kindness" in its pure state—not as in the fake meaning where you slap on a mask and consider yourself a saint, but as in actually helping other people.) Ultimately, kindness is what we need most, and if we need to be persuaded of anything, it is to be kind; it is the most practical thing to practice.

It is Anne's kindness that allows her to be effective in helping the various members of her circle. It is her kindness that makes her practical in emergencies. It is her kindness that wins back

the man she loves—and with him, the promise of a full, prosperous, and happy life.

As well as pointing out how kindness helps us on the way to happiness, Austen also shows how kindness can help us recognize and avoid unkindness,

which helps one avoid unhappiness. This critical point is underlined repeatedly in the latter part of the book. Anne's repugnance for unkindness saves her from getting trapped in a relationship with William, a man who is handsome and rich, but selfish.

While "Persuasion" has a happy ending, it is important to note that Austen was no starry-eyed dreamer disconnected from reality. The happy ending is not inevitable, because prudence and kindness alone are not enough to make one's life happy in the full sense of the word.

At the beginning of the book, a sort of happiness is available to Anne: her wry observations to herself, the great poetry she reads, and her pleasure in the natural world. Nevertheless, for most of the story, she is neglected and ignored by her family, scorned by her beloved, and as far as society is concerned, on her way to becoming an old maid.

Romantic love is a very high happiness, and it is a happiness that requires not one, but two virtuous people. The suspense and drama of the novel is largely about the question of whether Wentworth will rise to Anne's level and make her happiness complete. Anne's kindness is necessary, but it's not sufficient to make her happy.

While happiness for the kind and prudent is not inevitable, unhappiness without prudence and kindness is. No wealth, rank, or social position seems to satisfy the characters who don't do the prudent thing: be kind.

These are especially important considerations in our time, when "equality of outcome" is a slogan and when that outcome is evaluated only in terms of wealth, rank, and social position. This is not to denigrate the pursuit of any of these things but, without virtue, we are unable to enjoy them, anyway.

Be kind and prudent, and learn something of what kindness and prudence mean by reading "Persuasion."

Paul Joseph Prezvia received his M.A. in history from the University of Notre Dame in 2012. He now teaches at Gregory the Great Academy and lives in Elmhurst Township, Pa., with his wife and children.

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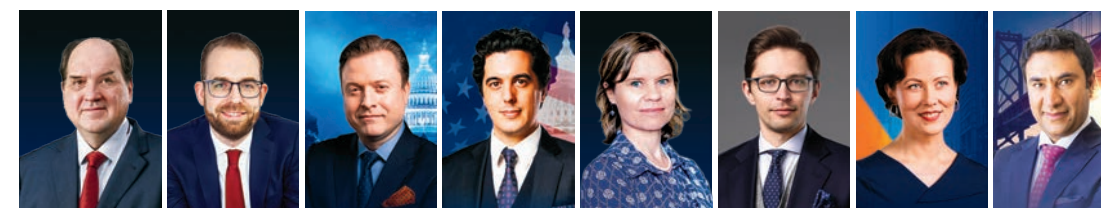
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Boys will play. "Snap the Whip," 1872, by Winslow Homer. Oil on canvas. Metropolitan Museum of Art

Lost Boys *and* Growing Up

Messages from Neverland

Continued from Page 1

When he was 6, his 13-year-old brother died in a skating accident, a loss that affected Barrie's mother and Barrie himself for the rest of their lives. He tried but largely failed to take his brother's place in his mother's affections, and longed even as an adult for his age of innocence before

his brother's death.

Later, Barrie befriended the family of Arthur and Sylvia Davies. He developed a deep affection for Sylvia and her sons, helped to support the family financially, and was soon treated as a member of their circle.

Arthur died in 1907, and when their mother's death from cancer in 1910 left the boys parentless, Barrie became their

guardian and mentor. He later wrote of their influence: "I suppose I always knew that I made Peter by rubbing the five of you violently together.... I am sometimes asked who and what Peter is, but that is all he is, the spark I got from you."

Though some modern commentators have wondered whether Barrie's relationship with the boys was more than paternal,

many critics have repudiated that idea, believing that Barrie was probably asexual. Part of this claim stems from his childless and quite possibly unconsummated marriage to actress Mary Ansell.

In addition, much evidence exists that Barrie simply enjoyed the company of children, male and female, perhaps because of his own wounded childhood, his height—

he was only 5 feet, 3 inches tall—and his often evident childlike nature.

Combine these circumstances of nature and his environment, and we discover the headwaters for the creation of Peter Pan and the Lost Boys.

A Part of Our Common Heritage

From its first performance, "Peter Pan" was a hit with audiences both in Great Britain and in the United States. This story of a boy who never grows up, who leads a tribe of Lost Boys while fighting pirates, and who entices the Darling children—Wendy, Michael, and John—to return with him to Neverland to share in his adventures continues to entrance audiences today.

In addition to its countless performances on stage and screen (the 1953 Disney cartoon version remains popular even today), "Peter

Pan" has inspired a number of spinoffs. Both "Hook," with its emphasis on friendship and imagination, and the delightful study of Barrie in "Finding Neverland" illustrate this ongoing interest in the story of Peter and Wendy. Canadian pop singer Ruth B. also tapped into our infatuation with Peter Pan in her hit song "Lost Boy."

Peter, Tinkerbell, and Captain Hook are now strands woven into the tapestry of our culture like Scrooge, Alice, and Sherlock Holmes.

And like all good stories and myths, each generation finds something new in the telling.

Peter, Tinkerbell, and Captain Hook are now strands woven into the tapestry of our culture.

Today's Lost Boys

For many people, "Lost Boys" today might refer to those males who have achieved the age of maturity, but not maturity itself. As Ruth B. sings:

*I am a Lost Boy from Neverland
Usually hanging out with Peter Pan
And when we're bored, we play in the woods
Always on the run from Captain Hook
"Run, run Lost Boy," they say to me
"Away from all of reality..."*

Lost Boys do exist in America. They are the 30-year-olds who work, if they work at all, at menial jobs. They consume opioids and other drugs, or drink too much beer, and seem to have no more ambition than a stone. If they need a car, they must ask Mom or Dad to cosign the loan. The possibilities of home ownership, marriage and children, and job satisfaction seem never to enter the scope of their radar.

These are the negative consequences of Neverland. It's a place of adventure, possibly, but also a place where boys will never become men.

But is there another side to this perspective, one more enchanting and joyful than this bleak portrait?

All Men Are Lost Boys ... and That's a Good Thing

Recently, my son-in-law, my daughter, and their family visited the home of one of his old friends. Both had attended a small boarding school together. At one point, both men stripped to their boxers and sat for a while in a hot tub.

Meanwhile, their children tittered at the sight of their dads while their wives look on a bit aghast. Finally, after they'd dried off and were getting back into their clothes, my 16-year-old grandson remarked, "Well, you can take the boy out of high school, but you can't take the high school out of the boy."

And right there is one reason for Peter Pan's appeal.

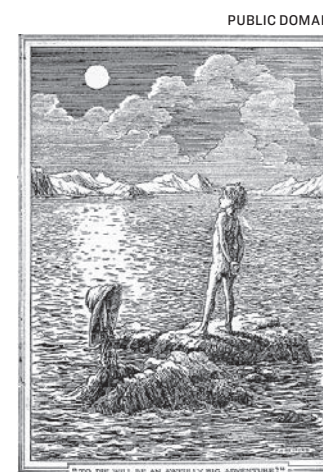
Whatever station in life they have attained—corporate president, house painter, teacher, baker—most men were



The cover of the 1915 edition of "Peter Pan."



A plate featuring Capt. Hook from "Peter and Wendy," 1911, illustrated by Francis Donkin Bedford.



One of Peter Pan's most famous quotes, "To die will be an awfully big adventure," appears on an illustrated plate from "Peter and Wendy," 1911. Illustration by Francis Donkin Bedford, 1911.

allies of Peter Pan in their childhood. With stick swords they battled dragons; they ran through the woods pretending to be soldiers or pirates, knights or cowboys; they played roll-the-bat in the backyard, and saw themselves on the field at Yankee Stadium. They were heroes in their dreams, rescuing girls from the bad guys, throwing the winning touchdown pass for their dad's university team, and fighting off schoolyard bullies.

Want some proof? Here's a simple experiment: Ask any little boy between the ages of 5 and 8 what he hopes to become one day. Likely answers will include a soldier, a policeman, a fireman, or even a cowboy.

Sometimes with sweet delight, he will say, "I want to be just like Daddy." Or ask any man about his ambitions when he was 6. I doubt corporate accountant was among them.

The kid who wanted to become a knight on horseback may now be a lawyer, but those early "Lost Boy" fantasies still inspire him.

Barrie as Realist

Much of what we read about J.M. Barrie stresses his childlike nature, yet he was quite aware of the need for children to become adults and of the flaws of children.

At the very end of his novel "Peter Pan," he writes: "When Margaret grows up she will have a daughter, who is to be Peter's mother in turn; and so it will go on, so long as children are gay and innocent and heartless."

Those last three words, "innocent and heartless," imply that innocence begets heartlessness. Only by growing into adults do we acquire the compassion that derives from hard times and experience.

And in the very first paragraph of the same book, Barrie tells us:

"All children, except one, grow up. They soon know that they will grow up, and the way Wendy knew was this. One day when she was two years old she was playing in a garden, and she plucked another flower and ran with it to her mother. I suppose she must have looked rather delightful, for Mrs. Darling put her hand to her heart and cried, 'Oh, why can't you remain like this forever!' This was all that passed between them on the subject, but henceforth Wendy knew that she must grow up. You always know after you are two. Two is the beginning of the end."

That's one way to look at "Peter Pan." Given some of Barrie's other observations in the play and the novel on adulthood, however, and the lessons drawn from his personal experiences, we might more positively conclude, "Two is the end of the beginning."

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.

FINE ARTS

Art Worth Visiting: 3 US Summer Exhibitions

LORRAINE FERRIER

Across the country, there are some great summer exhibitions that highlight fine European art and craftsmanship, from rare French medieval architecture and stained glass in Philadelphia, to remarkably colorful ancient Greek and Roman sculpture in New York, to Renaissance prints from Germany, Switzerland, and the Netherlands at the advent of printing, in Washington, D.C.

Bringing Color Back to Ancient Sculpture

Vibrant, colorful replicas of ancient Greek and Roman sculptures will soon arrive in New York and will be on display alongside similar original masterpieces. It's surprising, almost jarring, to see these ancient works depicting gods, goddesses, important personalities, and mythological creatures painted in lively colors with flesh-toned paint, colorful clothes (often in striking patterns), and sometimes with touches of gold. But this is how ancient sculpture used to be.

For centuries, the pure white marble statue has been the quintessential image of ancient



sculpture. The idea of the uncolored ancient sculpture began during the Italian Renaissance (in the 16th century to be exact), when the sculptures fit into the ideal of art that artists were looking for, Vinzenz Brinkmann explains in a video.

Brinkmann is the head of the department of antiquity at the Liebieghaus Sculpture Collection in Frankfurt am Main, Germany, where

for 40 years his team has been researching ancient artists' use of color.

He explained that, in the 18th century, when archaeologists began excavating ancient sites in Rome and then in Greece, they unearthed artifacts with traces of paint. But the myth of uncolored ancient art continued. Even in the 20th century, when researchers used science to confirm that color was used on ancient statues, the idea of colorless ancient sculpture still reigned.

Brinkmann and his team began looking at the ancient sculpture under the microscope with their naked eyes, then they used technology such as ultraviolet light, and then infrared luminescence photography to discover finer details. The Metropolitan Museum of Art will present this research in its "Chroma: Ancient Sculpture in Color" exhibition. On display will be 14 of the German team's reconstructions of Greek and Roman sculpture alongside similar works from The Met's collection.

The Met's departments of Greek and Roman art worked with Brinkmann and his team to reconstruct, in color, the museum's Archaic-period Sphinx finial (a decorative ornament to highlight a structure), which once crowned a grave stele (stone funeral monument) also in the museum's collection.

"The Flight Into Egypt," believed to be from the "Infancy of Christ Stained-Glass Window," circa 1145, by anonymous. Stained glass; 20 1/2 inches by 19 3/4 inches, from the Basilica of St. Denis, Paris. On loan from The Glencairn Museum, Bryn Athyn, Philadelphia.

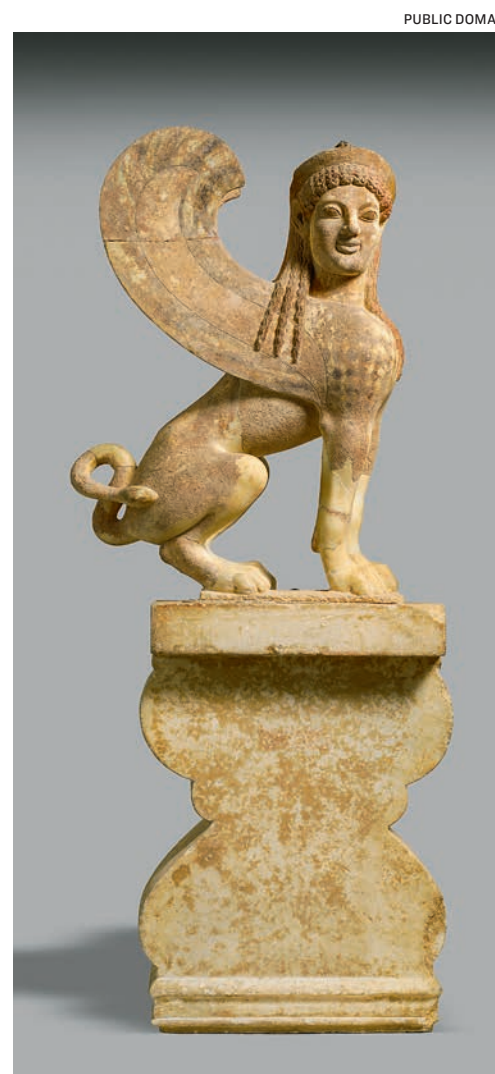
"The Chroma: Ancient Sculpture in Color" exhibition runs July 5, 2022–March 26, 2023. To find out more, visit MetMuseum.org

American Treasures of French Medieval Art and Architecture

American lawyer and businessman Raymond Pitcairn must have seen many great works of art and architecture in his lifetime. He shared



See fine European art and craftsmanship right here in America.



Marble finial in the form of a sphinx, circa 530 B.C., Greek Archaic period (circa 650–480 B.C.) Parian marble; 56 1/8 inches tall. Munsey Fund, 1936, 1938, The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

his mother's love for European art and, from the age of 3, traveled to Europe almost every year until he was married.

Pitcairn (1885–1966) went on to become a notable collector of medieval art and architecture. It was an era of art he loved above all others. "Of all the works of art created by the hands of men, there are none that seem to live, through the human spirit that breathes within their every part, as do the marvelous churches and cathedrals of the Middle Ages," he wrote in 1920.

Pitcairn focused on collecting exemplary pieces of Gothic and Romanesque monumental sculptures and stained glass in particular, especially French pieces from 1100 to 1300.

He collected art for the sheer love of it, but he also oversaw the construction of the Gothic and Romanesque-style Bryn Athyn Cathedral (1917–1928) in Pennsylvania (which was funded by his father, the industrialist John Pitcairn), and he wanted to find the best art to copy.

Artists and artisans worked in the traditional manner for the cathedral's construction, in onsite workshops dedicated to stone, wood, metal, and stained glass.

Art lovers wanting to see Pitcairn's collection can normally do so at the Glencairn Museum in Bryn Athyn, just north of Philadelphia, in the mansion home where he lived with his wife for 40 years. But currently, the museum is undergoing refurbishment.

Luckily, visitors to the Philadelphia Museum of Art can see some of Pitcairn's most celebrated works in its exhibition "Medieval Treasures From the Glencairn Museum." Included in the exhibition, for example, is the best-preserved piece of Early Gothic glass in America: the stained-glass "The Flight into Egypt" panel



"Saint Jerome Penitent in the Wilderness," circa 1496, by Albrecht Dürer. Engraving on laid paper; 12 1/2 inches by 8 3/4 inches. Joan and David Maxwell Fund, Pepita Milmore Memorial Fund and The Ahmanson Foundation, The National Gallery of Art, Washington.

from the Basilica of St. Denis, in Paris. (The St. Denis choir is the first complete example of Gothic architecture.)

Exhibition visitors can also see exceptional architectural sculpture, such as a capital (the broad, top part of a column) from St. Guilhem-le-Désert in Hérault, southern France.

The "Medieval Treasures From the Glencairn

Museum" exhibition runs June 24, 2022–Fall 2023. To find out more, visit PhilaMuseum.org

New to National Gallery in Washington: Northern Renaissance Prints

Visitors to the National Gallery of Art (NGA) in Washington will soon be able to see an early engraving by German artist Albrecht Dürer, titled "Saint Jerome Penitent in the Wilderness."

In the engraving, Dürer showed Jerome paying penance in his desert hermitage, far from the temptations of Rome. He solemnly gazes at a crudely made cross sticking out of a crag, as he holds the rock he uses to beat against his chest.

Dürer so deftly rendered Jerome's remorseful facial expression that it's hard not to be moved. The lion Jerome tamed, by pulling a thorn from his paw, is sitting by his side.

Dürer had recently returned from Venice, Italy, when he created this image, which was a popular subject in Italy but not so in Germany. The work is one of some 30 prints by Renaissance artists working in Germany, Switzerland, and the Netherlands that will be in the gallery's new exhibition: "The Renaissance in the North: New Prints and Perspectives."

All the exhibition works are new NGA acquisitions that together show how art and ideas spread across Europe in the late-15th and 16th centuries through the new medium of printing. On display are woodcuts, etchings, and engravings for portraits, public decoration, and private devotion.

"The Renaissance in the North: New Prints and Perspectives" exhibition runs July 3–Nov. 27, 2022. To find out more, visit NGA.gov



"Chopin Plays for the Radziwills," 1887, by Henryk Siemiradzki.

BOOK REVIEW

A Humble Instrument and 24 Famous Preludes

ANITA L. SHERMAN

Many years ago, I purchased a very tall intricately carved antique hutch. It's still with me. I've never had it appraised, and the only identifying marks inside point to a German manufacturer in the late 1800s. I have often wondered what other rooms it has graced.

Frédéric Chopin has always been one of my favorite composers. His compositions are often intricate and complex yet reveal such a soulful quality.

My fascination with author and conductor Paul Kildea's "Chopin's Piano" is that he takes readers on a fascinating musical journey. It's one that traces the history not only of the humble instrument that Chopin used to

create his now-famous 24 Preludes but also of all the ingredients that come into play when art transcends the ages and thrives.

Today, pianists are at liberty to interpret Chopin's Preludes. Most are played to audiences on impressive grand pianos bearing the names of renowned and respected manufacturers.

Restful Resonance

But when young Chopin visited Majorca, Spain, in 1838 with friend and lover George Sand and her children, the Preludes were notes in his head waiting to be put on paper and, hopefully, played out on a keyboard.

While waiting for a Pleyel piano to arrive (held up in Customs), Chopin turned to a local craftsman named Juan Bauza who built a small piano, a "pianino," for him to use. It was on this modest instrument that several of the Preludes were composed, music that has delighted and bemused listeners, players, and critics for generations. Chopin's Preludes are today considered one of the great and revolutionary works of musical Romanticism.

To add to Chopin's creative ambience, he was playing this "pianino" in a cell of an abandoned monastery at Valldemossa, in the mountains above Palma, where they had rented quarters.

While the outside environs boasted flow-

ering trees and beautiful vistas, the inside rooms were often dark and damp, conditions that didn't bolster his health. Chopin suffered from consumption.

These were the early days of piano making. Steinways would be a coming attraction.

When Chopin and Sand left Spain, the "pianino" remained at the monastery for 70 years.

Romantic Heroine

Long after Chopin's death in 1849, another famous Polish pianist, Wanda Landowska, who was particularly fond of Chopin's compositions, was delighted to find this instrument touched by Chopin's hands and purchased it in 1913 while visiting Majorca.

The author is meticulously generous with his vast amount and scope of information to add to the story.

Readers will now learn her story and her influence on 20th-century music. She compiled her own collection of instruments over the years and library of music. Much of the information that Kildea shares with readers come from her private papers.

Her protective care of her beloved keyboards and music manuscripts ended in 1940 with the Nazi occupation. Works of art, instruments, and other collections were confiscated, many ending up scattered throughout Europe.

Landowska was fortunate that some five years later, primarily through the efforts of the Allied armies' Monuments Men and meticulous collaborative organizations, the instruments were discovered and returned to her home in France.

By this time, she was living in the United States, so decisions were made about what to do with each piece. Shipping costs were in most cases prohibitive.

Kildea weaves an exquisite narrative, with the fate of this instrument and the man who composed on it as the foundation. But the whole story is so much more. It's a sweeping one that explores the development of piano making, the way that different pianists interpret a piece, and the way that music—in this case Chopin's—can inspire and lift the spirit of so many over many generations.

Delectable Details

Prepare yourself for a level of detail that can be daunting (distracting at times), even perhaps for those who would claim to be music aficionados.

Kildea is meticulously generous with his vast amount and scope of information to add to the story. He will describe lithographers and their renditions of port and market life (to give you an idea of the streets that Chopin walked while in Majorca).

I know now, but didn't, that belladonna (a poison) was used as eyedrops (dangerous to the eyes) in Victorian ladies' eyes to give them a luminous and presumed seductive glow. Many ladies on stage used it. That bit of information alone had me shift to Google to learn more about Victorian makeup techniques.

Since Kildea has been an artistic director, he explains how performances were handled in the artistic houses, the lighting, the décor, who decided who played, and what they played. Chopin's Preludes were not immediately embraced outside of private salons. In many ways, they were 24 separate ideas, each with their own originality, theme, tempo, and structure.

Even though some of Kildea's digressions take you down diverse historical paths, it all adds to the complexity and creative beauty of how a piece of music or art comes into being.

Details aside, it's lavishly and lovingly written in sparkling prose. It's a celebration of a man, his music, and the instruments that share their place in history.

Put one of Chopin's Preludes; No. 15: "The Raindrop" is softly mesmerizing. Settle in to appreciate and celebrate the spirit of creative genius.

Anita L. Sherman is an award-winning journalist who has more than 20 years of experience as a writer and editor for local papers and regional publications in Virginia. She now works as a freelance writer and is working on her first novel. She is the mother of three grown children and grandmother to four, and she resides in Warrenton, Va. Anita can be reached at anitajustwrite@gmail.com

'Chopin's Piano: In Search of the Instrument That Transformed Music'

Author

Paul Kildea

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BOOK REVIEW

An Enlightening and Humorous Journey Through Old English

An enlightening and humorous journey through Old English

DUSTIN BASS

To the layman, Old English sounds much like the King's English, like the verbiage in the King James Version Bible, or even the works of William Shakespeare. The layman could hardly be more wrong.

Hana Videen, in her new book "The Wordhord: Daily Life in Old English," brings to life a language that has long been dead yet is still relevant in the grand scheme of understanding where some of our modern English comes from.

It is called Old English. Yet, when reading her book, the reader will realize that Old English might as well be called Old Russian because it sounds and looks as foreign as any other foreign language. Don't let that previous sentence confuse you or deter you from the book. "The Wordhord" is not written in Old English. Rather, it is built around Old English words and what they meant, and

then how they connected to other words and phrases, or at times how they had no connection to other words and phrases yet sounded and looked very similar.

"The Wordhord," in other words, is an easy read. And for a topic as seemingly uninteresting as a deep dive into Old English, it is a refreshingly fun read.

Old Culture by Way of Old English

"The Wordhord" is a brilliant work due to the manner in which the author presents and discusses the old language. She breaks down words and phrases along topical chapters, ranging from food to time to weather to friendship (or "fiendship").

Videen's book will be a treasure for language nerds.

Videen repeats Old English words just enough to make the reader realize that those words are actually sticking to memory. But the book is more than an introduction to the language; it is an introduction to the culture that surrounded it.

At the start of the book, Videen writes: "My interest in history comes first from an obsession with words, and this book's approach to the past is thus guided by words, not historical events or individual people." The author proves true to her premise.

She discusses the transition from paganism to Christianity, and the challenges



The word "bösm" is bosom, breast, chest; enclosure formed by the breast and the arms; sheltering embrace. Plate from "Arthurian Romances," late 13th century. Yale University Library.

to find something just to write on as well as find something to write with. She also presents numerous Old English poems, in particular those relating to Christian saints. The poem "Beowulf" is utilized very often to exemplify the words she is discussing.

All of that culture and history is woven seamlessly around the words. The author doesn't miss a step in doing so, and never bores the reader with anything mundane. Her humor, indeed, would probably not allow it. I found myself audibly laughing many times throughout the book, which was a surprise I had not expected but eventually came to expect.

A Book to Treasure

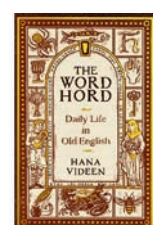
"The Wordhord" is a journey through the past, and one that should be deemed significant to English speakers, even if you end up thinking to yourself: How is this our mother

tongue? It's a question I found myself asking.

When tuning in to your Anglophilia concerning the great kings and queens, battles and conquests, writers and poets, and monks and saints, consider the language they all spoke. It was a language of a people so near to all of us, yet now so unfamiliar.

Videen's book will be a treasure for language nerds. For everyone else, it will be a fun, fascinating, and hilarious read. Undoubtedly, it was one of the most enjoyable reads I've encountered in a long time.

Dustin Bass is the host of Epoch TV's "About the Book: A Show about New Books With the Authors Who Wrote Them." He is an author and co-host of The Sons of History podcast.



The book is more fun than you might think.

'The Wordhord: Daily Life in Old English'

Author

By Hana Videen

Publisher

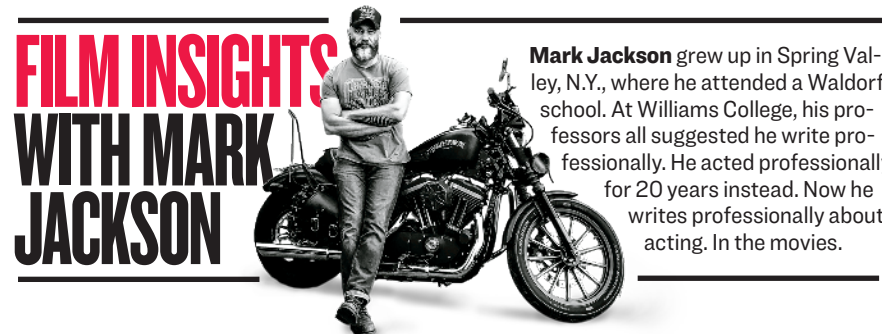
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Mark Jackson grew up in Spring Valley, N.Y., where he attended a Waldorf school. At Williams College, his professors all suggested he write professionally. He acted professionally for 20 years instead. Now he writes professionally about acting. In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

Normalizing America's Gender Agenda

MARK JACKSON

Steven Spielberg's original "Jurassic Park," based on Michael Crichton's novel, was an instant, classic blockbuster. Jurassic classic. It had originality in world-building, the king of movie magic directing, and the kind of lo-tech puppetry that, done well, can put sophisticated CGI to shame. It created a true sense of wonder. Remember the vibrations in the dashboard water cup, due to ponderous T. rex footfalls? Pure magic.

Then came the installment that tweaked DNA and created monster-saurs out of dinosaurs. That was a pretty good one. Evil humans! Always fiddling about like wicked Uncle Ernie from 'The Who's "Tommy," being driven by technological competition and greed.

Now, with "Jurassic World: Dominion," we've finally arrived at the franchise's conclusion. After 29 years the thrill is gone. T. rex is boring, and what we're left with is a bloated vessel—call it an ark—of dinos that's listing badly, about to sink, but which attempts, in its final moments, to float a boatload of Hollywood woke-ness at the world. More on this later.

Familiarity Breeds Contempt

My brother once did TV's "Deadliest Catch" for real; he worked aboard dangerous crab boats in Alaska's Bering Strait. He said, of going ashore, that our national bird, the majestic bald eagle, is as common as chickens out there, squabbling over fish scraps on beaches, and that you really don't want to see herds of them like that because there's an eventual loss of respect: Familiarity breeds contempt.

In "Jurassic World: Dominion"—same deal. The cloned dinosaurs that escaped their island paddock and have been running around onscreen since 1993 have lost their majesty and become the type of pests you call the exterminator about.

But more than that—they've assimilated. They gallop in herds, in romantic John Fordian fashion, across America's great plains (pursued and lassoed by cowboys, no less). They saunter amiably alongside pachyderms on African flood plains. And there are pterodactyl nests on top of Manhattan's Freedom Tower. Very normalized! Not exotic! Not strange. Acceptable. Can we all get along? Can you see where I'm going with this?

What Happens

Human greed is full-blown in "Dominion." Dinosaurs are big business, bred as if in puppy farms, haggled over in black market "Star Wars"-type bazaars, and purchased willy-nilly by Big Pharma, hell-bent on excavating lucrative ancient remedies for modern illnesses.

The baddie here is gene-tech CEO Lewis Dodgson (Campbell Scott) who runs a massive company called Biosyn, a dino sanctuary in Italy. He's a classic, benign-seeming, absent-minded-professor type, but he's got a few surreptitious irons in the fire, one of which is a plan to control the world's grain supply by bioengineering gargantuan dino-locusts and letting them do their locust-y-nom-nom-thing on America's crops. Ahem. Sort of like we've been hearing about powerful folks currently buying up America's farmland.

Problem is, big crunchy locusts, while gross, are not scary. "Dominion" tries to make up for this scare-vacuum by ramping up the ac-



(L-R) Alan Grant (Sam Neill), Maisie Lockwood (Isabella Sermon), and Owen Grady (Chris Pratt) do the warding-off-of-velociraptors gesture.



A classic T. rex shot from "Jurassic World: Dominion."



Ian Malcolm (Jeff Goldblum) getting ready to hightail it out of the dino danger zone.



Ellie Sattler (Laura Dern, C) says hello to a baby triceratops.

tion: motorcycle chases, shootouts with dino smugglers, and cargo plane mayhem involving territorial pterodactyls. Along with the now standard dino-on-dino chomp action between two or three of "the biggest" dino carnivores.

Meanwhile ...

The nonstop bickering ex-Navy SEAL-turned-raptor-trainer Owen Grady (Chris Pratt) and former dino park operations manager Claire Dearing (Bryce Dallas Howard) are a couple now, living in a cabin, attempting to parent human clone Maisie Lockwood (Isabella Sermon). Also protect her, because who can keep their hands off a free-ranging human clone running about? She must be collected and lab-tested. Take a wild guess by whom.

Back by popular demand from the original "Jurassic." Dr. Ellie Sattler (Laura Dern) sees what's going on with the locust situation. She goes and gets original Dr. Alan Grant (Sam Neill), who's still doggedly digging up original dino bones even though live dinosaurs are now basically running around in his backyard. They head over to Biosyn to sniff around.

Also, genetically tampered-with velociraptor Blue from the last movie had a baby (for which she didn't require a mate), and suddenly the baby and Maisie the clone are simultaneously kidnapped by mercenaries and whisked off to Biosyn, where the original (and now-famous) chaos theorist Ian Malcolm (Jeff Goldblum) is guest lecturing. Once everyone is gathered at Biosyn, let the inevitable dino destruction commence!

Upshot

From day one, the "Jurassic" series has always been about exploitation and capitalistic greed. Dino DNA was manipulated to resurrect Lazarus-like dinosaurs from extinction for purposes of scientific advancement, but mostly to sell theme-park tickets and merch.

We know all this. And it's been fun. And to be fair, once this clunker gets rolling, it's got some decent, theme-park roller-coaster tension and fun as well.

But the thesis of "Dominion"—that it's logical to think that dinosaurs could blend into modern planetary existence and not be megapests—is sci-fi, pseudoscience nonsense at best. New York City, after a century's worth of three infestations (rats, roaches, and bedbugs) can't get rid of them but, say, a man-killing velociraptor infestation... no problem?

It should go without saying that we humans have unnaturally elevated ourselves to apex

predator status via technology. In a world of giant, unchecked T. rexes, raptors, various flying and swimming horrors, not to mention the diabolical gene-spliced, stronger-faster-smarter weaponized versions of all these apex-apex predators, there are no more human dino-snacks left on planet Earth probably inside of a week.

"Let all the species get along" is unsound logic and also bad storytelling. Nobody wants to see humans get along with dinosaurs. We want to see bad humans get eaten by dinosaurs—that's the payoff you want from your outrageously inflated, expensive movie night out; we want to see a T. rex eat whoever's responsible for \$7-a-gallon gas prices. That would be such poetic justice, since gasoline is ultimately dinosaur bones.

The purpose of all of this Rodney King "Can we all get along?" plea as it pertains to cloned dinosaurs, genetically modified dinosaurs, and cloned humans is this: This cornucopia of contrived life forms is a blatant metaphor for the myriad permutations and combinations of surgically, pharmaceutically, and eventually genetically tampered-with gender alterations and gender transitioning that the world is now looking at and indoctrinating our children with in schools.

Here's the ultimate example: Clone Maisie Lockwood's mom got herself pregnant in a lab. Not a man in sight. What would you call that? Maybe a "birthing person"? Is Hollywood saying, who needs men? Transitioning rules the day? Frankenworld?

Hollywood herewith just tried to subliminally normalize the world's current gender confusion. It's contrived, unnatural, inorganic, tampered with, and it reminds me of a popular 1960s TV ad, the punchline of which was "It's not nice to fool Mother Nature."

Mother Nature is smarter than humans. She's the birthing person of humans. There's always retribution for human fiddling foolishness.

Let's hope "Jurassic World" remains only a movie concept.



Dr. Henry Wu (BD Wong) poses with a dissected Jurassic megalocust.



Owen Grady (Chris Pratt) has lassoed himself a grass-grazing parasauropod.

FINE ART

The ‘St. Vincent Panels’ Historic Process Undertaken for Historic Painting

ARIANE TRIEBSWETTER

As visitors look through a glass window, restorers work diligently to preserve one of Portugal’s national treasures. Paints, microscopes, X-ray machines, trays, tools, computers, frames, and tables fill the space, all set up to do this important work.

Since June 1, 2020, an international group of experts has been analyzing, scanning, and retouching one of Portugal’s most important cultural artifacts: the “St. Vincent Panels” (circa 1470). In Portuguese, the work is known as “Painéis de São Vicente.” Anyone can watch in real-time as conservation experts restore the polyptych (many-paneled painting) at the National Antique Art Museum of Lisbon, Portugal.

It is estimated that originally the artwork may have had 12 panels, with six now lost. The six panels that constitute the work have been separated for the restoration process. Incredibly, most of the wood that supports the panels has survived from the original structure.

International Restoration Effort

The technical difficulty in restoration is to preserve the original work: to repair damage from past renovations and to uncover the original work, while not damaging the painting or giving an incorrect historic or aesthetic result.

Luckily, with the latest 21st-century technology available to conservators as well as experts in other fields, the process is easier. Technical support arrived from two specialized laboratories: the HERCULES Laboratory of Évora University and the José de Figueiredo Laboratory of Lisbon, which assisted in analyzing the painting and suggesting how

to best restore it using their equipment.

International consultants also arrived to help. Art historians and conservators-restorers came from the National Gallery of London, the University of Ghent in Belgium (Ghent is the city that is home to the renowned Ghent Altarpiece), the Central Institute of Restoration in Belgium, the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, and the Prado Museum in Madrid.

Experts first examined every inch of the six panels to record all damage done to the painting over time. This preparatory work determined the best approach to preserve the original composition and rediscover the original bright colors. After registering previous restorations completed before 2020 and any damage caused by time, the restorers began the second phase, which is now in progress.

Since the 16th century, the panels may have had as many as six restorations. The main goal of the restorers and the museum is to not damage the integrity of the painting. Restorers want to bring back the painting’s brighter colors and conserve as much of the original piece as possible.

Painstaking Progress

The experts are removing old layers of varnish to see the right chromatic range of the panels and to discover the original colors used in the painting. To see the different layers and use of colors, restorers use UV lights to register any differences in fluorescence; this allows them to recognize the different layers and use of colors.

During the UV process, experts noticed blue layers of color under red layers. The blue changed the painting entirely, as red is one of the predominant colors of the panels. Experts also saw all of the retouched areas and materials used throughout different time periods.



A photo of the “St. Vincent Panels” is provided for patrons while the painting is being restored at the National Antique Art Museum of Lisbon.



Sculpture of Nuno Gonçalves, royal painter of the court of King Afonso V.

For example, the painting was cleaned multiple times with an acid pH solution during previous restorations, which damaged some of the painting.

Earlier conservators, before the 1910 restoration, had used varnish layers that didn’t correspond to the colors originally used by the painter. The current restoration team applied varnish to parts of the panels to know which parts to clean, to see what colors were actually originally used by the painter, and what was added in later renovations.

The next step for the museum restorers was to use X-rays to reveal things that are invisible to the naked eye. For example, they discovered faces that were painted on top of others. The X-rays guided the experts in selecting what methodology to choose for the specific scanned areas of the panels.

Mysterious Collective Portrait

The panels were discovered in 1882 in the monastery of São Vicente de Fora, in the Alfama district of Lisbon. The panels were then put on display at the National Antique Art Museum, after being restored in 1910 by Portuguese painter Luciano Freire.

The panels are attributed to Nuno Gonçalves, royal painter of the court of King Afonso V. The painting—oil and tempera on oak—is thought to originally be part of the St. Vincent altarpiece in Lisbon’s cathedral, known as the Sé.

Pictorially, the painting is considered one of the first group portraits in 15th-century Europe. Collective portraits were rare during the European Renaissance, and most were not as expressive as this one. The panels are also remarkable because they are one of the few paintings that depict 15th-century Portuguese society.

To this day, there is speculation among specialists regarding the precise identities of



the figures and the meaning of the panels as a whole. The artist depicted a large group of figures in this work of art. There are 58 in total gathered around St. Vincent of Saragossa, a third-century martyr and the patron saint of Lisbon. St. Vincent is pictured twice: on each of the two larger, middle panels. On either side are two narrower panels filled with more figures.

The panels show characters of the Portuguese court in the 15th century and Portuguese nobility, as well as knights, friars and monks of different religious orders, counselors, and other unidentified figures. The painting presents a ceremonial, contemplative, and solemn setting, as shown in the poses of figures with hands folded as if in prayer. The social groups have expressive looks, and refined costumes and accessories.

Age of Greatness

The “St. Vincent Panels” hold great meaning for Portuguese identity because of the period during which it was painted: the Age of Discovery. The Portuguese refer to this time as the “Age of Discoveries.” It was a time of

economic and cultural growth for the nation, and an era of great maritime exploration and expansion. The most common interpretation of this painting is that it celebrates the accomplishments of Portuguese expansion in North Africa during the Avis Dynasty, Portugal’s second dynasty between 1385 and 1580.

Multiple figures in the painting point to the Age of Discovery. Most importantly, the painting’s namesake, St. Vincent, who was the patron saint of seafarers during expeditions, was embraced by the Portuguese people. According to legend, the first king of Portugal, Afonso Henriques (circa 1106–1185), was said to have found the saint’s relics (remains) and brought them to Lisbon. He is not portrayed in the painting.

Another character possibly portrayed in the panels is Henry the Navigator, one of the most important figures of the early Age of Discovery. In 1895, Portuguese art historian Joaquim de Vasconcelos identified the elderly man wearing a burgundy hat on one of the central panels as Henry the Navigator. However, the identification of many of the char-

The painting is considered one of the first group portraits in 15th-century Europe.

For more arts and culture articles, visit [TheEpochTimes.com](https://www.theepochtimes.com)

acters, including Henry, in this polyptych is still discussed and strongly debated.

To document this historic restoration, the Portuguese newspaper *The Public* (O Público) has followed the process for the last three years, in partnership with the museum and the Millennium BCP Foundation (Fundação Millennium bcp). Through video footage, photography, articles, and interviews, the newspaper shares the restoration process with its readers. A team of journalists regularly visits the “restoration house” to check on the progress, and the paper has a dedicated page on the panels and their restoration.

Restoring the “St. Vincent Panels” represents a chance to restore an artistic legacy to Portugal.

The restoration process can be seen live at the National Antique Art Museum in Lisbon, Portugal, until Dec. 31, 2022.

Ariane Triebswetter is an international freelance journalist with a background in modern literature and classical music.

The “St. Vincent Panels” currently undergoing restoration.

WHAT GOOD IS POETRY?

Wordsworth’s Lament in ‘The World Is Too Much With Us’

SEAN FITZPATRICK

One way or another, people must make sense of the world, but how they come to that understanding begs the question of what it means to understand something. Does understanding hang on things like structure or significance or something else altogether?

Poetry is one way to come to an understanding of things on several levels. Derived from the Greek “poiesis,” meaning “to make,” poetry makes rational, emotional, and spiritual connections between physical and metaphysical reality, helping us to understand that the physical functioning of matter is not all that matters. There are deeper functions and higher forces that cannot be captured by equations or definitions.

Consider the sonnet “The World Is Too Much With Us” by William Wordsworth:

The world is too much with us; late and soon,
Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers—
Little we see in Nature that is ours;
We have given our hearts away, a sordid boom!
This Sea that bares her bosom to the moon;
The winds that will be howling at all hours,
And are up-gathered now like sleeping flowers;
For this, for everything, we are out of tune;
It moves us not. Great God! I’d rather be
A Pagan suckled in a creed outworn;
So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,
Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn;
Have sight of Proteus rising from the sea;
Or hear old Triton blow his wreathèd horn.

With this piece, Wordsworth shows the function and power of poetry: to identify those things that lie beyond the expression of discreet quantity and quality and give them a presence and a purpose that rise above the noise of an industrialized, science-saturated society.

Many people nowadays subordinate spiritual exercise to the acquisition of knowledge that is purely functional and utilitarian, and this is precisely what Wordsworth’s sonnet bewails. There are essential mysteries of the heart that defy



“Aurora With Apollo Driving the Sun Chariot” by Costantino Cedini. Oil on canvas.

market mentalities and social or scientific systems. But how to express that? Their expression begins with the poetic.

From Matter to Something More

English author D.H. Lawrence posited that to call the sun a ball of burning gas is to resist the vital power of the sun. “To the scandal of physicists,” he said, “whatever the sun is, it is not a ball of flaming gas.” By this, he meant that the sun is essentially more than its composition, as are all things that exist.

Poetry helps us to understand that the physical functioning of matter is not all that matters.

Sometimes allowing for more than the physical, even if it means allowing for the fantastic, is truly important. In other words, it is more important to look at the sun and think about God than about gas. In the former lies the poetic power of the sun, a power that Wordsworth says the world is out of tune with.

The world is a materialist world and has lost touch with the symbolic side of reality, lending itself instead to the idea that only matter—

what is commonly called “stuff”—matters, and that the mere having of things, even to excess, is paramount in this life. Thus, much of the appreciation for the subtler things, the spiritual things, has been sacrificed on a worldly altar of affluence.

Those who share Wordsworth’s assessment should dare to resist and reverse the crisis of “getting and spending” by boldly embracing the beautiful things that make life worth living. These are often the things worth doing for their own sake and are enriching instead of just time-consuming.

The World We Have Lost

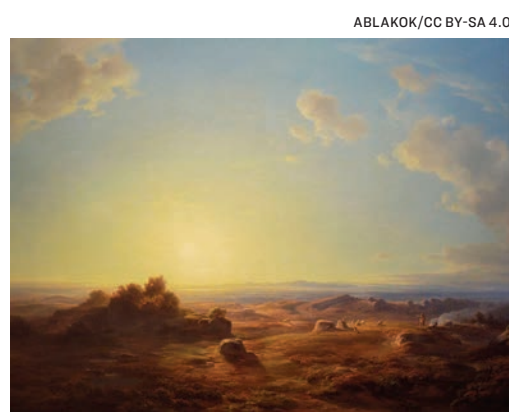
Wordsworth shakes us with the might and majesty of poetry, with howling winds and sleeping flowers and the seductive sea, providing a philosophical and theological platform rooted in wonder. It rises above the accumulation of facts to the interconnectedness of all subjects understood in their proper relation to one another—where one might see majestic gods moving over the waters instead of the dull vessels of commerce.

Poetry is the creative utterance of the mystical sense of creation. It expresses our sensitivity to creation. As such, nature can serve as a poetic portal to supernatural contemplation—what many have held and still hold to be the highest of all human acts, despite the way the world and its workings overwhelm us.

Poets like Wordsworth, together with

the powers he invokes, urge a different, deeper worldview than the one championed today. And poems like “The World Is Too Much With Us” invite the contemplation of the symbolic nature of the world as it struggles against materialist fixation, and strives for the beautiful, yet difficult, balance of body and soul.

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.



“Heath Near St. Hippolyte at the Foot of the Vosges in Alsace,” 1848, by Christian Ernst Bernhard Morgenstern.

BOOK REVIEW

‘Visible Hand: The Wealth of Notions on the Miracle of the Market’

A straightforward, nonacademic view of how economics works

DUSTIN BASS

Matthew Hennessey, the deputy opinion editor for *The Wall Street Journal*, has written a new book titled “Visible Hand: A Wealth of Notions on the Miracle of the Market.” It is a straightforward, unpatronizing breakdown of economics without the academic jargon that often loses people.

While reading this book, I thought to myself: This should be handed out with the diploma to every graduating high school senior.

Hennessey uses everyday experiences to demonstrate how economics works and why an economy either flourishes, diminishes, or craters. The author presents the lofty discussion, often referred to in the book as the “dismal science,” in simple terms. In other words, he takes the discussion from the ivory tower to main street.

Accessible to the Common Man

Economists from Friedrich Hayek to Leonard Read to Milton Friedman (all of whom are mentioned in this book) worked to make economics more relatable, and in many ways they succeeded. Books ranging from “The Road to Serfdom” to “I, Pencil” to “Free to Choose” have made economics more easily understandable for the general public, regardless of the reader’s secondary or post-secondary education.

By Hennessey’s own admission, his book on economics is “for people who, broadly speaking, don’t like economics. Or think they don’t.” It is not so much that the author dumps down economics; rather, he makes it clear that everyone, whether they want to admit it or not, engages in economics. To make those points, he utilizes personal experiences from his childhood to adulthood, as well as pop culture references (from his childhood and adulthood).

One of the main themes of the book (and for that matter, economics in general) is that economics is about choices. Hennessey references his time in high school when he had a choice between high school baseball and drama.

He really liked both but couldn’t do both.

He states that, little did he know at the time, he was engaging in “trade-offs” (an oft-used idea of economist Thomas Sowell, who is mentioned quite often in the book). At that age, he wasn’t forking out money, but he did have to use the form of currency he possessed: time.

The author relates this fork in the road to the many other forks in the roads he encountered, as well as the ones we as members of the populace encounter.

This book is for those who don’t like economics.

Pop Culture as Economic Lessons

What do the Sex Pistols have to do with economics? In fact, Hennessey centers a sizeable section of his book around a comment made by the Sex Pistols’ lead singer Johnny Rotten: “Ever get the feeling you’ve been cheated?”

The rhetorical question that Rotten asked is not rhetorical in the book. The answer is yes. Hennessey, in his fifth chapter, titled “Prices,” demonstrates all the ways we can feel cheated, even when we aren’t cheated. This feeling has to do with how a company establishes its prices in order to create profits. He uses his son’s love of Lego blocks to demonstrate the point. It is a very creative, yet simple method for explaining how supply and demand and utility affect product pricing.

Family as Economic Lessons

Regarding his son’s love of Legos, Hennessey discusses in detail his parents’ economical maneuvering, ranging from charity work to entrepreneurship. There are plenty of people who choose a career path based on charity work. His parents were like this.

When an opportunity opened for his father to run a shelter for troubled youth, he jumped at the chance. For nearly a decade, his father’s work was based on helping the community.

Then a member of the community decided to play politics. Hennessey takes the



Bustling with work and activity, “The Wealth of the Nation” by Seymour Fogel. Mural.

moment to demonstrate how this is part of economics, and a multifaceted part at that. His father lost his job just months before he would have been eligible for a pension. Along with that, anyone who has worked for a charity organization—unless, of course, we’re talking about that one 501(c)(3) called the NFL—knows that the pay is less than stellar.

Like so many individuals, couples, and families over the centuries, the Hennesseys needed to make a decision, and it was one that needed to be made quickly. The family went into business for themselves, and did so with some help from family members, friends, and members of the community. It’s an example not just of how financial capital assists entrepreneurs, but also of the importance of social capital (though the term social capital isn’t used in the book, the reference is clear).

And for this small business, prior community investment proved pivotal. The Hennesseys bought an old bar and turned it into a successful enterprise, one that impacted the family and the community in positive ways. The author describes how this small business supported the family, provided those necessary first jobs for him and his siblings (along with other locals), strengthened the social fabric of the community, enabled the family to take vacations, and allowed his parents to eventually retire comfortably.

There is also within the tale a discussion of how supply and demand works, and not simply with products (that is, drinks and food), but the welcoming environment in which people find themselves.

The numerous stories bring economics to life for the reader—and that, in itself, is the author’s main goal.

Politics and Economics

Hennessey, in a less than subtle way, proves that economics is all around us at all times. It is, as he states in the book, like any other law of nature. There is nothing you can do about

it except abide by it, and when you attempt to defy that law of nature (like many, including governments, try to do) bad things happen.

There are those who believe that they can deny the laws of economics (that is, nature) without recourse. They are commonly called socialists.

Hennessey proves to be a very nonconfrontational writer, at least for the vast majority of the book. But then he discusses the problems regarding Democrats and Republicans and their less-than-free-market-enterprise views.

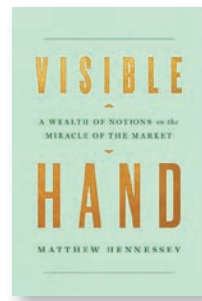
There is a thorough discussion on Sen. Bernie Sanders and his ilk (“ilk” is used by the author) and how uneconomical perspectives put into practice (or rather forced into practice) will ultimately destroy the lives of regular Americans.

It’s not hard to sense the passion (or understandable anger) with which Hennessey writes. He has his own kids to take care of, and it appears he wants to make it clear that everyone should be thinking on those familial terms.

Economics isn’t simply for those who have read “The Wealth of Nations” by Adam Smith. Those readers would be few and far between indeed, but rather this book is for those who, broadly speaking, don’t like economics. Hennessey has tried to make economics accessible and enjoyable to learn for just about everyone.

Why? Because while we may not be interested in economics, as the author states early in the book, “economics is interested in all of us.” All the more reason to consider getting the book for that recent graduate.

Dustin Bass is the host of Epoch TV’s “About the Book: A Show about New Books With the Authors Who Wrote Them.” He is an author and co-host of The Sons of History podcast.



‘Visible Hand: A Wealth of Notions on the Miracle of the Market’

Author
By Matthew Hennessey

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REWIND, REVIEW, AND RE-RATE

How Danger Follows Fame, Western Style

IAN KANE

When I first heard of the 1950 Western “The Gunfighter,” I immediately imagined a bunch of lawmen and outlaws drawing their six-shooters and blasting away at each other, either in tawdry saloons or standing in the middle of a street in some dusty town. But to my surprise, what I found instead was a completely different cinematic animal—a slow-burn character study about a man trying to run from his shady past, and perhaps turn his life around.

I also wasn’t expecting Gregory Peck to star in the lead role as apex gunslinger Jimmy Ringo, a man with a reputation so ferocious that people gape and stare at him wherever he winds up. Fortunately, Peck manages the character quite well since Ringo isn’t the young, thrill-seeking hot-head he once was. On the contrary, Ringo, now in his mid-30s, has matured and pulls his pistol only when his life is threatened.

The film opens in the Southwest of the 1880s. Ringo rides into a small town and enters the local watering hole in search of a stiff drink. His presence immediately raises some eyebrows. But a young hotshot named Eddie (Richard Jaeckel) isn’t impressed. Like so many before him, Eddie yearns to test his burgeoning gunslinging skills against the legend Ringo, and thereby make a big name for himself. And also like so many others, Eddie’s self-delusional vision of himself vastly outstrips his gun-fighting skill set.

After Eddie challenges Ringo and loses badly, Ringo is once again on the run, even though he shot the brash youth in self-defense. Eddie’s three older brothers don’t care who drew their pistols first—they simply want to settle the score for Eddie’s death. Therefore, they begin trailing Ringo to another town called Cayenne.

Once there, Ringo sets up shop in a drink-

Now, Jimmy Ringo pulls his pistol only when his life is threatened.

‘The Gunfighter’

Director:
Henry King

Starring:
Gregory Peck,
Helen Westcott,
Millard Mitchell

Not Rated

Running Time:
1 hour, 25 minutes

Release Date:
June 23, 1950

★★★★★



Gregory Peck in a wonderful but lesser-known Western, “The Gunfighter.”

ing establishment ironically called “The Palace.” Its proprietor is Mac (Karl Malden), who recognizes Ringo and quickly alerts the town’s top lawman, Marshal Mark Strett (Millard Mitchell). Strett happens to have a past with Ringo, and they used to run together as buddies.

Ringo knows that the three brothers will arrive in town at some point, but he’s determined to make amends with his old sweetheart, Peggy Walsh (Helen Westcott), and see his young son for the first time. Gossip swiftly envelopes the town like wildfire, and soon another local young buck named Hunt Bromley (Skip Homeier) wants to make a name for himself by shooting Ringo down.

A Western With a Great Script

This sets up a complex set of dilemmas and fascinating situations. Fortunately, the superb script (written by William Bowers and William Sellers) has a peppy buoyancy to it that never drags, yet lets its more thoughtful moments linger. These great scenes mainly consist of Peck as Ringo quietly pondering his next move or weighing his limited options.

Peck’s long and lean frame subtly shifts and twists—indicating the inner torment of a man who is considered the “top gun of the West” yet has grown weary of the notoriety and simply wants to reconcile with his wife and settle into a normal life with his family. But Peck can also suddenly transform into an aggressive version of Ringo’s old self. This happens whenever his more mature and tolerant persona doesn’t quite get the message across to any of the reckless souls who confront him. It’s a marvelous display

of multidimensional acting.

The supporting cast is likewise excellent, with standout performances by Helen Westcott (who reminds me of Grace Kelly) playing a woman who is conflicted about letting a formerly very bad man (and only love) back into her life, as well as by Millard Mitchell as a sympathetic friend who is trying to uphold the law.

Frankly, “The Gunfighter” surprised me in a very positive way. Its mix of interesting characters, tense drama (along with wry bits of humor), fantastic writing and direction, beautiful black-and-white cinematography, and outstanding set design make it a highly entertaining Western that is a delight to watch.

Ian Kane is an U.S. Army veteran, author, filmmaker, and actor. He is dedicated to the development and production of innovative, thought-provoking, character-driven films and books of the highest quality. You can check out his health blog at IanKaneHealthNut.com



Wherever Jimmy Ringo (Gregory Peck, L) goes, a young hothead follows, here Hunt Bromley (Skip Homeier), hoping to outgun him.



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