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(Top) "The Dachstein From Sophien-Doppelblick Near Ischl," 1835, by Ferdinand Georg Waldmüller. Oil on panel; 12 1/4 inches by 10 1/4 inches. Austrian Belvedere Gallery, Vienna.

(Above) "Self-Portrait at the Easel," 1848, by Ferdinand Georg Waldmüller. Oil on canvas; 69 1/2 inches by 56 1/2 inches.

FINE ART

ILLUMINATING AUSTRIA, HOPE, and GOOD CHEER

The brilliance of painter Ferdinand Georg Waldmüller

LORRAINE FERRIER

ustrian painter Ferdinand Georg Waldmüller held nature in high esteem. "Nature must be the only source and sum total of our study; there alone can be found

Waldmüller's landscape paintings in particular show his brilliant attention to detail.

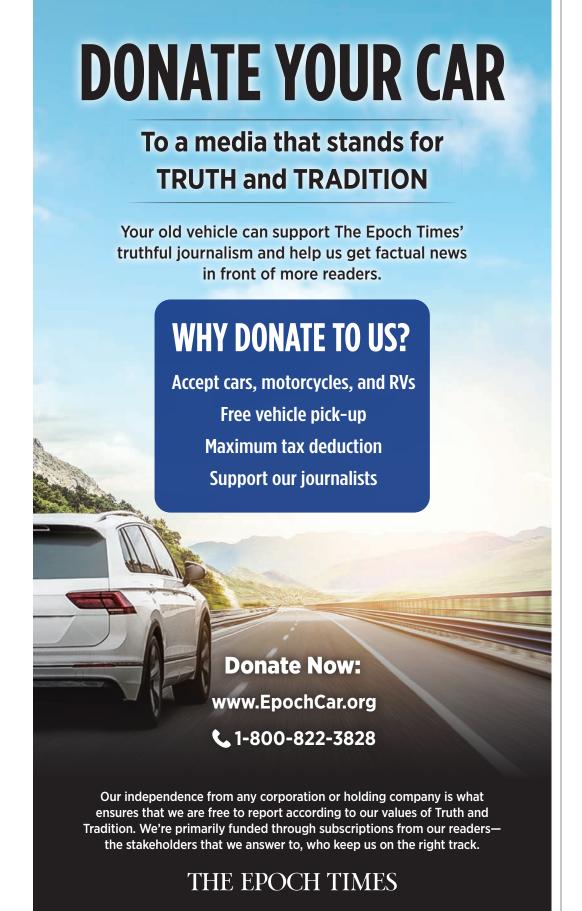
the eternal truth and beauty, the expression of which must be the artist's highest aim in every branch of the plastic arts," he wrote in 1846.

Throughout his life, Waldmüller (1793–1865) closely studied nature. He believed that artists should concentrate their efforts on the "rendering of sunlight," a practice he embraced as he studied, sketched, and painted the transient sunlight across Austria and Sicily, to name a couple of countries.

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The Raggedy Boys' Bard: Horatio Alger and the American Dream

JEFF MINICK

or 50 years, his name was a household word. Horatio Alger Jr. (1832–1899) was the creator and chief proponent of the "rags to riches" story. Once his writing career took off, he put out over a hundred novels, most of them aimed at adolescents. They were tales of street urchins and poor young men who by dint of their virtue, education, hard work, and enterprise broke free of their poverty, often with the aid of a rich patron who rewarded them for some brave deed of rescue.

Alger's influence was profound. His books were read by countless young Americans. The renowned journalist Heywood Broun called the author's stories "simple tales of honesty triumphant," and comedian and film star Groucho Marx said: "Horatio Alger's books conveyed a powerful message to me and many of my young friends—that if you worked hard at your trade, the big chance would eventually

old man I think of it as the story of my life." Not all have viewed his work so favorably. In "Poor Mark Twain satirized Al- Alger Jr. from 1880. ger's poor-boy-makes-good stories, and later writers and

come. As a child I didn't re-

gard it as a myth, and as an

critics attacked his work as formulaic, which it is, and false in its premises. His books were already losing popular appeal when the Great Depression struck, seeming to put an end to the Algeresque formula that sweat, honesty, and ambition equaled success.

Yet even now, Alger's vision inspires countless Americans.

The Small Man With the **Big Message**

Unlike his characters, Horatio Alger never knew poverty firsthand, though his father, a Unitarian minister, had Sunday school, with a Sunday lunch faced financial ruin and often had with Greyson's family in the bargain. trouble making ends meet. At 16, Alger Later, it is Greyson who helps Henry entered Harvard University, of which he later recorded: "No period of my life has been one of such unmixed happiness as the four years which have been spent within college walls."

On earning his degree in 1852, he turned to writing as his livelihood, and then teaching. But later, failing to support himself in these endeavors, he entered Harvard Divinity School and graduated in 1860.

Deemed unfit for service in the Union Army—Alger was sickly most of his life and was only 5 feet, 2 inches tall—he served in war-related work until 1864, when he was ordained and accepted a position at a church on Cape Cod. In 1866, he resigned his post and departed for New York City.

Young readers of 'Ragged Dick' and Alger's other stories were shown steppingstones to success.

First serialized in a magazine in 1867, Alger's "Ragged Dick, Or Street Life in New York With the Boot-Blacks," appeared in book form in 1868 and became an immediate hit. This novel, which the author hoped would bring attention and help to the swarms of homeless children on New York's streets, also served as Alger's template for the scores of stories that came afterward. These books sold millions of copies both during and after Alger's lifetime, the proceeds of which he often donated to charitable works intended

to improve the lives of children. Alger spent his final years living with his sister in Natick, Massachusetts, where his impaired health and frequent depression affected his ability to write. On his instructions, after his

death his sister burned his letters and personal papers.

From Rags to Respectability

"Ragged Dick," which is one of the few Horatio Alger books remaining in print, is as simple in its storyline as in

Richard Hunter, who goes by the nickname Ragged Dick, is a 14-year-old living on the street and making his way as a shoeshine boy. He has some bad habits—"I am afraid he swore sometimes, and now and then he played tricks on unsophisticated boys from the country"—and he throws away most of his earnings on shows at places like the Bowery Theater and on gambling.

would not steal, or cheat, or impose upon younger boys, but was frank and straight-forward, manly and self-reliant." Throughout the novel, he has several opportunities to swindle others, but he always rejects that option.

On the other hand, he is honest—"He

He's also kind to the bootblacks who are younger or inept at their trade, springing for a meal or offering them encouragement.

Several times, his honesty and generosity bring returns. After treating the orphan Henry Fosdick to a Little Stephen Girard," Faded portrait of Horatio meal, for example, and then offering him a place in his Library of Congress. newly acquired room, the barely literate Dick discovers that Fosdick can read

and write, and strikes a bargain with him, offering him a permanent place in his quarters in exchange for lessons. The two boys team up, open bank accounts with their paltry earnings, save their money, and slowly begin the long haul out of poverty.

Others also respond to Dick's truthfulness and resourceful spirit. Having promised a Mr. Greyson to bring him change for a ten-cent shine, Dick eventually fulfills that obligation, an act that leads him to Mr. Greyson's church and Fosdick by way of recommendation to procure a job as a store clerk.

Dick's best break comes at the end of the novel, when he rescues a 6-year-old boy who has fallen from a ferry. The boy's father, who owns a counting room, a sort of combination bank and accounting office, offers Dick a job. In the last lines of "Ragged Dick" is this exchange between Henry and Dick:

"When, in short, you were 'Ragged Dick.' You must drop that name, and think of yourself now as"—

"Richard Hunter, Esq." said our hero,

"A young gentleman on the way to fame and fortune," added Fosdick.

Helping Hands

Young readers of "Ragged Dick" and Alger's other stories were shown steppingstones to success: aspirations, a virtuous character, an education, a willingness to work hard and to open the door to opportunity when it came knocking, and a heart for the less fortunate, all aided by the blessings of good fortune. Here's just one example: When Dick takes a job for a day escorting a wealthier country boy, Frank, on a tour of the city, Frank's father gives Dick one of his son's suits. That change of clothing and his conversations with Frank about education give Dick a new outlook on his life, a belief in the possibility that he might someday attain Frank's status.

Though critics accuse Alger of painting a false picture of the benefits born from Ragged Dick's attributes and mock the writer's focus on individual effort, Alger recognized the part played by others in that arduous climb out of the gutter, the mentors who help Dick—

and who help the rest of us as well. In the author's preface, Alger explicitly emphasizes this need for assistance, writing that he hopes his books will "have the effect of enlisting the sympathies of his readers in behalf of the unfortunate children whose life is described, and of leading them to cooperate with the praise-worthy efforts now made by the Children's Aid Society and other organizations to ameliorate their condition."

Making the Most of One's Life

THE EPOCH TIMES Week 8, 2023

To most fiction, we bring a set of natural prejudices. Readers who enjoy fastpaced action, an eccentric hero, and suspense will probably find a home in Lee Child's Jack Reacher series; those who prefer more sedate stories will instead open Jane Austen.

Aside from those connoisseurs who might dislike "Ragged Dick" for its literary imperfections, some may argue that "Ragged Dick" seems little more than a preachy, bogus fantasy. Yet Alger's vision of work, virtue, and personal responsibility meshed with the American Dream of his time. Even today, this dream survives, as can be seen by the many immigrants coming to our country, the shelves of self-help books that by their very genre speak of individuals taking charge of their own lives, and the pride that so many Americans still take in their work and

"I'll go to work and see what I can do," says Dick in a conversation with Frank about education.

There's the Alger ethic. And there's the dream that still lives.

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.



Cover of the 1895 Henry T. Coates and Company edition of "Ragged Dick" by Horatio



Alger wrote tales of street urchins who broke free of their poverty. "Shoeshine Boy," 1891, by Karl Witkowski. Oil on canvas.



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ILLUMINATING AUSTRIA, HOPE, and GOOD CHEER

Continued from Page 1

Toward Nature

At 14 years old, Waldmüller studied at the Academy of Art in Vienna, where he gained a strong foundation in the Old Master painting tradition. Soon after finishing at the academy he took commissions, mainly copying old master works. His teachers were German painter Hubert Maurer, who introduced classicism to the academy, and Italian painter Johann Baptist Lampi.

Early in his career, Waldmüller painted portraits, which paid well and for which he became famous in the 1830s, before he focused on his love of genre and land-

Waldmüller painted hope and the innate goodness of the human spirit.

scape paintings. In 1856, Waldmüller gained international success after an exhibition in Buckingham Palace, London.

Waldmüller's landscape paintings in particular show his brilliant attention to detail. He painted his best landscapes between 1829 and 1843, when each summer he would visit the pristine alpine lakes and towering mountain peaks of the Salzkammergut, Austria's lake district. Austrians often refer to one of the region's lakes, Lake Altaussee, as an inkpot for writers and poets. In a similar vein, the entire Salzkammergut provides a breathtaking palette for painters.

Waldmüller, who loved to paint the high mountains, created the distant mountain

and forest vistas just as detailed and clear as the foreground motifs. Waldmüller's ability to render the distant details without any loss in definition defined his style.

Waldmüller's sojourns to Salzkammergut gave him infinite opportunities to see how the sunlight caressed the land from dawn to dusk, and gave him endless pleinair painting practice. From 1834 on, he mainly painted landscapes of the region. In "The Dachstein From Sophien-Doppelblick Near Ischl," Waldmüller created a harmonious composition that leads the viewer deep into the Dachstein Mountains, a group of peaks in the Eastern Alps of Austria. In the foreground, a wooden fence directs viewers to the houses in the valley and to a meandering river on the right side of the painting. Waldmüller created the trees in the foreground with as much detail as the mountains and valley beyond, yet there is still a sense of space and depth of field—specialities of

Waldmüller's painting "View of the Dachstein With Lake Hallstatt Seen From the Hütteneckalm Near Ischl" shows an

example of how he placed figures and buildings to give a sense of scale and depth. The tiny figures against the towering Dachstein Mountains put the vast, majestic scene into perspective, while allowing him to render the foreground and background objects in detail.

In addition to his landscapes, Waldmüller specialized in floral paintings. His 1843 still-life painting "Roses" shows how he applied his signature love of details to that genre, with its highly reflective objects such as the silver vase brimming with roses in various states of decay.

Capturing the Natural World and Human Nature

Waldmüller also had a talent for capturing human nature on canvas. He combined his love of the Austrian landscape with his keen insights into the human psyche to make successful genre paintings, often full of multiple figures. He painted these in the Biedermeier style of realist art that originated in Germany.

The Biedermeier style of art and architecture (around 1815–1848) grew during a period of European peace after the Napoleonic Wars. Austrian diplomat and statesman Klemens von Metternich's leadership in Europe had brought political stability to the region. Urbanization and industrialization thrived and a new European middle class emerged, which was keen to collect and enjoy the arts.

In Austria, Biedermeier-style paintings contained no social or political commentary. After the country's years of instability, Biedermeier artists created realistic pious, sentimental paintings that generated warmth, good cheer, and a sense of belonging.

Waldmüller painted hope and the innate goodness of the human spirit in his genre paintings of pastoral scenes, people in poor houses, soup kitchens, and the like. Some of the paintings shows people in bleak circumstances, but even in these scenes, he showed the joy and the strength of the human spirit in the face of adversity.

In "The Monastery Soup," Waldmüller created a grand, harmonious work with multiple figures, reminiscent of the old large figurative works.

Waldmüller's composition hints at a triangle, leading our attention to the bustling scene. Even though there's much activity-jostling, laughter, prayer, and the general care of the children-each of the small figurative groupings, like each note in a great symphonic work, strengthens the overall composition of the painting. Even the monk in the wall painting seems to interact with the figures.

Many of Waldmüller's works celebrate Austrian rural life and traditions, such as his endearing work "On Corpus Christi Morning," wherein a group of jolly villagers ready themselves for the day. The painting centers on a group of girls dressed in white, with flower headdresses. A grandfather watches on the left side of the work, as a mother and baby and possibly a grandmother fuss over the girls' dresses. A smartly dressed young help coming near it, as if it had something boy in a blue sash holds a candle as he walks off to the right.

genre and landscape subjects in his com- and in human nature itself.

age." It shows a group of pilgrims walking along a rocky hilltop pause to aid their companion, who has collapsed from exhaustion. Waldmüller painted the sick pilgrim and the figures close by at the highest point in the painting, perhaps to show the importance of the cross she holds and that the journey they're making

positions, such as in "The Halted Pilgrim

is not without sacrifice. He depicted the evening sunlight outlining the land like a halo, again emphasizing the pilgrims' sacred plight.

Each brushstroke Waldmüller made captured the brilliance and delight of nature. His paintings have universal appeal; the heart of "true painting" does. French art critic Roger de Piles explained in his book "The Principles of Painting" in 1708: "True painting is such as not only surprises, but as it were, calls to us; and has so powerful an effect, that we cannot to tell us." Each of Waldmüller's paintings tells us that he found the eternal truth and In his late work, Waldmüller combined beauty he searched for, in the wilderness



"View of the Dachstein With Lake Hallstatt Seen From the Hütteneckalm Near Ischl," 1838, by Ferdinand Georg Waldmüller. Oil on panel; 17 7/8 inches by 22 5/8 inches. Vienna Museum, Vienna.



"The Radhausberg at Gastein," 1837, by Ferdinand Georg Waldmüller. Oil on panel; 10 1/4 inches by 12 3/8 inches. Winterthur Museum, Library & Gardens, Winterthur, Del.



"Roses," 1843, by Ferdinand Georg Waldmüller. Oil on panel; 18 7/8 inches by 15 3/8 inches. Liechtenstein Museum, Vienna.



"After School," 1841, by Ferdinand Georg Waldmüller. Oil on panel; 29 1/2 inches by 24 3/8 inches. Old National Gallery, Berlin.



"The Rose Season," circa 1864, by Ferdinand Georg Waldmüller. Oil on panel; 22 3/8 inches by 27 3/4 inches. Vienna Museum, Vienna.



Christi Morning," 1857, by Ferdinand Georg Waldmüller. Oil on panel; 25 5/8 inches by 321/4inches. Austrian Belvedere Gallery, Vienna.



Pilgrimage, 1853, by Ferdinand Georg Waldmüller, Oi on panel; 18 1/8 inches by 22 7/8 inches. Liechtenstein Museum, Vienna

Athena's Challenge to Modern Mantras

Truth and wisdom bring terror to those adhering to popular narratives

JAMES SALE

oday, it seems that we are in a world where facts and truth are no longer important; how we feel seems to be the key criterion for establishing whether something is true or not. So we hear the expression "my truth" everywhere, meaning that it is irrefutable because it is "my truth," no matter what the facts are.

The ancients had a different understanding of what really counted. The Greeks, in particular, understood the psychology of the human mind: how it works, what it seeks, and, most importantly, what the consequences are for the hubris of ignoring the gods' advice or commands—the gods' advice, of course, according to reality and the facts.

Hubris for the Greeks was the ultimate sin, for it meant that one had either ignored or defied the express wishes of the gods. Although the gods, the Olympian gods, fought and bickered among themselves and had rivals and jealousies just like us, nevertheless, they had supplanted the chaos, primitivism, and savagery of their fathers and mothers: the Titans. They had replaced all that with order and justice.

The world of Cronos (Zeus's father), for example, seems bestial compared with the ordering of the cosmos that his children created. Indeed, when we think of Cronos as a word for "time," we remember that time eats all its children, just as Cronos attempted to devour all his male offspring.

The Goddess of Wisdom

Aside from Zeus himself, perhaps one of the most important Olympian gods was Pallas Athena, the goddess of wisdom, war, and craft. Also, she was the daughter of Zeus, and some say his favorite.

Usually, when we think of the Greek god of war, we think of Ares (in Latin, Mars), but both Ares and Athena were gods of war. The difference is significant. Ares was the god of war that is understood as blood-thirsty, brutal, and ferocious, whereas Athena as the goddess of war could be understood as strategic, intelligent, and sometimes deceptive.

Athena loved wily Odysseus for this very reason. He was not the greatest Greek warrior—that was the blood-thirsty Achilles. But it was not Achilles who won the war for the Greeks. It was Odysseus's cunning his strategies (and Athena's support), it is Odysseus who also survives the war.

Athena is also the "perpetual virgin," which I think points to the fact that (her) wisdom and truth cannot be corrupted. She sprang fully grown and armed from the head—the forehead, in fact—of Zeus, suggesting not only foresight but also the power of wisdom. Indeed, in one myth, all the other gods were awestruck by her appearance, and Helios, god of the sun, stopped in his tracks to behold her!

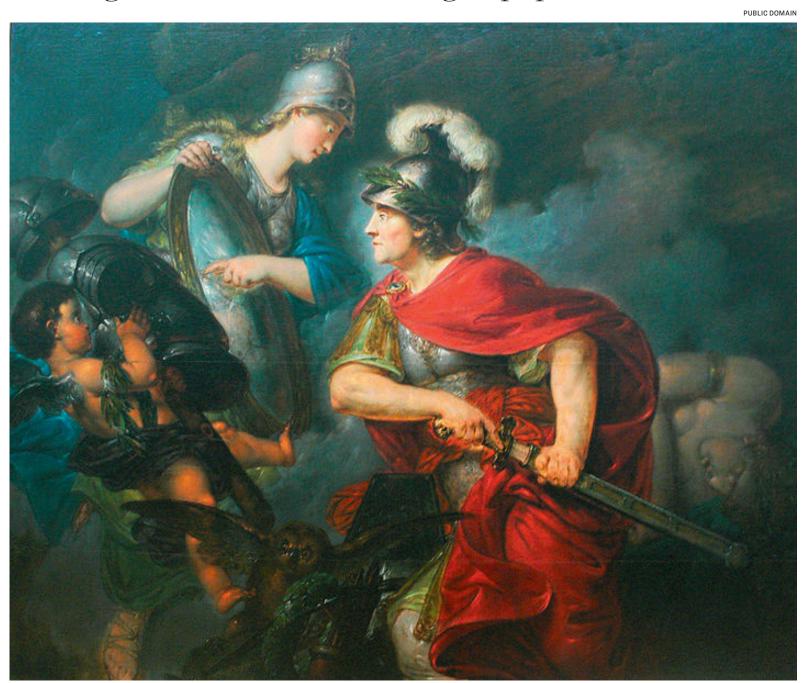
As the patron goddess of heroes and heroic values, Athena favored many other great Greek heroes, including Perseus, Herakles (the greatest of all), Bellerophon, and Jason, as well as Odysseus. Invariably, it was her advice that was crucial to their success. A great example of this, and relevant to our discussion, was her critical support of Perseus.

Athena instructed Perseus not to look directly at Medusa so that he would not be turned to stone and, literally, petrified. Instead, he looked at his shield of bronze, polished like a mirror, which enabled him to decapitate her.

Medusa Today

Athena today is relevant because we see a common pattern of behavior whenever wisdom presents itself in our modern life: when, for example, someone challenges nonbinary ideology, or when a qualified person challenges the presumptions and orthodoxy of COVID-19 vaccinations and mask-wearing, or when critical race theory is challenged on the grounds that it might itself be racist, or when ... the list goes on. When these challenges occur, when some evidence is presented counter to the popular narrative—that is, when Athena, goddess of wisdom and truth, manifests—we always see the same behavior.

If we return to the Perseus myth, the head of Medusa, after it appeared in several other adventures with Perseus, finally finds its resting place in the center of Athena's shield, the aegis. This means that, in facing Athena in battle, one had to face Medusa's head. In other words, one had to face the sheer terror that is petrifying!



"Frederick the Great as Perseus" 1756, by Bernhard Rode depicts Athena showing Perseus how to avoid the gaze of Medusa.





Athena,

wisdom,

instructs

a voung

student

to find his

inspiration

in Italy and

Greece, circa

the Greek

goddess of

"The Birth of Athena" by Antoine Houasse. Palace of Versailles.

There is no rational argument to pitch against the truth.

DEMITRIOS P/SHUTTERSTOCK



Perhaps one of the most important Olympian gods was Pallas Athena, the goddess of wisdom, war, and craft; also, she was the daughter of Zeus.

Only another god or spirit could withstand it. And as for her attacks, even among the gods, probably only Zeus and one or two others could adequately do even that.

Thus, when shibboleths of today are attacked by wisdom, the result is terror and petrification. These ideas manifest in a number of ways. First, the people who spread these ideas exhibit the inability to rely on rational dialogue. There is no rational argument to pitch against the truth. Instead, those who call themselves "woke" enter into profound denial. (To be clear, the term "woke" is used by both liberals and conservatives to describe a number of more radical progressive ideologies, including critical race theory, social justice, and gender theory.)

This petrification hardens their attitudes and their hearts. The heart becomes a stone. Fear (more accurately, terror) produces a lashing out, a vicious response, an inability to consider alternatives, and even the possibility of considering that they might be mistaken or, in fact, be wrong.

A third manifestation is that eventually, as the hardening (the petrification) deepens, they display a merciless, pitiless quality: Offenders must be punished. (At the same time, of course, the meme "be kind" is chanted like a mantra.)

Freedom's Defenders

We know, then, that wisdom and truth— Athena—is on our side when we witness these behaviors and manifestations of those determined, through their hubris, to deny reality, to deny the facts, and to deny truth. As the English writer and philosopher G.K. Chesterton said of the unforgiveable sin, it is "to call a green leaf gray."

Composer and writer Kenneth LaFave, in his wonderfully instructive book "War of the Words," justly observed that "the single best and most accurate word to identify freedom's defenders, it seems, is 'Westerners.'"

Historically, this does seem to be true. From the Magna Carta to the Bill of Rights, the West has continually pushed to establish the freedoms that we now take for granted. The danger we are in now is that these freedoms are being eroded internally, and we have been extremely lax in confronting this decline: lax as in taking our attention away from wisdom and truth, which petrify the enemy, and by allowing green leaves to be called gray.

The antidote is to return to the goddess of wisdom. This, of course, is a metaphor, for we might also wish to remind ourselves that wisdom was in the Judeo-Christian tradition with the Lord God in the beginning: "The Lord possessed me [Wisdom] at the beginning of His way, before his works of old. From everlasting I was established ..." (Proverbs 8.22–23).

Let's step up our efforts to stay with the truth and instill wisdom whenever we can, for more than anything else, this is what the

James Sale has had over 50 books published, most recently, "Mapping Motivation for Top Performing Teams" (Routledge, 2021). He has been nominated for the 2022 poetry Pushcart Prize, won first prize in The Society of Classical Poets 2017 annual competition, performing in New York in 2019. His most recent poetry collection is "HellWard." For more information about the author, and about his Dante project, visit EnglishCantos.home.blog

TV SERIES REVIEW

THE EPOCH TIMES Week 8, 2023

A Year in the Life of the PGA

MICHAEL CLARK

The fourth Netflix-produced sports docuseries, "Full Swing" is a prime example of being in the right place at exactly the right time.

As docuseries such as this typically begin preproduction a year or longer prior to shooting, no one could have predicted the tumult and finger-wagging that arose in the late spring regarding what the majority of those in the know consider to be the most controversial, game-changing event in the history of professional golf: a competing tour.

As a general rule, documentaries are relatively inexpensive and easy to produce, as the bulk of the final product is culled from existing media. For example, if you wanted to make a biographical documentary of Tiger Woods, a man whose life has been captured in great detail since he was a toddler, you'd have no trouble locating source material. The two-episode "Tiger" came out on HBO in 2021, and it was good. But it's not a definitive biography as he's still alive and is still playing golf, albeit inconsistently.

Woods is seen in several episodes of the eight-part, nearly six-hour "Full Swing" but only as one of dozens of other PGA players. It chronicles the events of the 2022 tour including the six most prestigious tournaments, and select profiles of some famous and not-so-famous current players.

As with most productions of this length, there are narrative peaks and valleys, and the good news is that the former greatly outnumber the latter.

Justin and Jordan

Things get off to a great start with the aptly titled first episode "Frenemies," highlighting the lifelong friendship and rivalry between Justin Thomas and Jordan Spieth. Of the two, Spieth caught fire first, winning two majors (Masters, U.S. Open) and the two end-of-year playoff events (Tour Championship, FedEx Cup) in 2015.

For the third-generation professional, Thomas, it was a longer road to success, but he's also been more consistent than Spieth. When not in competition, they're each other's biggest supporters and travel to events together on private jets.

Like every other player seen in the series, if they're shown departing or arriving at any given event, it's on a private jet together, which is not a good look to the bulk of the

Brooks Koepka (R) practices his putting in "Full Swing."



The dust-up between the **PGA and LIV** still hasn't fully settled.

'Full Swing'

Documentary

None credited

TV Rating:

Release Date:

Feb. 15, 2023

Running Time:

5 hours, 57 minutes

Director:

retrospect, the producers should not have included any of this footage.

"Episode 2: Win or Go Home" is easily the most stark and sobering of the lot. It focuses on four-time majors champion Brooks Koepka alongside meteoric up-and-comer Scottie Scheffler. Two years into a funk, Koepka can't do anything right while Scheffler has the Midas touch, becoming the top money winner over the last two years while also capturing the 2022 Masters.

PGA Versus LIV

The zenith of the series is the third episode, "Money or Legacy," which covers the birth of the non-PGA sanctioned "LIV" tour. Rightfully perceived by most as a PR move to divert attention away from the Saudi's questionable human rights violations, the Saudi government-bankrolled endeavor offered obscene amounts of money to PGA players to come on board.

Some players, including Koepka and the colorful Ian Poulter, were among the first to join the new tour. It's hard to disagree with the LIV business plan. Instead of playing 72 holes with the chance of being cut halfway through with no paycheck, LIV tournaments are only 54 holes in duration (hence the Roman numeral "LIV" name), and everyone gets paid.

This dust-up between the PGA and LIV still hasn't fully settled, but it did succeed in prompting the PGA to modify its business model in favor of its principal draw: the players.

The most inspirational installment, "Imposter Syndrome," profiles Joel Dahmen, a low-ranked player, and his improbable showing at the 122nd U.S. Open. Lacking in anything resembling pretense, Dahmen is the drinking buddy whom ama-

fans who are diehard PGA supporters. In teurs would like to join on the weekend when great scores take a distant back seat to having a good time.

The Ebb

Episodes 5, 6, and 7 ("American Dreams," "Don't Get Bitter, Get Better," and "Golf Is Hard") are all perfunctory and serviceable but come off as padded filler, more concerned with providing fluff and human interest angles instead of connections to golf.

The final installment, "Everything Has Led to This," concentrates on the year's final events: the 150th (British) Open won by Cameron Smith and the phoenix-like resurgence of Northern Ireland native Rory McIlroy at the season-capping FedEx Cup.

As the son of a PGA golfer who was weaned on the game, my expectations of "Full Swing" were higher than the uninitiated viewers, but lower than those thoroughly immersed in all aspects of the sport. I'd like to say that "Full Swing" will be relatable to non-golfers, but I can't. It is something that requires a working knowledge of the sport going in.

Had it been trimmed down to four or so hours, "Full Swing" would have had far more bite and staying power.

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

REWIND, REVIEW, AND RE-RATE

An Enjoyable World War II Dramedy

IAN KANE

World War II had reached a feverish pitch in 1943 as Axis forces continued to lose ground to the Allies. By the summer, Italian dictator Benito Mussolini had been deposed and much of Italy celebrated the removal of "Il Duce." However serious these global events may have been, director Stanley Kramer was able to make a mostly lighthearted comedy set during that tumultuous period—a film about wine, dancing (and stumbling), and the survival of an entire village—in his 1969 film "The Secret of Santa Vittoria."

The quaint, hilly Italian village of Santa Vittoria learns about the good news of Mussolini's departure when one of their own, young Fabio (Giancarlo Giannini), announces it on the piazza. One of Fabio's friends, the village idiot and raging alcoholic Bombolini (Anthony Quinn), attempts to celebrate at home with some of his boozing buddies, including Fabio and another chum, Babbaluche (Renato Rascel).

However, Bombolini's fiery wife Rosa (Anna Magnani) has had it with their drunken antics and kicks all of them out of the house. This causes Bombolini to spiral out of control. He promptly gets completely hammered and somehow ends up on the balcony of a water tower, on which he paints a message praising Mussolini.

In a hilarious (yet somewhat sad) scene, Fabio talks drunken Bombolini out of jumping from the balcony in angst. After painting over the message, the two men manage to climb back down the tower and Bombolini is inadvertently hailed as



Capt. Von Prum (Hardy Krüger, L) matches wits with Bombolini (Anthony Quinn), in "The Secret of Santa Vittoria"

This is a film about wine, dancing, and the survival of an entire village.

The Secret of Santa Vittoriaⁱ

Director: Stanley Kramer Starring: Anthony Quinn, Anna Magnani, Virna Lisi **MPAA** Rating: PG-13

> **Running Time:** 2 hours, 19 minutes **Release Date:** Oct. 29, 1969

a hero. The village doesn't know that he is

the one who originally scrawled the pro-

Mussolini graffiti on the tower. Because of his sudden rise in popularity, Bombolini quickly replaces the village's pro-fascist mayor. As he begins to pull himself out of his state of inebriation and settle into his position as the new mayor, Fabio returns with another urgent announcement: The German army that occupies Italy is expanding out into the countryside and confiscating whatever valuables it can find. For a place such as Santa Vittoria, the annexation of its sole valuable resource—its exemplary wine—could spell doom for its economy and wipe the village out.

Self-aware enough to know that he's not the brightest bulb of the bunch and desperate for any ideas on how to avert such a calamitous disaster, Bombolini consults a wounded officer of the Italian army named Tufa (Sergio Franchi). Together, they devise a plan to move the village's one-million-plus bottles of wine to an ancient Roman cave in the area and disguise it in the hopes that the Germans can't find its treasures.

However, in order to safely transport all the bottles of vino, the villagers must form a huge human line and hand each bottle of wine to one another, one by one. They also cleverly leave behind some of the wine bottles in the village's massive cellar in an effort to fool the Germans into believing that's all they have.

The villagers manage to hide the main bulk of their wine inventory in the Roman cave just before the arrival of a detachment of German soldiers led by Capt. Von Prum (Hardy Krüger).

What transpires from here is a highly entertaining game of cat and mouse between Von Prum, who suspects that the village is hiding a wine stash somewhere, and the bumbling Bombolini.

Three Performances

This film's premise is an interesting one, pitting a bunch of rural Italian country bumpkins and their clownish leader against a regiment of the German army and its clever commanding officer. Quinn's exaggerated hand gestures and facial expressions complement his character well, and the actor's unique brand of goofy humor elicits many a laugh. Krüger is likewise convincing as a shrewd German army officer who is determined to get to the bottom of the mystery.

But what surprised me was the sadly underutilized talents of Anna Magnani. She had already won an Oscar for Best Actress for her role in 1955's "The Rose Tattoo." Magnani was an intensely radiant woman who imbued the characters she played with a gravitas that most actresses can only dream of. I could have watched her and Quinn go back and forth for most of the movie and been completely satisfied; they have great chemistry in their brief scenes together.

As it is, "The Secret of Santa Vittoria" is a lengthy (in a good way), fun, and mostly funny drama that features memorable characters, an intriguing plot, and the ever-gorgeous natural scenery of the Italian countryside.

You can watch this film on Vudu.

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.

The Power of Our Inner Righteousness

Satan concedes to heaven's might

not only his nature, as we saw in an ear-

lier installment in this series, but also his

appearance. The evil that fills Satan has

Think not, revolted Spirit, thy shape the

Or undiminished brightness, to be known

As when thou stood'st in Heav'n upright

Departed from thee, and thou resembles

Thy sin and place of doom obscure and

And felt how awful goodness is, and saw

Virtue in her shape how lovely, saw, and

His loss ... (Book IV, Lines 835–840, 846–849)

Accepting evil as his truth, Satan is thorough-

ly changed from the angel he once was. In

going against God's law, he becomes the op-

posite of the characteristics of heaven: He is

ugly, deformed, prideful, and angry. Despite

being ugly within and without, something

within him still wishes for heaven. This fur-

ther suggests that he, even as the epitome of

evil, cannot fully separate himself from the

truths that the beauty and virtue of heavenly

That glory then, when thou no more

made him thoroughly ugly:

abashed the Devil stood,

wast good,

things represent.

ERIC BESS

vil things are frightening to many of us unless we are experiencing them from a distance. Sometimes, it can be difficult to have the confidence to turn toward and confront evil. How might we truly identify evil and confront it with confidence?

Deceptive Satan Inspires Discord

In the previous installment in this series, we followed the two angels Ithuriel and Zephron as they searched for the foreign spirit in the Garden of Eden. The two angels search Eden high and low until they find a toad by Eve's ear. This toad was attempting to put impure ideas into Eve's mind as she slept:

In search of whom they sought: him there

Squat like a toad, close at the ear of Eve; Assaying by his devilish art to reach The organs of her Fancy, and with

Illusions as he list, phantasms and dreams Or if, inspiring venom, he might taint Th' animal spirits that from pure

Like gentle breaths from rivers pure,

At least distempered, discontinued

Vain hopes, vain aims, inordinate desires Heaven Weighs Righteousness and Evil Blown up with high conceits engend'ring The archangel Gabriel arrives and asks Sapride. (Book IV, Lines 798–809)

Milton's passage has certain undertones, for it's interesting that Satan initially attempts to tempt Eve while she sleeps. When we sleep, we're not necessarily diligent against or even aware of those things that might affront us; we're less able to protect ourselves against evil when we lack awareness. Are we not more likely to be tempted when we let our guard down?

And what does Satan use to tempt Eve in this state? He seeks to inspire within her emotional disorder, pride, and animalistic desires that separate her from God. The word "inspire" is an interesting choice of word, for when we feel inspired, we feel from within that our intentions are our own. Satan, in his manipulative craftiness, is inspiring God's creation to move away from God and toward evil.

The Power of Righteousness Reveals the Truth of Evil

Seeing the toad and recognizing its manipulative intentions, the angel Ithuriel lightly touches the toad with his spear, and his touch changes Satan back into his true form:

Him thus intent Ithuriel with his spear Touched lightly; for no falsehood can

Touch of celestial temper, but returns Of force to its own likeness ...

With sudden blaze diffused, inflames

So started up in his own shape the Fiend. Back stepped those two fair angels half So sudden to behold the grisly King. (Book

IV, Lines 810–813, 818–821)

That which is of the heavens, that is, that which is innately righteous, exposes that which is evil with little effort. Ithuriel, an angel representative of righteousness, only has to lightly touch upon evil for evil to reveal its true nature.

This reveals something about our own divine nature: If our unadulterated souls are divine in nature, then we too—deep within—are representatives of righteousness. We need merely touch upon evil, that is, point it out, to expose its true nature, for wickedness is no match for the righteous.

How Evil Deforms

Confronted by the appearance of Satan, the angels ask who he is, and this question angers Satan. Satan suggests that the two angels ought to know the king of the rebel angels who led an onslaught against God. acceptance of evil has served to change Lost." Engraving. tan why he has left hell to come and violate human beings while they sleep. Satan responds that hell is too painful for him, so he has come to Earth to find peace. He didn't come to harm humans.

Gabriel suggests that Satan has lost his divine wisdom, too, since he doesn't realize that the anger he has against God is the true source of his pain. But then Gabriel asks, if hell is so bad, why are you the only one to leave?

Satan replies that Gabriel knows he didn't flee first, for Gabriel saw him lead the charge against heaven. Instead, he says he has searched to find a better place for his followers and that this act will bring him the fame and praise that he was denied in heaven.

Gabriel calls him a liar and says that his story keeps changing; first, he says he leaves hell because of his own pain, but then he says he leaves hell to find a better place for his followers. At one point, he sang the most praise of God, only to become the one to lead a rebellion against God; he has no idea who he is or for what he stands. Gabriel demands that Satan go back to hell, or he will drag him back there.

Despite Satan being ugly within and without, something within him still wishes for heaven.

Satan isn't happy with this statement at all and threatens Gabriel in return. A fight almost breaks out, but God reveals golden scales that weigh the strength of Satan versus the strength of heaven, and heaven's strength greatly outweighs Satan's. Gabriel tells Satan to look at God's scales:

Satan, I know thy strength, and thou

Neither our own but giv'n; what folly then To boast what arms can do, since thine no

Than Heav'n permits, nor mine, though doubled now To trample thee as mire: for proof look up,

And read thy lot in you celestial sign Where thou art weighed, and shown how If thou resist. The Fiend looked up and knew His mounted scale aloft: nor more, but fled Murmuring, and with him fled the shades of night. (Book IV, Lines 1006–1015)

Satan looks up and realizes that despite the fact that he follows the ways of hell, his strength is still determined by the ways of heaven, and he concedes.

Doré Contrasts Good and Evil

Doré depicts the moment that Satan retreats from the group of angels. The contrast of his body against the background and the size of his body makes him the focal point of the composition: Doré wants us to see him retreat.

Doré also makes a clear contrast between the nature of Satan and heaven. The angels and heaven are depicted with great light. The angels are even depicted as if they're illuminated by the light of heaven, but Satan isn't illuminated at all. Instead, he's shrouded in shadow.

It's also interesting that Satan is made to descend from the top of the hill. This is another moment where Satan is made to descend, the first being when he was cast out from heaven for rebelling against God. It's almost as if the laws of heaven are enforcing a certain degree of balance: The more he wants to be at the top, the more he's forced to descend.

If we truly are divine within, that is, if the law of heaven is part of our makeup, then is it true that we, too, can make evil reveal its true nature by just pointing it out? Can we show the beauty and strength of heaven by merely contrasting it with the ugliness of evil? Is there something in our nature that wants to align with the laws of heaven no matter what our state of mind may be?

Gustav Doré was a prolific illustrator of the 19th century. He created images for some of the greatest classical literature of the Western world, including "The Bible," "Paradise Lost," and "The Divine Comedy." In this series, we take a deep dive into the thoughts that inspired Doré and the imagery those thoughts provoked.

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

The angels, however, inform Satan that his "Nor more; but fled/Murmuring, and with him fled the shades of night" (IV. 1014, 1015),1866, by Gustav Doré for John Milton's "Paradise

BOOK REVIEW

Masterful Storytelling of a Secret Nazi Plot

ANITA L. SHERMAN

THE EPOCH TIMES Week 8, 2023

Dec. 7, 1941, marks the date in history when Japan bombed Pearl Harbor, ushering the United States into World War II.

Earlier, in May 1940, Hitler had invaded Holland and Belgium. Poland and Czecho slovakia had already fallen. France would soon follow.

England's newly elected prime minister, Winston Churchill, knew that in order to keep Germany at bay, he would need the United States to enter the war. England stood alone.

For more than a year prior to 1941, Churchill beseeched U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt to send more than well wishes. Roosevelt, while sympathetic, governed a country weary of war with no desire to get involved in another. That sentiment changed on that fateful Sunday morning in Hawaii when the undetected Japanese carriers launched their bombers on the American fleet.

Joseph Stalin, the dictator of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), had signed a Nazi-Soviet pact in 1939. In 1941, Germany broke that pact and invaded the USSR, heading toward Moscow. The Soviet Union wasn't prepared for war.

Major Players Prepare to Partner

The "Big Three"—Roosevelt, Churchill, and Stalin—were now allies against Hitler.

As much as Dec. 7, 1941, is cemented into the World War II history of the United States and, hopefully, in the minds and hearts of most Americans, bestselling authors Brad Meltzer and Josh Mensch take readers on a compelling and riveting inside look at the political drama leading up to November 1943.

At the height of World War II, Roosevelt (now fully into the war), Churchill (possibly hedging at the prospect of crossing the English Channel to face Germany on French soil), and Stalin (suffering the loss of thousands of troops and weary of fighting Germany alone on the Eastern front) met for the first time to discuss crucial strategies to ensure that victory would be theirs.

Do these three world leaders trust each other? Do they share like-minded political strategies? And what about their personalities? Do they like each other?

Meltzer and Mensch, both prolific authors and both affiliated with the History Channel and television programming, do a masterful job collaborating on this narrative, which reads like a taunt thriller. But it's all true, making it even more mesmerizing.

Roosevelt is keen on the three leaders

The book is an exhilarating behind-thescenes look at history.

BRAD

'THE NAZI

CONSPIRACY: THE

AND CHURCHILL'

Josh Mensch

Flatiron Books

Jan. 10, 2023

By Brad Meltzer and

Hardcover 400 pages

a materialistic

spoiled brat,

Sara values

people and

relationships.

'The Little Princess

Shirley Temple, Anita

Nash, Arthur Treacher,

Louise, Ian Hunter, Mary

Director:

Starring:

Sybil Jason

Not Rated

Running Time:

Release Date:

March 10, 1939

1 hour, 33 minutes

Walter Lang

SECRET PLOT TO KILL

ROOSEVELT, STALIN,



Nov. 28, 1943. (L-R) Joseph Stalin. Franklin D. Roosevelt. and Winston Churchill on the portico of the Soviet Embassy during the Tehran Conference.

The Big

Three meet

meeting face-to-face, not only to gauge one another's political and military prowess but perhaps, more importantly, to show the world a united front against Nazism and that victory will be achieved through the collaborative efforts of the Allied forces.

Leveraging the Logistics Getting these three together is comparable

to aligning the stars. All come with their own agendas, and all are surrounded by their own military advisers, staff, and security teams. And then there are the spies and saboteurs seeming to lurk behind every closed door. There's lots of political intrigue.

For the Nazis, having all three of them together in one place was too good to be true. Threats of a triple assassination were all too real as the date of their meeting in Tehran, Iran, in November 1943 drew closer.

While the "Big Three" are the main focus of this read, there are a host of satellite figures who revolve in their worlds, and readers will find them equally captivating: Mike Reilly, Roosevelt's head of the White House Secret Service; Franz Mayr, a German operative living in Tehran; Otto Skorzeny, a gutsy German officer who masterminds the rescue of Benito Mussolini (not only a political ally but a good friend of Hitler's) from a hotel on the Apennine Mountains; Averell Harriman, then-U.S. ambassador to the Soviet Union; and Reinhard Heydrich, Hitler's Reich Security chief.

It's an exhilarating behind-the-scenes look at history through the lens of time and in the hands of authors who bring this pivotal period of history to life in fine fashion. The

Sara. With no sympathy for a now-"penniless"

Sara, Minchin swiftly strips her of prior indul-

gences, shunts her from her luxurious room

authors weave these characters brilliantly on land, sea, and air from one crisply written chapter to another. Although I didn't read this book in one sitting, it's tempting to binge read, as it's challenging not to keep turning the pages to see what happens next.

It's also a very poignant perspective on the horrors of war, with details of brutal massacres, sadistic killings, treason, and cruel twists of fate. The toll on human life is staggering, and those facts aren't spared the reader.

The course of history would have no doubt been changed, perhaps with cataclysmic consequences, if this conspiracy to take out the three heads of state of the three major Allied powers (the United States, Britain, and the Soviet Union) had borne fruit in 1943. We know that didn't happen.

Clearly using cloak-and-dagger elements, Meltzer and Mensch do a masterful job of storytelling with this edge-of-your-seat history read. Readers know it ends well, but getting there is a tale worth knowing.

Hardcover: 400 pages 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



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GOLDEN AGE FILM

'The Little Princess': Shirley Temple's Final Hit as a Child Star

RUDOLPH LAMBERT FERNANDEZ

Walter Lang's family drama, bordering on a fairy tale, is set in 1899 England, when senior military officers were considered part of the aristocracy, just shy of royalty.

When widower Capt. Crewe (Ian Hunter) is called to duty in the Second Boer War, he's forced to leave his child, Sara (11-yearold Shirley Temple), and her pony in Miss Minchin's School for Girls. For the first time living entire months on her own, Sara joyfully, if mischievously, copes with the ups and downs of life.

Schoolmistress Minchin (Mary Nash), is as steeped in pointless propriety as she is in snobbishness, unmoved by aristocrats unless they can make her even more affluent than she is. Her kind brother Bertie (Arthur Treacher), and teacher, Rose (Anita Louise), help in running the boarding school.

Pampered by her father since birth, Sara smarts at Minchin's needlessly regimented establishment. As Capt. Crewe brings her to the gate, Sara furrows her brow and says, "It's not a very cheerful-looking school, is it Daddy?"

She's right. Minchin takes Sarain only when Capt. Crewe, reluctantly, brandishes his formidable financial credentials. Things look up at first, as Minchin pampers Sara, expecting a flow of payments from Sara's doting father. Sara shows up at school dressed as a prin-

cess, with a pony in tow. So some of her lessthan-aristocratic classmates are raring to teach her a lesson in modesty. Soon, they and Minchin get their chance.

As war bulletins flow in from the siege of Mafeking in South Africa and Capt. Crewe is reported killed in battle, the tables turn on

to a garret, and foists kitchen and household chores on her. To Minchin's dismay, Sara turns out to be quite a character: resilient, steely, and proud of her soldierly upbringing. Typical of children who are brought up by single parents and who have no siblings to keep them company Far from being

> chatting up her doll or her pony. Far from being a materialistic spoiled brat, Sara values people and relationships. She sings and dances not just when happy, but even when unhappy, as long as it helps brighten up those less fortunate. She's unbowed by Minchin's bullying and doesn't shy from befriending the underdog, especially the lowly, but charming Becky (Sybil Jason), who routinely does the chores.

at play, Sara is used to playing pretend and

One touching image is of Sara, tutored by Capt. Crewe, either bidding him goodbye or weathering his separation when on duty, recites a little rhyme:

"My Daddy has to go away, But he'll return most any day. Any moment I may see, My Daddy, coming back to me."

Pomp and Grandeur

Producer Darryl F. Zanuck spares no expense or effort in delivering gorgeous costumes and elaborate set design and decoration. Because it's so posh, the school also benefits from the services of horse-riding instructor Geoffrey (Richard Greene). Wealthy families at the time considered a pony for a child as something of a status symbol. Remember Rhett Butler, fussing over his little Bonnie and her pony in "Gone With the Wind," released the same

Lang, better known for directing "The King and I" (1956) and "Can-Can" (1960), brings his flair for music, dance, pomp, and grandeur even to the relatively simple settings here. Two brief song sequences see Sara tap-dancing



alongside Bertie. One extended seven-minute, fairy-tale-like dream sequence, including a bit of ballet, depicts almost all the principal characters, including Minchin as a witch!

Conscious of his child-centered audience, Lang softens Minchin's harshness in some places for comic effect, and allows it fuller flow in others, but never darkens it to the level of deprivation seen in other children's movies such as "Great Expectations" or "Oliver Twist."

Besides, kindness surrounds Sara anyway, in the form of Bertie, Rose, and Becky. Even Minchin's aristocratic neighbor Lord Wickham (Miles Mander) and his attendant, Ram Dass (Cesar Romero), present a sympathetic contrast to Minchin's transactional style. Children will delight at the hint of magic that this intriguing duo brings to a scene.

It's a pity screenwriters Ethel Hill and Walter Ferris pivot their narrative almost entirely around Sara, rarely stopping to flesh out the characters of other girls, let alone other adult characters. Even Becky features too fleetingly. Typical of that era's films, American actors jostle with British performers, never worrying too much about inauthentic accents.

The film capped nearly a decade of Temple's 1930s roles as a child actress, her first in Technicolor and her last major hit as a still-chubby

Rudolph Lambert Fernandez is an independent writer who writes on pop culture. Sara Crewe (Shirley Temple) and riding instructor Geoffrey (Richard Greene), in "The Little REWIND, REVIEW, AND RE-RATE

Preservation of Our Past for Our Future

RUDOLPH LAMBERT FERNANDEZ

In 1922, archaeologist Howard Carter, who discovered the tomb of Egyptian Pharaoh Tutankhamun, stood at its door. After a prolonged excavation, or "dig," in Egypt's Valley of the Kings, Carter was the first human in some 3,000 years to set foot there. In typical British understatement, he captured the momentous occasion saying that time seemed to have "lost its meaning."

The film "The Dig" directed by Simon Stone, takes its philosophical cue from Carter and reflects on time and its meaning. But it draws inspiration from another dig, in 1939 England, which revealed an ancient Anglo-Saxon treasure-laden ship buried beneath a countryside moor. It also draws on John Preston's eponymous novel based on the real-life man and woman who powered that historic discovery.

A widow with an archaeological itch, Edith Pretty (Carey Mulligan), contracts archaeologist-excavator, Basil Brown (Ralph Fiennes), to dig on her land on her hunch that it'll throw up a "find." True to her instinct, it does. As the dig proceeds, they unearth special meanings that time holds for them, and a little more than treasure in the mud.

Brown spurns legacy contracts with the local Ipswich Museum in favor of Pretty's. But as treasures surface, the British Museum imposes itself on them and their little village and takes charge. Pretty's son Robert (Archie Barnes), cousin Rory (Johnny Flynn), and Brown's wife May (Monica Dolan) are sympathetic witnesses to this drama that plays out amid impending war.

Digging Inside

At one level Stone's film is about how time leaves shards of history buried under a tomb or mound, hidden, sometimes for centuries. At a deeper level it's about how we sometimes bury our true self under a façade. Only those who care enough can help us uncover the "treasure" we've hidden.

Brown's treasure is his thirst for knowledge, his mastery of Latin, geology and astronomy, and his nose for soil and its secrets.

Edith Pretty (Carey Mulligan) owns farmland where she would like Basil Brown (Ralph Fiennes) to dig for archeological treasure that she believes is buried there.

Stone's film is about how time leaves shards of history buried.

'The Dig'

Director: Simon Stone

Starring:

Carey Mulligan, Ralph Fiennes, Johnny Flynn, Monica Dolan

MPAA Rating: PG-13

Running Time:

1 hour, 52 minutes

Release Date: Jan. 15, 2021





But he's hidden that treasure from everyone, including from himself. When he's tempted to leave the dig to the petty machinations of museums, it takes the collective persuasion of Pretty, May, Robert, and Rory to let his treasure surface and shine.

Pretty's treasure is her selflessness, likewise hidden, especially from herself. It takes more than nudges from Brown and others to let her treasure shine.

Brown loves his wife May, yet enjoys a companionship with Edith that flows more from mutual admiration than from romantic tension. If there's a wisp of romance in the air everyone, including May, recognizes it as that: a wisp and nothing more.

Mulligan is a terrific actress. Perfect for pugnacious Pretty, she brings a delicate mix of softness, backbone, and repressed upperclass sensibilities to the role. As Ipswich Museum pleads with her to free Brown from her contract, she leaves it entirely to him. There will be no landlord's tantrum to insist that he obey her or the museum.

Fiennes is brilliant as a mascot for "continuity." He rises at night to prevent rain from ruining the dig; his bid to preserve the past from an intervening present. Not satisfied with looking down at the soil, he uses his telescope to look up at the sky.

Simon Stone delights in using symbols and contextualized imagery to suggest an endless interplay between past, present, and future. Pretty removes old petals as she places new flowers at her husband's tomb, determined to find fresh ways of honoring the past. Her wireless-radio interrupts her reverie about the past with broadcasts of a rude present: imminent war. Pained, she watches historical monuments slowly doubling up as gun-positions. Sci-fi comics near a sleeping Robert suggest he's dreaming of a future currently too fantastic for his present.

Amateur photographer Rory captures the present on his camera (the historic dig in progress), but for the sake of the future (archives that'll tell the story behind the dig). When Brown's about to give up, thanks to meddlesome museums, May dares him not to by reminding him why he uncovers the past at all: to let future generations know their roots.

Extraordinarily long long-shots show Edith walking or Brown cycling across the moor. You see their tiny silhouettes against a massive countryside landscape and a great big sky, which hints how individuals do matter in the larger scheme of things. Individuals can make a difference if they take a stand and live up to their convictions, instead of succumbing to the "flavor of the month."

We can decide the kind of future we want by choosing what of the past and present we must protect, and what we can afford to let die away. "The Dig" reflects on this.

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

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