

THE EPOCH TIMES

ARTS & CULTURE

PUBLIC DOMAIN

A 1910 plaster replica of an 1821 marble sculpture of George Washington, created by Italian sculptor Antonio Canova, is now on display at the North Carolina Museum of History. The original sculpture was destroyed in a fire in 1831.



NATION

History of

North Carolina Office of
Historical Research
100 S. Salisbury St.
Raleigh, NC 27601

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FINE ARTS

The Myth and the Might of Antonio Canova's Sculptures

George Washington, Napoleon,
The Three Graces, and others

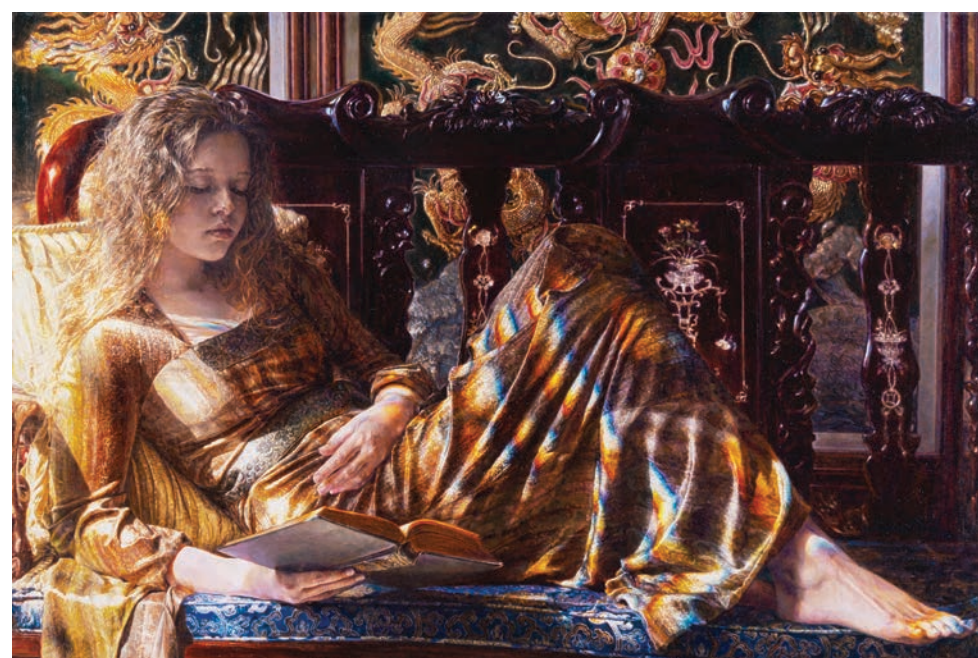
LORRAINE FERRIER

In 1820, the preeminent neoclassical sculptor Antonio Canova completed a marble sculpture of George Washington that divided many viewers. Dressed as a Roman emperor, the over life-sized, seated Washington appears middle-aged, relaxed, and confident as he contemplates what he's written on the tablet he holds.

Canova inscribed "To the Great Nation of the United States of America" on the bottom of the sculpture.

Thomas Jefferson had suggested that Canova, an Italian, create the work because he deemed no American sculptor capable;

Continued on Page 4



Ying and Yang by Sandra Kuck

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Two writers—one of them a doyen of etiquette, Judith Martin; the other a grand mistress of gastronomy, M.F.K. Fisher—bring a cosmopolitan elegance to the page and are in a class all their own.

TRADITIONAL CULTURE

Etiquette, Eating, and Eloquence: Two Leading Ladies of the English Language

JEFF MINICK

Ask someone who knows the movies to name an actor and actress who best depicted sophistication, grace, and style on the big screen, and odds are that Audrey Hepburn and Cary Grant will pop up in that conversation.

"Sophisticated" is an adjective often linked with both of these stars. In nearly all his roles, from the dark comedy "Arsenic and Old Lace" to the suspense-filled "North by Northwest," Cary Grant projected the consummate gentleman, impeccably attired, and a model of manners, wit, and masculinity. The inimitable rhythms of his voice with its practiced Mid-Atlantic accent—softened vowels and discarded R's—buttressed this image of poise and urbanity.

Audrey Hepburn likewise brought sophistication to her acting. She may have played the Cockney flower girl Eliza Doolittle in "My Fair Lady," but in most of her roles she exhibited a style and grace that imprinted itself indelibly on audiences. Even today, the clothes and jewelry that Hepburn wore and the way she carried herself draw the attention and admiration of younger women.

Just as this brand of sophistication is rare among film stars, so too among American writers. We have many fine makers of words, but rarely would we describe their prose as shimmering with the verbal worldliness and grace of a dry martini, a little black dress, or a perfectly fitted tuxedo.

Miss Manners

Since 1978, Judith Martin has served as the nation's most prominent arbiter of etiquette. Better known by her pen name "Miss Manners," Martin has written and seen published several thousand columns, many of them collected in a score of books. Critics have sung her praises as an "authentically comic genius" and "a philosopher cleverly and charmingly disguised as an etiquette columnist." In 2005, Martin received the National Humanities Medal, our nation's highest award for work done in the humanities.

In addition to her gifts for humor and her crisp commentary on a broad range of subjects, Martin also brings to her writing a near-genius ability to match

the style of her prose with her subject of etiquette. To the delight of her readers, her prim yet saucy tone became the hallmark of "Miss Manners." In "Miss Manners' Guide to Excruciatingly Correct Behavior," for example, she replies to a reader asking how one politely eats a grapefruit:

"Gentle reader: 'Carefully, if at all. The grapefruit is a particularly vicious piece of work with a sour disposition, just lying in wait to give someone a good squirt in the eye. If the grapefruit sections have not been loosened with a grapefruit knife before servicing, or if you are not armed with a pointed grapefruit spoon, give up. It will get you before you get it.'

A college girl asks, "How does a lady discreetly deal with perspiration?" and receives this response:

"Gentle reader: 'A lady does not perspire. When dear Orson Welles was married to Rita Hayworth, someone spoke of her as 'sweating,' and he replied coldly, 'Horses sweat. People perspire. Miss Hayworth glows.' There is nothing wrong with dewy college girls. Within reason, of course.'

Of the elaborate ruses a gentleman often concocts to surprise his potential bride-to-be with a ring and a proposal, Miss Manners notes: "If enough work is put into it, the gentleman will be exhausted enough not to mess with the wedding arrangements, thus enabling the bride to 1) have it all her way, and 2) complain that if he loved her, he would take more of an interest."

This mix of formality and wit make Martin eminently quotable, especially short, succinct messages like this one: "If you can't be kind, at least be vague." She also restates truisms that score a bull's-eye: "Society cannot exist without etiquette. ... It never has, and until our own century, everybody knew that."

The Queen of Feasts

Writer and media personality Clifton Fadiman called her "the most interesting philosopher of food now practicing in our country." Poet W.H. Auden bestowed even higher praise when he said, "I do not know of anyone in the United States today who writes better prose." The subject of their remarks was Mary Frances Kennedy Fisher (1908–1992),

ALEKSEY MATREININ/SHUTTERSTOCK

in the two weeks of his carefree youth find a clean smooth place to fix on, the years afterwards are full of stress, passion, and danger."

"Consider the Oyster" is today available as part of "The Art of Eating," a 784-page tome made up of four other books as well: "Serve It Forth," "How to Cook a Wolf," "The Gastronomical Me," and "An Alphabet for Gourmets." Open this hefty collection to any page, and you would be hard-pressed to find a dead sentence or a dull description. I just tried this experiment myself and dropped straight into this passage from "An Alphabet for Gourmets:"

"I have, in public places, watched women suddenly turn a tableful of human beings into scowling tigers and hyenas with their quiet, ferocious nagging, and I have shuddered especially at the signs of pure criminality that then veil children's eyes as they bolt down their poisoned food and flee."

That passage precedes, of all things, a special recipe for scrambled eggs.

Fisher's best-known work, "How to Cook a Wolf," brings particularly pertinent encouragement to our time of skyrocketing prices in the grocery store. Originally written with the "ration cards and blackouts and like miseries of World War II" in mind—the title derives from the proverbial "wolf at the door"—"How to Cook a Wolf" makes an adventure of eating well when choices and resources are limited. Referring to the postwar return of skyrocketing prices in the grocery store, Fisher writes that people may be more appreciative of plentiful food: "And that is good, for there can be no more shameful carelessness than with the food we eat for life itself. When we exist without thought or thanksgiving we are not men, but beasts."

Like Martin, Fisher is not only a fine writer but a cultural philosopher as well.

Ease Is a Mark of High Style

The prose of both Martin and Fisher comes across to their readers, as should the sentences constructed by any conscientious writer, as having leaped effortlessly from the cranium onto the

better known as M.F.K. Fisher, who once summed up her gastronomical philosophy by writing: "There is a communion of more than our bodies when bread is broken and wine is drunk. And that is my answer, when people ask me: Why do you write about hunger, and not wars or love."

Though the tone of their prose differs, like Judith Martin, M.F.K. Fisher composed sentences that sing to readers. In her 1941 book "Consider the Oyster," for example, she begins this way:

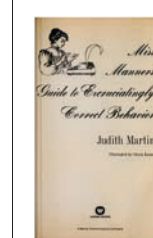
"An oyster leads a dreadful but exciting life.

"Indeed, his chance to live at all is slim, and if he should survive the arrows of his own outrageous fortune and

Both women put their heart and soul into their writing, choosing words and punctuation with consummate care.



M.F.K. Fisher makes an adventure of eating well when choices and resources are limited, in "How to Cook a Wolf."



Critics have sung the praises of Judith Martin ("Miss Manners") as a comic genius and "a philosopher cleverly and charmingly disguised as an etiquette columnist."



"Sophisticated" is an adjective often linked with Cary Grant and Audrey Hepburn, seen here in a scene from "Charade."

page—or today, onto the electronic screen. Like Hepburn and Grant in their movies, they perform gracefully in paragraph after flawless paragraph.

Yet it's safe to say that both women put their heart and soul into their writing, choosing words and punctuation with consummate care. In her introduction to "The Art of Eating," for instance, Fisher tells of a young man who once read aloud to her from a chapter in one of her books, which "had been pointed out to me as a good bit of writing by several people."

But then she comments: "The mean, cold fact remains, though, that on page one of the chapter, there is a use of one word which I shall never point out to anyone, but which offends me gravely. ... I'll regret until the day I die that I know it is there."

Now, there's a writer. When visiting Judith Martin, readers may find themselves, as I did, bursting into laughter at her sharp witticisms. When in the company of M.F.K. Fisher, those same readers may not laugh quite so much, but they may feel, as I did, as if they were running their fingers through a chest filled not with rubies, sapphires, and gold doubloons, but with the glittering jewels of nouns, verbs, and adjectives.

And so, here's a flute of champagne raised to you, good ladies, for having shared your treasures with the rest of us.

Jeff Minick lives and writes in Front Royal, Virginia. He is the author of two novels, "Amanda Bell" and "Dust on Their Wings," and two works of nonfiction, "Learning as I Go" and "Movies Make the Man."

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FINE ARTS

The Myth and the Might of Antonio Canova's Sculptures



A detail of "Napoleon as Mars the Peacemaker," 1803–1809, by Antonio Canova. Bronze; 127 3/4 inches

Napoleon deemed Canova's "Napoleon as Mars the Peacemaker" too athletic, so it never went on public display.



"Cupid and Psyche," 1808, by Antonio Canova. Marble; 59 inches tall. Museum visitors could once rotate this sculpture.

Continued from Page 1

however, not everyone agreed with that sentiment. When the marble first came to the Hall of the Senate in Raleigh, North Carolina, on Dec. 24, 1821, opinions differed. The Raleigh Register viewed it as "Doubtless the best specimen of the fine arts in the United States," while American historian R.D.W. Connor, in his 1910 history of the sculpture, wrote that some viewers accused Canova of "Romanizing the American general, declaring it to be a better statue of Julius Caesar than of George Washington."

To gain Washington's likeness, Canova used a bust that Italian sculptor Giuseppe Ceracchi had created from life. According to The Frick Collection website, while Canova carved Washington, he had assistants and his half-brother read aloud a history of the American Revolution. Canova later wrote of the first president that he was "the immortal Washington ... the genius who has performed such sublime deeds, for the safety and liberty of his country."

To understand why Canova chose to create his Washington in a seated position, we need to look at his sculpture "Napoleon as Mars the Peacemaker," explains art lecturer Christina Ferando in her talk on Canova for The Frick Collection. He depicted a standing, nude Napoleon triumphantly holding a statue of Nike, the goddess of victory. But Canova couldn't design a similar monumental work for his Washington piece because the display space available was not large enough; the room's ceiling was too low to effectively show the sculpture's grandeur. In addition, he knew that Americans would be offended by a nude Washington, so he clothed him.

Reviving the Ancient Greek Heritage of Sculpture

Canova (1757–1822) created his Washington piece at the end of an il-

Canova became known for reviving the ancient Greek heritage of sculpture.

lustrious career. He'd worked for popes, European royals, aristocrats, and politicians, including Napoleon, the Duke of Wellington, and Catherine the Great. Canova worked at a time of great discovery: Archaeologists had begun excavating ancient sites in Rome and then in Greece.

Early in his career, Canova became known for reviving the ancient Greek heritage of sculpture. Some, at the time, even called him the modern Phidias (circa 480–430 B.C.). Equating Canova to the ancient Greek sculptor was a grand gesture, and Canova would have been flattered by the comparison, as he believed "the works of Phidias are truly flesh and blood, like beautiful nature itself," according to Jean Martineau and Andrew Robinson in their book "The Glory of Venice: Art in the Eighteenth Century."

According to legend, only Phidias had seen the exact image of the gods, which he imparted to man. Phidias oversaw the Parthenon's complete sculptural design, making several important sculptures for the temple, such as his now lost 38-foot-high "Athena Parthenos" made in gold and ivory that held Nike in her hand. Similarly, Canova depicted Napoleon holding Nike in his work "Napoleon as



A detail of Antonio Canova's memorial cenotaph for Archduchess Maria Christina of Austria in the Augustinian Church in Vienna.

Mars the Peacemaker."

In 1779, when he was in his early 20s, Canova finished a sculpture of the ancient Greek mythical inventor, architect, and sculptor Daedalus and his son Icarus, titled "Daedalus and Icarus." The work shows Canova's Baroque style before he went to Rome; he later became known for his neoclassical works.

In this work, we can see Daedalus carefully fashioning wings on his son by binding feathers to his back with wax. Daedalus made wings for himself too, and the pair used their wings to fly, fleeing from the island of Sicily and the clutches of King Minos. Famously, Icarus died. His father warned him not to fly too high, yet he did. Icarus's bravado enticed him to fly closer to the sun, which then melted the wax on his makeshift wings, and he fell into the sea and drowned.

Daedalus and Icarus fled from King Minos after Daedalus had a hand in saving the life of the young Athenian prince Theseus by giving Theseus's beloved, Minos's daughter Ariadne, the secret to escape the labyrinth of the dreaded Minotaur. The Minotaur had the body of a man and the head of a bull. Theseus entered the labyrinth, offering himself as the Minotaur's sacrifice.

In his neoclassical sculpture "Theseus and the Minotaur," Canova chose to depict Theseus towering over the Minotaur he'd just slain. The work represents the contemplative mind (Theseus) triumphant over the material body (the dead Minotaur), scholar David Bindman said in his Sydney J. Freedberg Lecture on Italian Art in 2015.

Many people who saw "Theseus and the Minotaur" couldn't quite believe it was an original work by Canova rather than a copy of an ancient Greek sculpture. It was this work and his first papal commission in Rome, Pope Clement XIV's tomb (completed 1787) in the Santi Dodici Apostoli basilica, that cemented Canova's fame across Europe.

At the height of his fame, Canova created his best-known works, including "The Three Graces," "Psyche Revived by Cupid's Kiss," and "Pauline Borghese Bonaparte as Venus Victorious."

To Color or Not

For centuries, the pure white marble statue was the quintessential image of ancient sculpture. The idea of uncolored ancient sculpture arose during the late Italian Renaissance, when the sculptures fit the artists' ideal, as Vinzenz Brinkmann explains in a video on the Liebieghaus Sculpture Collection website. Brinkmann is the head of the department of antiquity at the Liebieghaus Sculpture Collection in Frankfurt am Main, Germany. For 40 years, his team has been researching ancient artists' use of color. (This is explored in The Metropolitan Museum of Arts' current exhibition "Chroma: Ancient Sculpture in Color.")

White had long symbolized light and godliness. Using lighter or white marble for the face or parts of the body may have been "one way of representing gods or god-like emperors, differentiating them from mortals or their bodies from the clothes they might be wearing," scholar David Bindman explained in his talk.

During the 18th century, archaeologists unearthed ancient Roman—and then ancient Greek—artifacts with traces of paint. Despite this discovery, the myth of uncolored ancient art persisted. Even in the 20th century when researchers used science to confirm that color was used on ancient statues, the idea of ancient sculpture being white still reigned.

Yet what's particularly fascinating about Canova is how he finished his works by reintroducing color and gilding (dorures) as the ancients once did. Bindman noted that Canova had actually seen colored pigments on the surface of ancient sculptures. Canova's friend, archaeology enthusiast Antoine-Chrysostome Quatremère de Quincy, was one of the first to note that the ancient Greeks once applied color to their sculpture and architecture.

Canova's patrons, however, found his "new" embellishments jarring. They believed that pure white sculptures were true to ancient tradition. For instance, Bindman explained that when the Duke of Bedford commissioned Canova to make him a sculpture of "The Three Graces," he gave clear instructions that it should be "cleaned down to bare marble."

Admired by Design

Many museums and art galleries were founded during Canova's lifetime, and he was one of the first to create works solely for museum display rather than for architectural settings.



"Pauline Borghese Bonaparte as Venus Victorious," 1801–1807, by Antonio Canova. Marble.



Antonio Canova's self-portrait in marble.

LORENZOPEZZI/SHUTTERSTOCK

Canova made the designs for the sculptures, and his workshop assistants created the initial figures, leaving the final finishing touches for their master to perfect. According to the Victoria and Albert Museum, London website, the Duke of Bedford described "The Three Graces" as "unsurpassed by any modern specimen of the art of sculpture," and noted "The morbidezza,—that look of living softness given to the surface of the marble, which appears as if it would yield to the touch."

When Canova designed those works, he considered every aspect and viewing angle. For example, he'd design architecture to house a work, control how the piece would be lit, and even alter existing architecture to ensure that his sculptures were seen in the best possible way.

Today, we're used to seeing museum artworks from afar—behind glass, a security rope, or from below at statues placed on pedestals. Art lovers in Canova's time viewed art differently. They were allowed to interact with the sculptures. They could touch and sometimes even rotate them. Viewers could turn Canova's sculpture "Cupid and Psyche" 360 degrees via a small metal handle in the base, Ferando explains in her talk for The Frick Collection. Viewers could also rotate some of Canova's sculpture groupings. The two wrestlers in his "Fight Between Creugas and Damoxenos" could be individually rotated 180 degrees, which meant that they still made visual sense as a pair. If he allowed them to be rotated 360 degrees, one could be facing the other way and not fighting the other.

Viewers were also encouraged to see the art by torchlight, as they believed the ancients once did. "The polish throws upon the parts which are lighted so great brilliancy as frequently to make invisible the most laborious diligence," German art historian Johann Joachim Winckelmann wrote.



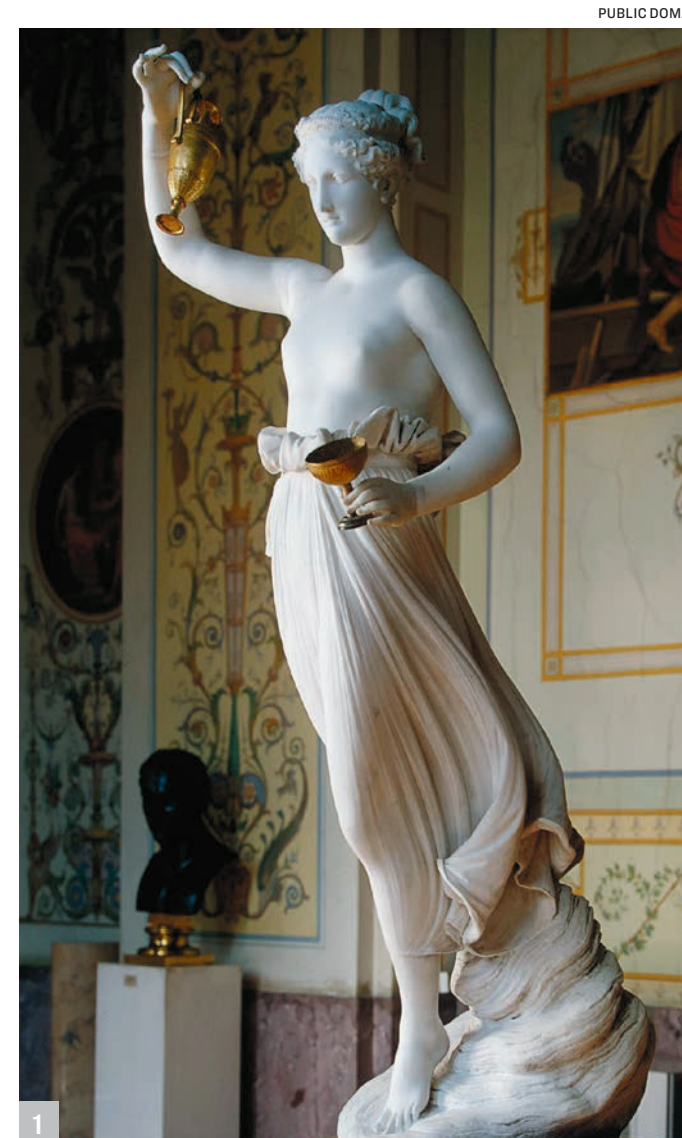
"Theseus and the Minotaur," 1782, by Antonio Canova. Marble; 57 1/4 inches by 62 1/2 inches by 36 inches.

In Light of Washington

When Canova's George Washington sculpture was unveiled in Raleigh, a newspaper commented: "Even the celebrated Statues of the Apollo of Belvidere [sic] and the Venus of Medici have their blemishes, but the Statue of Washington, like Washington himself, is without a stain or spot."

Today, we cannot see Canova's original marble sculpture of George Washington because fire destroyed it in 1831. But just as we can sometimes see ancient Greek sculptures only through ancient Roman copies or plaster casts, visitors can see a plaster cast replica of Canova's model for the work, as well as a 1970 marble copy.

Canova's George Washington sculpture summarizes the artist's approach to making great neoclassical art. He kept the essence of what he believed was the ancient Greek tradition of sculpture—the color, form, and accessories—while staying true to contemporary sensibilities.



1. "Hebe," by Antonio Canova. Marble; 25 5/8 inches by 63 inches by 33 1/2 inches.

2. "Daedalus and Icarus," 1777–1779, by Antonio Canova. Marble; 78 1/2 inches by 37 1/4 inches by 38 inches.



BOOK REVIEW

Leading Our Children in the Right Direction

ANITAL L. SHERMAN

It's been 14 years since our youngest graduated from high school. Much has changed in the public-school arena just in the last decade. None of our children were faced with critical race theory or gender politics in the classroom. I didn't worry about what they were reading in literature classes.

I'm thankful that our three grown children are out of the education system, but now we have four young grandbabies, four fresh young minds just starting out, and it's worrisome given the current climate of classrooms across the country.

In "Battle for the American Mind: Uprooting a Century of Miseducation," author Pete Hegseth is on a mission to save American education and our Western culture along with it.

He does a convincing job in his book by going back historically to take a look at the depth of the problem that America faces in restoring a philosophy of education long since lost. He argues that the progressive takeover of the educational pipeline goes much further back than any of us would have imagined, certainly starting before most of us were in school.

It's reached a point now where, due to the strength of teachers unions, not only is the classroom curriculum compromised but also the caliber of teachers and the composition of school boards, as well as what's being written in the textbooks. It's a one-sided view, in his mind, and not worthy of being taught to kids.

He fully admits that along with most of us, he has been indoctrinated by an educational system that has replaced reasoning with memorization and rote routines. It's all part of an orchestrated plan for political control, and it goes deeper than K-12 education. It strikes at the heart of cultural and economic order; above all, it dissolves the old reliance on Christianity.

Forgotten Force

For Hegseth and David Goodwin, who is founder of the Ambrose School in Idaho and a contributor to the book, a once-treasured ingredient in how children are raised has systematically been targeted and removed over time. He refers to it as Western Christian Paideia (WCP), and he uses the term repeatedly throughout the book. I suspect "paideia"

is not a word that most readers are familiar with or use. It encompasses much more than subject matter learned in school.

As Hegseth writes: "Paideia, simply defined, represents the deeply seated affections, thinking, viewpoints, and virtues embedded in children at a young age, or more simply, the rearing, molding, and education of a child."

Hegseth, an Army veteran, author, and proud father of seven children, is nationally known as the co-host of "FOX and Friends Weekend." For him, his FOX Nation documentary "The Miseducation of America" touches the surface of what's at stake if parents and grandparents don't rally to turn around a century-long assault not only in America's classrooms but also on American culture rooted in Western civilization.

Influences from Europe, like the German Frankfurt School settling in New York and finding a home at Columbia University in the 1930s, as well as phenomena occurring earlier in the 20th century such as the push toward industrialization and the need to produce workers rather than thinkers, the decline of churches, the creation of the Department of Education, the rise of teachers unions, and the policies of past presidents are all key ingredients leading to our present crisis, according to Hegseth.

But his book is more than a rallying cry to state the problem; he digs deep to look at the root causes. He does this to further educate. Readers will have a clear understanding of what's happened. And rather than hiding in a hole and giving up, he proposes a game plan—a state of play to take back what was once revered and considered virtuous.

Classical Christian Education

For Hegseth, Western Christian Paideia has four core battlements: Reason, Virtue, Wonder, and Beauty. Christ is at the center of them all. Faith and truth drive the narrative. Hegseth illuminates:

"Progressives made three fundamental changes to diminish reason in America's schools. First, they removed logic and rhetoric from the curriculum. Second, they stopped using the Socratic method, or the requisite study of world history, philosophy, and theology. And third, they divided subjects into silos without a unifying frame. In short, they completely hollowed out the classical Christian education framework



A teacher helping grade-school children with their assignment.

Saving our republic starts with our most fragile and precious minds.

that had birthed the American experiment."

Hegseth's Army background has him intentionally using, at times, military terms to perhaps shock readers into action. For him, it's not just an academic argument or a political debate. He wants to win back the thousands of hours that children spend in K-12 education.

The Solution

Pull your kids out of government-run schools. Seek out Classical Christian Schools—there are hundreds across the country—and take a stand. Make sacrifices.

Saving our republic starts with our most fragile and precious minds: our youngest children. Our most vulnerable are at stake.

Pete Hegseth and David Goodwin make a case to save our republic by sending children to faith-centered schools. The situation is not good, but it's not hopeless. The war can be won.

'Battle for the American Mind: Uprooting a Century of Miseducation'

Author
Pete Hegseth with David Goodwin

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REWIND, REVIEW, AND RE-RATE

Justice Delayed Is Justice Denied

RUDOLPH LAMBERT FERNANDEZ

Orson Welles's formidable baritone introduces his masterpiece "The Trial" (1962) with a parable.

A man shows up at the seemingly beckoning doorway of The Law. A guard stops him and warns that each new threshold of the edifice is more zealously guarded than the first. The man slumps down to wait there and ends up waiting for years. As he ages, loses his strength, and lies dying, he is dimly reminded that the law ought to be accessible to everyone.

The film's protagonist, Josef K. (Anthony Perkins) represents an anonymous citizen or, more simply, a struggling soul. Other characters heighten his sense of anonymity by calling him Mr. K or just K.

The action begins with detectives barging into K's room, announcing his arrest. We never learn what they charge him with, yet K offers them his ID, answers their questions, and follows their orders. They meet his rush of questions not with answers but with more questions. Shocked, he also finds that his office colleagues and "law-abiding" witnesses seem to be helping with his arrest, supposedly helping an unprejudiced investigation.

Everything seems biased against K as he plunges into a dizzying maze, harassed by friends, relatives, police, lawyers, and court officials. He rails against the invasion of his privacy and the violation of his rights. He wails about shared guilt or innocence; surely, everyone's innocent or guilty of "something." His protests are in vain.

Watching the futile push-pull nature of his quest, you can't help wondering which bits of his fate are causes, and which are consequences.

The So-Called Rule of Law

Welles, who wrote the script, offers a clue. The word "law" appears nearly 30 times and the word "justice" only five. The point



Anthony Perkins as K in his hangar-sized office that houses hundreds of workers, who are ant-like, plugging away at thunderous typewriters or telephones, in a scene from "The Trial."

of a system of law isn't justice; it's a bureaucratic system designed to sustain itself and its processes, even at the expense of fairness and justice.

The story and its bizarre twists aren't anywhere near as important as the stiling style in which it's told. You feel like you're drifting between sleep one moment and waking the next, unsure whether you're in an amusement park in real life or merely unable to stir yourself from an unending nightmare.

During the film's running time of two hours, K runs the gamut of emotions that a "typical" or "innocent" citizen feels over two years (or 20), coping with an intrusive institution or an overbearing state. His mental state? It swings wildly, from curious to apologetic, from submissive-defensive to rebellious, from bullying to passive. One moment he's weak, cautious; the next moment strong, reckless. In the morning he's furious, at noon he's desperate, but by night, he's indifferent, even laughingly resigned.

Filmmaking at Its Best

Welles amplified a sense of feeling besieged through unbroken shots or long takes. You feel that you're eavesdropping on real, sensitive conversations. Welles's camera hugged K and those who are silent witness to his besegement or noisily party to it. Screen angles sharpened the claustrophobia, so you imagine that some rooms are too small,

some ceilings too low, some floors too high, or some corridors too narrow.

Sometimes Welles went the other way: He magnified the set several-fold. At one of K's "trials," the contempt of the authorities for K and the audience's laughter at K's speech are not just loud but deafening. Some doors are nearly 20 feet tall. K's hangar-sized office houses hundreds of workers, ant-like, plugging away at thunderous typewriters or telephones.

Welles, who also plays the advocate Albert Hastler whom K consults, dares us to ask: Is the hope of justice better than justice itself? Is there something endearing in the long-suffering waiting for justice? What of those who are content to file petition after petition, pay bill after bill, make court appearance after court appearance, submit one piece of evidence after another, cajole one witness after another to testify, all in the hope of "victory"?

K's rebuke to Hastler suggests that such a deathly wait for justice is actually "defeat."

Great Main Character Casting

Perkins is brilliant, walking and talking in jerks, vertiginously clapping walls as he staggers from corridor to corridor, craning his neck conspiratorially one minute and staring confoundedly the next. He manipulates the pitch of his voice to mirror his state of mind: high when talking to someone else, low when talking to himself.

The ridiculously broad-shouldered Perkins stood about 6 feet, 2 inches tall. Yet as the increasingly suffocated K, he might as well be a very small man behaviorally, psychologically, morally, emotionally, and even spiritually.

His creepy portrayal of Norman Bates in "Psycho" (1960) made Perkins a star. Yet it's his unsung turn as the pitiful Josef K in "The Trial" that exhibits the sheer expanse of his dramatic range. Sadly, it's a range that Hollywood barely explored and didn't celebrate nearly enough.

Welles's screenplay was adapted from Franz Kafka's novel of the same name. Welles also directed what he later called his best film. You be the judge.

Rudolph Lambert Fernandez is an independent writer who writes on pop culture.

The movie is based on a book of the same name by the German-speaking Bohemian writer Franz Kafka.

'The Trial'

Director:
Orson Welles

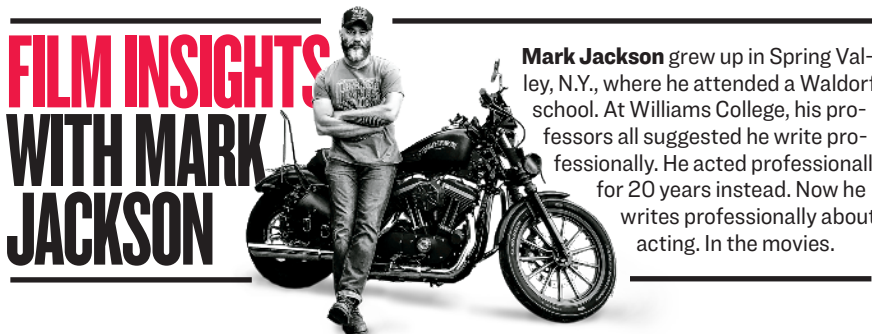
Starring:
Anthony Perkins, Orson Welles, Romy Schneider

Not Rated

Running Time:
1 hour, 59 minutes

Release Date:
Dec. 22, 1962

★★★★★



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

REWIND, REVIEW, AND RE-RATE

When Greed Became Cool

MARK JACKSON

With his suspenders, slicked-back hair, and power ties, Gordon Gekko (Michael Douglas) made greed look cool in 1987's "Wall Street," directed by Oliver Stone. Greed seems to be ramping up as of late, which is why "Wall Street" is worth a re-watch.

America may or may not be currently experiencing "greedflation." Global inflation rose from 4.7 percent in 2021 to 8.8 percent in 2022, but it's hard to say for sure whether or not it's greedflation. There was a pandemic, a trade war, a land war, huge government spending, and a global economy that's possibly become too complex for traditional macroeconomic theory to explain. More on this later.

Wall Street

"Wall Street" is basically an updated version of Goethe's "Faust." The devil (Gekko) gambles millions on America's big and small corporations, and a lowly but ultimately honest stockbroker (Charlie Sheen) sells his soul for a piece of a multimillion-dollar illusion.

Oliver Stone, who dedicated the movie to his late stockbroker father, took the Faustian template and then gave it the modern twist of the villainous corporate raider, a version of which was played by Richard Gere three years later in "Pretty Woman." In real life, politician and former businessman Mitt Romney was castigated by fellow Republican Newt Gingrich in a documentary as having "looted" corporations with his old corporate raider company, Bain Capital.

Bud Fox (Sheen) is an account executive stockbroker, chasing his dream of evolving from a small fish in a medium-sized firm to becoming an investment banker.

Bud works the phones alongside smarmy, entirely untrustworthy colleague Marv (John C. McGinley). Marv is a finance version of McGinley's Sgt. O'Neill in 1986's "Platoon," which also starred Charlie Sheen and was directed by Oliver Stone.

When Bud thinks about Lou, the room's elder (Hal Holbrook), who is a seasoned broker without the killer instinct to play in the finance big leagues, he realizes that he'd do well to add wheeler-dealer multimillionaire Gordon Gekko to his client list. That way, he can create the possibility of getting his foot in the door to the rarified world of the true finance players.

When he does finally squeeze through that door, he discovers that the dangerous Gekko doesn't need another broker. Gekko wants Bud Fox to get prized insider information, any way he can. Information is power, insider trading is illegal, and this is the crossroads where the easy wrong meets the hard right. Fox wavers only a moment before deciding that the end will justify the means, and he signs away his soul to the devil to gain the kind of skyrocketing career that many who come to Manhattan are after.

Bud's first mission is to spy on billionaire Sir Larry Wildman (Terence Stamp), whose presence in New York almost certainly involves stocks. One underhanded tactic leads to another, and soon Bud is spilling inside information and helping Gekko take over Blue Star Airlines, where Bud's father, Carl Fox (played by Sheen's real-life dad, Martin Sheen), has worked for 24 years.

Gekko naturally sees it as a perfect opportunity for exploitation. True to form, he lies about his intentions for the airline. And while ruthless capitalist Gekko takes Bud under his wing, shows him the ropes, famously instructing him in all the ways in which Sun Tzu's "The Art of War" applies to stock trading, young Fox finally sees that he may end up being responsible for the demise of his father's firm. Which would mean massive job loss for the men he worked alongside during his summer jobs there, and ultimately include the demise of his father's respect for him, in the Faustian bargain.

'Wall Street' is basically an updated version of Goethe's 'Faust.'



Gordon Gekko (Michael Douglas), the Mephistopheles-like character in Oliver Stone's "Wall Street."



Bud Fox (Charlie Sheen) is an account executive stockbroker who tired of being a small fish.

Thoughts

One might consider the heavy Wall Street lingo that kicks in hard and fast and never lets up to be a downside of the movie, because it's been said there's more suspense to be had when one has a fairly solid comprehension of the stock market. I don't entirely agree with that. In the same way that "Rounders" contains wall-to-wall poker lingo, it doesn't much matter if you don't understand cards.

As long as the script contains the truth (and Oliver Stone would know that from his stockbroker dad), and the actors understand what they're doing and saying, the audience will pick up on the truth subliminally and therefore be transported emotionally as well. Michael Douglas won 1987's Best Actor Oscar and Golden Globe, so it's safe to say that his research for Gordon Gekko was impeccable.

As for the rest of the performances, Daryl Hannah is rather unconvincing as Bud's interior designer-girlfriend, bequeathed to him by Gekko, who gave her a career, for a price; and James Spader is in his 1980s wheelhouse of privileged prep-and-Ivy League types. Charlie Sheen's early wheelhouse was the upscale greenhorn in for a rude awakening, and while satisfactory, he pales in comparison to his father's work as a stalwart blue-collar union man with his workers' best interests always at heart. Douglas steals the show from everybody as the grinning devil himself—suave, sophisticated, shrewd, cynical, ruthless, and heartless.

Greed

Ambition battles morality, wins, then loses. In "Wall Street," redemption comes with probable jail time on federal charges of securities fraud.

But the essence of "Wall Street" is summed up in a speech that Gekko gives at a shareholders meeting of fictitious corporation Teldar Paper, which is based on a real-life corporate raider Ivan Boesky speech. (Boesky's now barred from trading in the securities industry in America.)

"The point is, ladies and gentlemen, greed is good. Greed works. Greed is right. Greed clarifies, cuts through, and captures the essence of the evolutionary spirit. Greed in all its forms, greed for life, money, love, knowledge, has marked the upward surge of mankind. And greed, mark my words, will save not only Teldar Paper, but that other malfunctioning corporation called the U.S.A."

Greedflation or Worse?

As stated at the outset, I'm not sure whether or not greedflation is at work in the times we live in: the pandemic, the trade war, the land war, and so on. More than half of Americans think the current administration has weakened the economy according to a September poll from PBS NewsHour, NPR, and Marist, and the country's economic outlook would appear, naturally, to be shaped not just by confusing or conflicting indicators but also by politics.

Of course, there are those who claim that all the current chaos is due to the long arm of the Chinese Communist Party, which created the pandemic in the first place. Those claim that it injected the virus into America to tamper with our democratic election process and is now pulling the hidden levers rigged inside the Democratic Party's socialist-liberalist-progressivist ideologies. Like a diabolical Deception, doing so will transform America's listing ship of state into a nuclear submarine of communism.

Which is the ultimate form of greed. Watch "Wall Street" again, and contemplate where greed has gotten humans since the dawn of time.



Bud Fox (Charlie Sheen) gets the beautiful Darien Taylor (Daryl Hannah) as part of the bargain for selling his soul.



Roger Barnes (James Spader), a young corporate lawyer and former college roommate of Bud Fox.



A movie poster for "Wall Street."

'Wall Street'

Director:
Oliver Stone

Starring:
Michael Douglas, Charlie Sheen, Martin Sheen, Daryl Hannah, John C. McGinley, James Spader

MPAA Rating:
R

Running Time:
2 hours, 6 minutes

Release Date:
Dec. 11, 1987

★★★★★



(L-R) Frank Adonis, Michael Douglas, Daryl Hannah, Charlie Sheen, and Martin Sheen in "Wall Street."

SACRED ART

Image of Hope: The ‘Pietà’

ELIZABETH LEV

The most tragic sight imaginable is a mother who has lost a child. Witnessing such a thing, most shrink from the searing sense of loss, the emptiness of bereavement. Yet when Michelangelo unveiled his “Pietà”—the image of the Virgin Mary mourning the lifeless Christ—he revealed how sorrow can be conquered by hope.

In 1497, Cardinal Bilhères de Lagraulas commissioned a then unknown 23-year-old Michelangelo Buonarroti to produce the over-life-size sculpture group, the young Florentine’s first public work. It was destined for the cardinal’s burial chapel in St. Peter’s Basilica in Rome, then a much smaller building than the massive modern church. It would be placed above an altar, where future generations might pray for the cardinal’s soul.

Michelangelo spent a year sourcing and transporting the single block of marble from Carrara and unveiled the completed work to universal astonishment during the Jubilee Year of 1500. The Year of Jubilee was celebrated every 50 years, following the seven cycles of sabbatical years, and was celebrated as a year of liberation and rest.

Modern viewers have to peer at the sculpture from behind a wall of glass, where it was housed after it was attacked with a hammer in 1972. The welts and breaks were repaired, but the protective shield dulls the artistic voice of this powerful statue.

The Theme in a New Medium

Young Michelangelo was the first Italian to sculpt the subject of the Pietà, a theme developed by German artists in the 14th century and later adopted by the French, who gave it its name meaning “to feel sorry for.”

The composition, showing Mary holding the dead Christ before burial, had no scriptural basis, and northern artists sought to evoke pity by emphasizing Jesus’s wounds and Mary’s grief. With jagged, gaping holes in Christ’s hands, feet, and side, a body stiff with rigor mortis, and the crown of thorns still bound around his brow, the earlier versions were meant to make the viewer recoil.

But the Florentine sculptor had other ideas. He rendered Jesus’s body with the perfect articulation and proportions of a Greek god, elegant limbs draped across Mary’s lap. He made the wounds barely visible and the sleeping face peaceful. The only indications of death were in the carefully wrought details of the body: a shoulder bunched up under the ear, sagging muscles in the flesh of the thigh, and blood pooled in the dangling hand, all to suggest the heaviness of death.

Redirecting Our Sorrow

Michelangelo employed the pathos of the scene to redirect attention from Christ, whose suffering is long over, to the face of Mary, whose sorrow must be at its most acute. Gazing into the youthful visage, however, we see no frown of resentment, no open-mouthed shouts of grief, and no raised brows of doubt. Her still, solemn face evokes the youthful Mary who, in the Gospel of Luke, as an adolescent girl told the angel Gabriel that she would do his bidding.

Michelangelo’s Mary is the woman who, when she said “yes” to God, meant it. Through the trials of explaining her mysterious pregnancy to Joseph her be-



“Pietà” by Michelangelo, 1497. Marble. St. Peter’s Basilica, Rome.

trothed, to delivering the Son of God in a rough stable, to the rapid flight to Egypt one step ahead of Herod’s soldiers, Mary’s “yes” had life-altering consequences.

On this Friday, when, after she had poured 33 years of affection into her son as well as 33 years of expectation in the savior, it would seem too much to take—all that investment of love and hope and bury it in a tomb.

Hope Despite Shadows

Michelangelo’s deft chisel work accentuates the perils of this bleak moment. The veil around Mary’s face appears to hang loosely, leaving a ribbon of shadow around her brow, pooling into darkness on the sides of her neck. Deep crevasses in her bodice and skirt swallow up the light, forming pockets of obscurity.

Originally the statue was placed in a shallow niche, where grim shadows would have pressed in on all sides. Undaunted by the darkness, Mary perseveres with her eyes fixed on the body of Christ, carved by Michelangelo in the smoothest planes possible with surfaces that could take an extraordinarily high polish. Art historians marvel that the sculptor never polished marble that highly again, but stepping back from the work one can see why.

For all the shadows that play around the Blessed Virgin, her eyes are transfixed by the light radiating from the body of her son. Mary never loses sight of the light, even in the darkest hours—a timeless lesson for the millions who have stood before the work recalling their own pains and sorrows while seeing Mary shoulder the heaviest burden any human could be asked to bear. She never loses hope. The



A detail of Mary, showing her calm expression.



The high polish on the body of Christ shows his spiritual radiance.

Mary holding the dead Christ before burial had no scriptural basis.

pyramidal structure of the statue enhances the sense of her constancy. Her hope anchors her in the stormiest of moments.

In the midst of all this artistic perfection, there is an anomaly that insinuates itself into the scene: Mary’s lower body is disproportionately large in comparison to her upper body. The broad swath of drapery transforms her lap into a showcase for the body of Christ, resembling a shroud as well as recalling the womb that held him for nine months.

But Jesus, stretched across Mary’s legs, does not appear to be ensconced firmly in her lap; he slumps downward, as if about to fall onto the altar below. With one hand, Mary holds her son close. Her other hand opens toward the viewer in a gesture of offering. The light and the hope that had been the source of Mary’s strength is not kept for herself, but readily offered to anyone who comes seeking solace in dark times.

Elizabeth Lev is an American-born art historian who teaches, lectures, and guides in Rome.

BOOK REVIEW

Medicare for All: A Bad Idea

ANITA L. SHERMAN

Several years ago, I wrote a feature on a Virginia doctor who decided to leave the system. He was one of the better-known and respected physicians in the area, and his leaving this group of providers was a shock for many. He was tired of dealing with insurance companies and their piles of paperwork.

He started “Doc at Your Door” and now brings his services directly to patients. He does not accept Medicare or Medicaid or other insurances. It’s a pay-as-you-go plan; you pay for the time he spends with you.

I mention this as a segue into this book review because the Virginia doctor is an example of a physician who has chosen an alternative way of providing medical care to his patients and billing for his services.

Author Rich Yurkowitz, in his book “Medicare for All, Really?: Why a Single Payer Health Care Plan Would Be Disastrous for America,” considers himself an influencer. While not a physician striking out on his own to change the system, Yurkowitz provides readers with a wealth of information that, at the end of the day, argues against a single payer plan.

In his estimation, if a single payer plan became the law of the land, the situation would be bleak at best.

Stacking Up the Statistics

Yurkowitz is a health care actuary by trade. He has spent decades analyzing data. It’s not enough for him to say that we’ve gone astray or missed the mark when it comes to handling America’s health care system. He is taking a broad look through a panoramic lens to offer readers a unique perspective on the future of health care: where it is today and where it’s headed.

“Medicare for All” has become a hot-button topic, and there would appear to be two major camps. For the first, it sounds wonderful and could be the saving-grace answer for fixing a broken system; for the second, it would be the downfall of the country’s health care system. Of course, it’s become a politically charged and divisive issue.

It’s also a very confusing, complex, and difficult puzzle to put together—let alone have a meaningful conversation about—as there are so many moving parts.

This is where Yurkowitz puts all the playing cards on the table, assembling a vast array of information, much in graphs and charts. He not only arms readers with copious amounts of data but also offers help

Yurkowitz supports a free market system with more competition.



‘Medicare for All, Really?: Why a Single Payer Health Care Plan Would Be Disastrous for America’

Author
Rich Yurkowitz

Publisher
Amplify Publishing

Date
Oct. 4, 2022

Hardcover
352 pages

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



for how to look at this data and decipher what it actually all means.

He is not a fan of a single payer plan, or of a socialist approach to health care under the guise of social justice.

A Rewarding Challenge

Yurkowitz promotes what he sees as good about the current system, particularly in terms of medical innovations, new creative cures, the quality of physicians and hospitals, and the ability of the system to grapple with complex problems.

He acknowledges that the COVID-19 pandemic brought pressure to bear on the health care system, but he warns that overreacting to this emergency by proposing major overhauls is a knee-jerk reaction. The results could have a negative effect in the long run.

This is not a leisurely read. It’s not a book with which you would curl up by the fire-side or take to the beach. If you are not a numbers person, the diagrams and charts may be overwhelming.

What is laudable and worth noting is the author’s sincere desire to give readers a boost in understanding a complex issue. He offers a lot of statistics regarding how the U.S. health care system compares with other countries, what percentage of GDP (Gross Domestic Product) we pay for health care, how household disposable income should be factored into the equation, and so on.

His narrative style is conversational. From time to time throughout the book, he interjects what he refers to as left-right dialogue, paraphrasing or mimicking a theoretical debate that a democratic

socialist might have with someone more conservative. It’s an effective and entertaining literary structure and gives readers a break from the wealth of statistical data: data not meant to bore but to elucidate, yet can still be heavy.

Yurkowitz supports a free market system with more competition rather than less among health care providers. Innovative market solutions are, for him, a better solution than a government fix.

Clearly, he is anti-M4A (Medicare for All). For him, it’s bad policy. He offers a solution and has sent a copy of his book to Congress.

He doesn’t see his book as a money maker or one that will make a bestseller list. As a health care analyst, he is offering his decades of experience and hopes to influence the national debate on health care, particularly when it comes to legislation and what solutions would be more cost effective.

It’s a technical read, one that, according to the author, he has always wanted to write, and that he hopes the reader will find useful in sifting through the plethora of data on health care. Most importantly, he wishes to give the context needed for the situation to be better understood.

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. She can be reached at anitajustwrite@gmail.com

“Medicare for All, Really?” by Rich Yurkowitz, takes a broad look through a panoramic lens to offer readers a unique perspective on the future of health care.

Rocky Mountain Troubadour

John Denver’s music and the joy of our American landscape

REBECCA DAY

Even though musician John Denver didn’t have the lyrics memorized yet, he walked onto the small stage at the Cellar Door, an intimate music club in the quaint Georgetown neighborhood of Washington, D.C., on Dec. 30, 1970, and sang a new song he’d finished co-writing the night before. As he made his way through the words, written down on a piece of paper and taped to his microphone stand, he could feel the energy of the crowd rise. By the end of the song, the room was engulfed in a thunderstorm of applause. Denver knew he had something special.

With the first live performance of “Take Me Home, Country Roads” at that little club, Denver catapulted his music career into the national spotlight.

Country Music or Country and Western
Though Denver’s work is steeped in country tradition, with many of his tracks paying homage to rural ways of life, appreciating nature, and honoring family, his crossover appeal sometimes worked against him. Folk influences in his music led critics to compare him to Bob Dylan, but Denver never saw himself as the next Dylan. And when he won Entertainer of the Year at the Country Music Association award show in 1975, Nashville-based industry professionals were so up in arms that Denver’s brief relationship with the

John Denver on ABC’s televised special “An Evening With John Denver,” filmed on Feb. 18, 1975.

‘Thank God I’m a Country Boy’ is an unapologetically twangy salute to family and traditional values.

John Denver died last month, 25 years ago.



genre came to a temporary halt. Despite “Take Me Home, Country Roads” peaking at No. 2 on the Billboard Hot 100 Singles chart in 1971, years later Denver still felt like an outsider to country music.

In an interview included on his 1995 DVD “The Wildlife Concert,” he stated: “When I grew up, the music that I listened to, the music that I was raised on was called ‘country and western.’ ... The songs that are most moving to me and the songs that are most uniquely mine ... those are songs that come out [of] the spirit of the American West.”

Not since the days of early singing cowboys like country and western’s Gene Autry did someone embody the spirit of the American cowboy as much as John Denver did. “Rocky Mountain High” and “Wild Montana Skies” connected so deeply with listeners, helping them to rediscover joys residing in the freedom of America’s landscape, that some critics ultimately compared him to Henry David Thoreau, one of America’s most treasured philosophers. When radio stations thought “Rocky Mountain High” was about participating in illicit activities, Denver replied: “This was obviously done by people

who ... had never experienced the elation, celebration of life, or the joy in living that one feels when he observes something as wondrous as the Perseid meteor shower on a moonless, cloudless night.”

Even though Denver distanced himself from the Nashville establishment due to creative differences, he won over country music fans with releases like “Thank God I’m a Country Boy,” an unapologetically twangy salute to family and traditional values. These days, you can’t get through a classic country song list without coming across “Take Me Home, Country Roads.”

The Exultation of Nature

Born Henry John Deutchendorf Jr., his stage name pays tribute to his favorite state of Colorado with its towering mountains and sprawling wilderness. For his tenderhearted “Annie’s Song,” released later as a single and written while on a ski trip, he had to rework the melody when his producer pointed out to him that it closely resembled Russian composer Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky’s Fifth Symphony, Second Movement. The track’s uplifting string section of “Annie’s Song” makes you feel like you’re onboard a ski lift with Denver, getting an exclusive peek at the symphonies playing in his head as he glides over snow-laden slopes.

Before his tragic passing in a small plane crash on Oct. 12, 1997, Denver made his core purpose for performing live very clear: “My purpose in performing is to communicate the joy I experience in living.” Like the Rocky Mountains he loved so much, Denver’s grand, poetic range of music endures. Through his works, may we remember the importance of quiet exaltation underneath a meteor shower. May we remember that despite life’s twists and turns, there’s always some near-heaven country road that can lead us home.

Rebecca Day is an independent musician, freelance writer, and frontwoman of swampy-country group, The Crazy Daysies.

FILM REVIEW

A Moving History Lesson Gets Torpedoed by Technical Overreach

MICHAEL CLARK

There have been many poems, plays, songs (including the 1962 “The Death of Emmett Till” by Bob Dylan), short films, TV episodes, and three documentaries (“The Untold Story of Emmett Louis Till” by Keith Beauchamp from 2005 being the best of the lot) detailing the 1955 murder of 14-year-old Emmett Till. Considering the impact that this horrific event had on America’s cultural, political, and societal landscapes, it’s difficult to fathom that director Chinonye Chukwu’s “Till” is the first live-action feature film to do so.

“Till” opens with the title character (Jalyn Hall) and his mother, Mamie (Danielle Deadwyler), in a car singing along to the 1954 Moonglows love song “Sincerely.” It quickly affirms their inseparable bond and sets the tone for the remainder of the film. Emmett’s father, Louis, died in World War II. And although Mamie is engaged-to-be-engaged to her boyfriend, Gene Mobley (Sean Patrick Thomas), it is beyond clear that Emmett (as it should be) is always going to be the most important male in her life.

Separation Anxiety

Upbeat and effervescent, with a propensity to entertain anyone within earshot or eyeshot, Emmett is a natural performer, as displayed the night before he leaves on a two-week trip to visit family in Mississippi—without Mamie.

She is petrified that he will be gone so long and somewhat discounts the comforting words of her mother, Alma (Whoopi Goldberg), who attempts to get her to lighten up.

Before Emmett departs, Mamie pleads for him to “be small” when down South. Even though blacks are treated like second-class citizens in their adopted hometown of Chicago, they are viewed as insignificant and eminently disposable in the Jim Crow South. Stay mum, Mamie implores. Such a plea heard through the easily distracted ears of a self-confident 14-year-old boy is,

more than unfortunately, quickly forgotten.

A weirdly shoehorned scene of Emmett working alongside his cotton-picking, sharecropping cousins and great uncle follows, which leads to the pivotal moment at a convenience grocery store in the backwoods town of Money, Mississippi.

The Damage Done

In the next scene, Emmett enters the store alone, buys some candy, and tells the store’s co-owner Carolyn Bryant (Haley Bennett) that she “looks like a movie star.” Instead of being flattered, Bryant takes offense and “stare walks” Emmett out of the establishment.

Unaware of his faux pas, Emmett wolf-whistles at Bryant: It’s the audio equivalent of pouring gasoline on a blazing fire. He is whisked away by his cousins, but the damage has already, unequivocally, been done.

Within days, Emmett is kidnapped at gunpoint in the dead of night by Bryant’s husband Roy (Sean Michael Weber), his half-brother J.W. Milam (Eric Whitten), and three of their black employees. In the film’s most telling and effective scene, a distant still shot at night is accompanied by audio of muted blows and reactionary screams. This is (sadly) the high point of Chukwu’s cumulative narrative.

Apart from an expertly executed scene at a funeral home, where she takes as long as possible to reveal images of mangled Emmett’s corpse, Chukwu soon transitions into full-tilt made-for-TV mode.

She and cinematographer Bobby Bukowski seem more interested in technique than substance and, if not for Deadwyler’s throttling performance, the entire production might have sunk. Expect to see Deadwyler’s name on the upcoming Academy Awards Best Lead Actress shortlist.

Technical Overdose

Chukwu and Bukowski offer two presentation modes: uninterrupted, circular shots,



If not for Deadwyler’s throttling performance, the entire production might have sunk.

‘Till’

Director: Chinonye Chukwu
Starring: Danielle Deadwyler, Jalyn Hall, Whoopi Goldberg, Frankie Faison, Tosin Cole, Haley Bennett
Running Time: 2 hours, 10 minutes
MPAA Rating: PG-13
Release Date: Oct. 28, 2022



and static still shots. They seem to scoff at anything resembling a traditional presentation, and the result is a movie that values looks as much as content.

The same can be said of composer Abel Korzeniowski’s overpowering and relentless score. During Mamie’s speech in the final 10 minutes, the music is obtrusive and overblown to the point that her dialogue is barely heard over the cacophony of strings and horns.

This is not to say that “Till” isn’t impactful. Quite the contrary, it’s a blistering indictment of race relations at the time. Nobody with even half a heart could disagree with its underlying message. What happened to Emmett Till in Money, Mississippi, in 1955 was abhorrent to anyone with a soul.

In retrospect, it proved to be the catalyst for the already simmering civil rights movement that was long overdue and took nearly a decade longer for civil rights legislation to become law.

Noticeably absent is any mention of Roy Bryant and Milam’s 1956 interview with Look magazine where, protected by “double jeopardy” laws, they admitted their guilt and together received one payment of \$3,500.

The method of delivery overpowers the already powerful history lesson here. “Till” would have meant so much more had it contained far less.

Originally from Washington, D.C., Michael Clark has provided film content to over 30 print and online media outlets. He co-founded the Atlanta Film Critics Circle in 2017 and is a weekly contributor to the Shannon Burke Show on FloridaManRadio.com. Since 1995, Mr. Clark has written over 4,000 movie reviews and film-related articles. He favors dark comedy, thrillers, and documentaries.

Mamie (Danielle Deadwyler) says goodbye to her son, Emmet (Jalyn Hall), as he leaves to visit his cousins in the South, in “Till.”



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