

THE EPOCH TIMES

ARTS & CULTURE

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American actor Edwin Booth (1833–1893) was considered the greatest Shakespearean actor in 19th-century America. Here he is dressed as Hamlet, his most famous role, circa 1870, photographed by J. Guernev.

LITERATURE

Our English Cousin

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE AND THE SHAPING OF AMERICA

JEFF MINICK

Shakespeare. Bring up that name in conversation, and the reactions of your audience are likely to be mixed. To some of your listeners, that most famous name in all of English literature will likely arouse unpleasant memories of a dreary week or two in a high school class lost in a jumble of lords, ladies, jesters, and attendants, all seeming to speak a language only vaguely related to English.

Others will react with enthusiasm, re-

The plays and poetry of William Shakespeare have long been entwined in American culture.

membering with fondness the production of “As You Like It” at a playhouse or the teacher who brought Macbeth and Lady Macbeth to life in an otherwise unremarkable college classroom.

The plays and poetry of William Shakespeare have long been entwined in American culture. In the 19th century, actors in New York City, Washington D.C., and a dozen other metro areas performed his plays to swank audiences. At the same time, some traveling stage troupe might mount a stage in a California mining town and put on a rustic version of “Romeo and

Juliet,” performances that were wildly popular at the time.

Whether or not we’ve watched or read “Hamlet,” nearly all of us are familiar with “To be or not to be.” And popular expressions like “break the ice,” “not slept a wink,” “neither here nor there,” and “too much of a good thing” are all hand-me-downs from the Bard of Avon.

Many Americans, however, may be unaware of just how deeply Shakespeare’s works have penetrated our history and culture.

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BOOK REVIEW

Recovering Politics, Civilization, and the Soul: Essays on Pierre Manent and Roger Scruton

A fine, insightful analysis of the contributions of 2 modern conservative philosophers

DUSTIN BASS

Daniel J. Mahoney's new book, "Recovering Politics, Civilization, and the Soul," is an analytical study as well as a work of praise for the contributions of two modern conservative philosophers: the French philosopher Pierre Manent, and the British philosopher Roger Scruton.

These analyses and praises are displayed in essay form by one of the more accomplished conservative essayists and writers today in Mahoney. The focal point of the work is not merely to analyze and praise but to point, if not guide, the modern reader away from the soullessness of postmodern thought and back to a classical liberal perspective founded on faith.

Politics. Civilization. Soul.

The title of the book seems to be in no specific order: politics, civilization, soul. Which comes first? Which comes last? What is the proper sequence?

Perhaps there is no "proper" sequence, but in the introduction, Mahoney addresses these three in the order he has given them. He references Aristotle's notion that politics is the "enduring and humanizing imperative to 'put reason and actions in common.'" It is the "moral enterprise."

He follows with civilization, which according to the author is the "state of human flourishing where ordered liberty is tied to law and self-limitation" among other stated goals.

Mahoney clears up the sequence by stating that "recovery of free politics and of our civilized patrimony" is impossible "without a renewed appreciation of the human soul," which is "the seat of our consciousness" that makes "philosophical reflection" possible. His work is a suggestion that we—the West in particular—are in a state of recovery, though accomplishing such recovery is anything but certain.

Manent and Scruton

Mahoney has chosen Manent and Scruton because he believes that they "demonstrate how we can recover the continuity of civilization, the dignity of the political vocation, and an appreciation of the ensouled human person."

Though he notes that the two attack philosophy from different angles, he states another reason he chose these two was because they, similarly, are "profoundly countercultural... in their openness to the wisdom inherent in the Christian religion."

There are 11 essays in the book, each moving along the sequence of politics, civilization, and the soul. There are no

shallow exceptions to these works. Each essay requires the reader's full attention as it addresses the depth of the West's recent past and current turmoil. Although Mahoney makes historical references going as far back as centuries ago, his primary era of concern is post-1968, something he notes as the "thought of 1968" (that is, "the new anti-nomianism [that] confuses liberty with the liberation of the desires").

Mahoney takes the reader through just how Scruton, who passed away in 2020, and Manent addressed this radicalism of thought and perversion of liberty. Their works, which are consistently mentioned and referenced, brought reason to philosophical imbecility and balance to civilizational instability.

Their works brought balance to civilizational instability.

Their works, though ignored in liberal circles (liberal in modern terms), were adhered to in classical liberal circles as well as by those people striving for liberty and fighting to throw off the chains of totalitarianism. The irony is that the "thought of 1968," in its stated pursuit of liberty, chose chains over liberty by virtue of corrupting commonsensical approaches to a free society. As Mahoney states in his third essay:

Liberty is always liberty under law, or it ceases to do justice to the nature of man and society. A free, decent, and stable democratic order should never confuse the freedom to choose one's way in life with a radical relativism that gives us permission to choose our 'own conceptions of good and evil.'

Scruton and Manent understood that liberty is not an abstraction. It is a concrete ideal necessary for upholding its standards. While the university intellectuals pushed for redefining the terms of reality, Scruton and Manent (and other clearheaded thinkers of the era) promulgated reason substantiated by experience and the rudiments of Christianity.

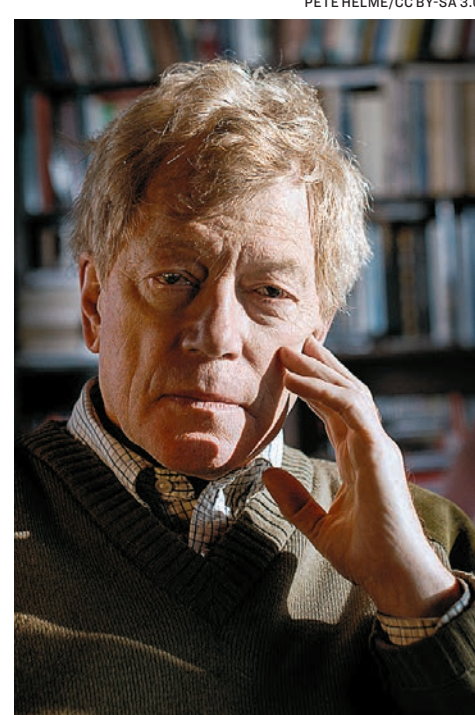
Their writings, as Mahoney makes clear, reached across the Iron Curtain to those seeking refuge from the intellectual idiocy that graduated from the university and became the logic of the secret police and governing overlords. Behind the Iron Curtain, as Scruton noted, "crime is not an action, but a state of being."

As Mahoney makes clear in his thoughtful essays, we owe Scruton and Manent much for their continual struggle against what Mahoney constantly refers to as the "ideological Lie" and what Scruton termed "the culture of repudiation"—it is the tyranny of a perverted, misconstrued, and deconstructed liberalism.

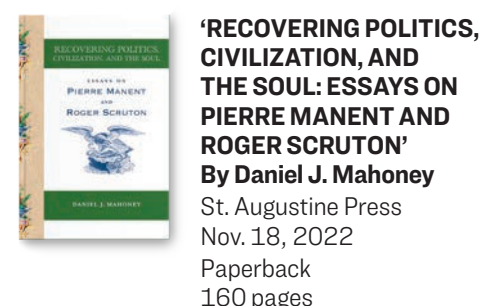
Their works are plenteous and provide a well-lit path to what is required for recovering our politics, our civilizations, and, yes, even our souls.

Mahoney's work is a fine contribution and a worthy tribute to these two pillars of modern Western civilization.

Dustin Bass is an author and co-host of *The Sons of History* podcast.



Philosopher Roger Scruton struggled against the tyranny of a perverted, misconstrued, and deconstructed liberalism.



L. Frank Baum's story "The Man in the Moon" reminds us to appreciate our home. "Two Men Contemplating the Moon," 1830, by Caspar David Friedrich. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.



LITERATURE

'There's No Place Like Home': L. Frank Baum's Short Story, 'The Man in the Moon'

KATE VIDIMOS

Each year, hundreds of people travel to different countries, flocking to their "bucket list" locations to meet new people and try new things. But the most important journeys begin and end with home.

In his short story "The Man in the Moon," L. Frank Baum shows how the man's journey from the moon to Earth proves educational. The man learns that wanderlust must not suppress our appreciation for home.

The man is very lonely, for he is the only

We must never be afraid to try something new or go to new places.

one on the moon and must "whistle to keep himself company." He envies the people on Earth, who have so much company and conversation. He begins to want to visit Earth to relieve this loneliness.

When he hears that the best place to visit would be Norwich with its famous pease porridge, he finally decides to go. He grabs hold of a good moonbeam and begins to slide down, but his descent grows so fast that he loses control and falls into a cool river.

However, this cool river scalds him and he barely swims out fast enough to save

himself. He is not used to Earth, for "everything goes by contraries in the Moon, and when the Man wishes to keep warm he knocks off a few chunks of ice and puts them in his stove; and he cools his drinking water by throwing red-hot coals of fire into the pitcher."

Upon recovering from the cool, scalding river, the man sets out to ask directions from a farmer. He is shocked to see the farmer's horses, which are far bigger than they look from the moon. The farmer directs him south to find Norwich.

Famous Pease Porridge

After a long journey, the man finally arrives in Norwich. He goes to one of the first houses and inquires whether this town is indeed Norwich, for he wishes to try the famous pease porridge. The woman of the house happily invites him in for some fresh porridge.

He asks for the porridge cold, since he likes it better that way. And when she brings him the cool bowl of porridge, he excitedly takes a large spoonful. But as soon as he takes a bite, he yells and jumps around. The cool porridge burns his mouth and causes a blister!

When the man watches the woman taste the porridge with ease, he is startled and runs from the house in fear. Seeing him running frantically, a policeman quickly arrests him and takes him to court to explain his suspicious actions.

Even though this adventure gives the man a chance to meet new people and try new things, he realizes that despite all of Earth's attractions, he misses home dearly. Just like Dorothy in "The Wizard of Oz," he quickly realizes that "there's no place like home."

In this story, Baum shows us that we must never be afraid to try something new or go to new places. Nevertheless, we must not let our sense of adventure, wanderlust, and even envy drown our appreciation for home and all the special, incomparable blessings it holds for us.

The excitement that fills us when we leave home to go on adventures should fill us just the same upon returning home.

Kate Vidimos is a 2020 graduate from the liberal arts college at the University of Dallas, where she received her bachelor's degree in English. She plans on pursuing all forms of storytelling (specifically film) and is currently working on finishing and illustrating a children's book.



THE SHADOW STATE

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THIS INVISIBLE HAND CONTROLS MORE THAN YOU THINK

In the past couple of years, environmental, social, and governance (ESG) policies have taken the business world by storm. But what do these three words actually mean—and what does their prevalence signify for the American consumer?

The Epoch Times takes a deep dive into the multitrillion-dollar ESG industry, tracing the movement's development from its origins. We examine the key players driving ESG, their goals for climate and social justice, and how they've united both governments and corporations in their quest for change.

And most importantly, we take a look into the future of ESG. Will it bring about the cleaner, more peaceful, and more equitable world it promises, or will it control our lives in ways that 20th-century totalitarians only dreamed of?

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LITERATURE

Our English Cousin

Continued from Page 1

An Adopted Father of Our Country

In "Shakespeare in America: An Anthology From the Revolution to Now," editor James Shapiro has brought together more than 70 pieces of literature, poems, reviews, essays, letters, humorous pieces, and a bit of fiction and drama, all of them written by Americans about an Englishman who died long before their time.

Here, John Quincy Adams analyzes the character of Desdemona, critical of her marriage to Othello. In a review of Nathaniel Hawthorne's "Mosses From an Old Manse," Herman Melville imports Shakespeare into his critique, even writing "Believe me, my friends, that Shakespeares are this day being born on the banks of the Ohio." No admirer of Shakespeare, Mark Twain parodies the playwright in an early piece of journalism, "The Killing of Julius Caesar 'Localized.'" More modern takes on Shakespeare are delivered by the likes

of humorist James Thurber, actor John Houseman, and writer Cynthia Ozick.

Those especially interested in American theater will undoubtedly find much of value in Shapiro's collection. There are not only varied reflections on the plays but also pieces on acting and stagecraft, such as James Agee's "Laurence Olivier's 'Henry V,'" which Agee calls "one of the great experiences in the history of motion pictures." At the end of his review, Agee writes of Shakespeare that "one Englishman used language better than anyone has before or since, or ever shall; and that nearly the best that our time can say for itself is that some of us are still capable of paying homage to the fact."

Those who love the English language will find yet another reason for reading "Shakespeare in America." Not only does the book give us new insights into his craftsmanship, but most of the writers featured here bring us praiseworthy prose of their own.

The works of Shakespeare have also heavily influenced some of America's greatest political figures.

Presidential Devotees

The works of Shakespeare have also heavily influenced some of America's greatest political figures. Shapiro includes in his study writings by such luminaries as John Adams, his son John Quincy, Abraham Lincoln, and American statesman Henry Cabot Lodge. In his remarks about Lincoln, for example, Shapiro reports that the president "carried a copy of Shakespeare's works around the White House (even as he had carried it earlier in his career on the judicial circuit)." Lincoln's secretary, John Hay, "reported how Lincoln would read aloud from the plays late at night."

Even in his boyhood, Thomas Jefferson was a Shakespeare fan, reading plays in his father's library and then watching them onstage as a college student in Williamsburg. As an adult, he stocked Monticello not only with Shakespeare's writings but with pictures and busts of him as well. Later, when he was president, he told one visitor that Shakespeare and Alexander Pope "gave him the perfection of imagination and judgment, both displaying more knowledge of the human heart—the true province of poetry—than he could find elsewhere."

Theodore Roosevelt disliked Shakespeare, finding his plays crude, yet on his trip to Africa following his presidency, he reexplored some of the works as well as the African plains and hills. He soon became enamored of them, writing to Henry Cabot Lodge and his wife: "You will be both amused to hear that at last, when 50 years old, I have come into my inheritance in Shakespeare."

W. Shakespeare, Ad Man Extraordinaire

If we need more evidence of Shakespearean influence on Americans, we need look only to the world of advertising.

In the article "How Shakespeare influenced the American ad industry," David Smith reports on a 2016 exhibition linking Shakespeare and advertising at Washington's Folger Shakespeare Library. Shake-

speare and his writings, the exhibition points out, have appeared in thousands of ads, from cigars and fishing reels to cough syrup, whiskey, and sewing machines. "I speculate that Shakespeare was a sign of class and elegance," says curator Georgianna Ziegler. "That is the raison d'être behind most of the adverts using him."

Of this same exhibition, Sarah Hovde informs us in "Would you buy a used car from Shakespeare? How about mustard?" that one salesman a century ago even wrote a brochure touting the idea that "Marc Antony's funeral oration in 'Julius Caesar' was a prime example of persuasive salesmanship."

'Dis Reading Vill Not Stop'

Ordinary Americans have also long regarded as their inheritance the words of Shakespeare. Like Lincoln, for example, many people in the 19th century took their learning from the Bible and from Shakespeare.

We find a classic example of this conjunction in Betty Smith's novel "A Tree Grows in Brooklyn." Here, an 18-year-old married and pregnant Katie Nolan learns from her illiterate immigrant mother that the secret for her children's success lies "in the reading and the writing." She tells Francie that she must read

to her children from the Bible and from Shakespeare. "And every day you must read a page of each to your child—even though you yourself do not understand what is written down and cannot sound the words properly. You must do this so the child will grow up knowing what is great—knowing that these tenements of Williamsburg are not the whole world."

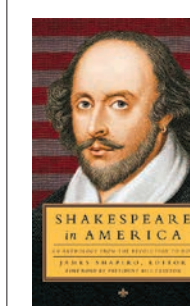
Directed by Elia Kazan, the film of "A Tree Grows in Brooklyn" includes this same touching salute to reading and to Shakespeare. "Dis reading vill not stop," the grandmother at one point commands her daughter and grandchildren. They will continue their nightly visits with "All's Well That Ends Well," "Troilus and Cressida," and "King Lear."

A Tie That Binds

And the reading and performances of Shakespeare have not stopped.

The plays continue to draw audiences across the United States. In addition to the performances by professional companies, schools, and community theaters, America offers an abundance of Shakespearean festivals and celebrations. New York's "Shakespeare in the Park" remains ever popular, and at least 50 Shakespeare festivals occur annually around the country. Moreover, Shakespeare is still widely

(Above) Many artists depicted scenes from Shakespeare's plays. "King Lear, Act I, Scene I," 1858, by American artist Edwin Austin Abbey. Oil on canvas. Gift of George A. Hearn, 1913. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.



The 2016 paperback edition of "Shakespeare in America: An Anthology From the Revolution to Now," by James Shapiro.

taught in our schools. Despite the recommendations by some that we remove Shakespeare in favor of more diverse and relevant literature, that push to eliminate his works from the curriculum has so far largely failed. The reasons for our continuing fascination with Shakespeare may have something to do with tradition but even more to do with his relevance. To declare Shakespeare and his work irrelevant, as some would do, essentially means that human beings—with all their complexities, their tragedies and comedies, their foibles and virtues—are irrelevant as well.

At this point in America's story, our culture needs greater unification, not more cuts from a dividing blade. Given their ongoing popularity, William Shakespeare's poetry and plays can continue to serve as one of the threads joining us one to the other.

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.



Volume 1 of the 1805 edition of "The Plays of William Shakespeare." The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.



Shakespeare is still beloved in America today. A scene from a "Twelfth Night" performance at the Lake Tahoe Shakespeare Festival at Sand Harbor State Park, Nev.



A tobacco package label showing the balcony scene between Romeo and Juliet. Library of Congress.

FINE ARTS

Europe's Lofty Ceiling Masterpieces

LORRAINE FERRIER

When in Rome, look up to the heavens in the nave of the Church of St. Ignatius of Loyola and you'll be in for a sweet surprise, as the lofty heights of heaven appear as real as you and I. Yet builders didn't construct the nave's dome and vaulted ceiling; lay Jesuit brother Andrea Pozzo (1642–1709) created it entirely with paint and mathematical perspective. Pozzo's painted ceiling is the best example of "quadratura," an illusionistic and realistic rendering of architecture and sculpture on walls or ceilings.

On the ceiling, Pozzo depicted Christ and the Virgin Mary welcoming St. Ignatius of Loyola, the founder of the Society of Jesus (known as the Jesuits), to paradise. God sends light to Christ, who emanates rays of light throughout the painting. One ray shines straight to St. Ignatius's heart. Christ radiates more rays of light to allegories of four continents—Europe, Asia, Africa, and the Americas—celebrating the Jesuit missionaries' work there.

Several scenes show Ignatius's life leading up to his apotheosis, a theme that the artist extended throughout the church. Pozzo depicted Old Testament figures such as Judith and Holofernes, David and Goliath, Jael and Sisera, and Samson and the Philistines to further reinforce the Roman Catholic faith in the Counter-Reformation period.

Artists saw every building surface, including the ceiling, as a canvas.

Pozzo's illusionistic Baroque masterpiece, along with his authoritative two-volume book on perspective, "Perspectives of Painters and Architects," influenced ceiling painting for years to come.

A Tradition Aiming for Righteousness

Pozzo's painting is part of a centuries-old tradition whereby patrons across Europe commissioned artists to decorate prominent buildings with a series of decorative themes that might encourage faith, patriotism, and morality, and also glorify a country's rulers, royalty, and great historical figures. Artists saw every building surface, including the ceiling, as a canvas to convey these commissions.

A new exhibition, "Looking Up: Studies for Ceilings, 1550–1800," at the National Gallery of Art in Washington explores the decorative tradition of ceiling painting. Around 30 of the gallery's drawings are on display, including Andrea Pozzo's illusionistic architecture for the vault of the Church of St. Ignatius of Loyola in Rome. Together, the drawings show the develop-



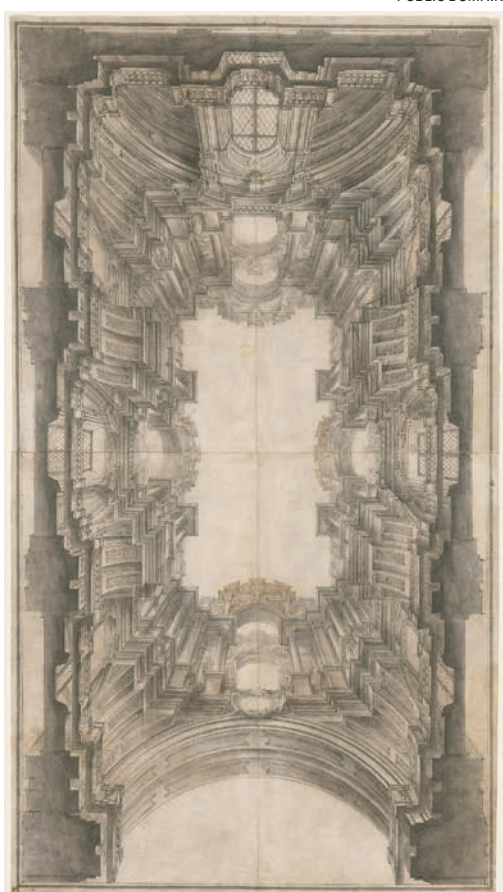
Italian painter and lay Jesuit brother Andrea Pozzo created the spectacular illusionistic painted ceiling in the nave of Rome's Church of St. Ignatius of Loyola. Pozzo's composition shows Christ and the Virgin Mary welcoming the founder of the Jesuit order, St. Ignatius, into paradise.

ment of the decorative tradition of ceiling painting; from architectural frames to illusionistic and dramatic scenes of the Baroque, to the geometric and idealized scenes in the neoclassical style.

The drawings on display also show how the artists prepared these monumental ceiling compositions much like they would any painting on canvas. First they made preliminary sketches, and then developed architectural schemes and sometimes detailed figure studies. For instance, Italian painter Livio Retti's delicate composition study for his fresco "The Triumph of Virtue and Divine Wisdom" shows the personification

of Wisdom at the peak, presiding between the Virtues. Directly below Wisdom, Virtue fights and tramples the Vices. Retti's finished ceiling painting is in the city hall in a city named Schwäbisch Hall, which is northeast of Stuttgart, in southern Germany. The painting reminds those in the council chamber of their civic duty.

Italian painter Luigi Garzi's black chalk study of "St. Catherine of Siena on a Cloud" shows her rapt in a vision of St. Catherine of Alexandria, where she sees the saint with the Christ child. In Garzi's finished work, which is in the Church of St. Catherine in Formiello in Naples, Italy, St. Catherine of



"Illusionistic Architecture for the Vault of St. Ignatius," 1685 or 1690, by Andrea Pozzo. Pen and gray and brown ink with gray wash on two joined sheets of heavy laid paper; 19 3/4 inches by 35 7/8 inches. Gift of Robert M. and Anne T. Bass, National Gallery of Art, Washington.



"The Triumph of Virtue and Divine Wisdom," 1736, by Livio Retti. Pen and brown ink with brown wash over graphite on laid paper; 17 1/2 inches by 21 1/4 inches. Wolfgang Ratjen Collection, Patrons' Permanent Fund, National Gallery of Art, Washington.

Siena looks adoringly up to the heavens as her vision unfolds above her, all to remind church visitors of their faith.

Exhibition visitors can also look up to the heavens of the gallery space to see a photograph of Pozzo's heavenly nave of the Church of St. Ignatius of Loyola, giving them a glimpse of the stupendous ceiling and thus centuries-old tradition.

The exhibition "Looking Up: Studies for Ceilings, 1550–1800" runs through July 9, at the National Gallery of Art, in Washington. To find out more visit, NGA.gov

FINE ARTS

The Innocence and Honesty of Children

'My First Sermon' and 'My Second Sermon'

YVONNE MARCOTTE

Brits of the Victorian age went to church. They also brought their children to church so they could listen to inspiring sermons. Very much a part of his age, artist John Everett Millais (1829–1896) and his family attended church services.

In 1863, he brought his 5-year-old daughter Effie to her first church service. Artist that he was, he captured this in his painting "My First Sermon," which met with great success. His son, John Guille Millais, noted: "This little picture of Effie was extremely popular."

In the painting, Effie sits bolt upright and attentive in a cubicle, with her feet on a stool and her hands in a muff, eagerly awaiting what would happen. Her hat sports a feather. Her red cape drapes around her body, with yellow gloves set to the side. The red of the coat and stockings attracts the eye against the darker green of the bench.

She is ready for something very interesting to occur. "The poignancy comes from guessing it is all really over her head," according to

a comment on The Victorian Web.

The younger Millais wrote that the seating was "old highback pews" in All Saints Church at Kingston-on-Thames, where Millais's parents lived.

Upon seeing the painting, the Archbishop of Canterbury is reported to have said: "Art has, and ever will have, a high and noble mission to fulfil... We feel ourselves the better and the happier when our hearts are enlarged as we sympathise with the joys and the sorrows of our fellowmen, faithfully delineated on the canvas; when our spirits are touched by the playfulness, the innocence, the purity, and may I not add (pointing to Millais' picture of 'My First Sermon') the piety of childhood."

In a witty follow-up of "My First Sermon" a year later, titled "My Second Sermon," Millais painted his daughter once more attending a church service. Here, the novelty of going to church had worn off for the artist's little girl. Her feet hang in abandon next to the footstool. Effie has taken off her hat as she leans sideways and enjoys a catnap.

The message is clear when paired with "My First Sermon." Effie is bored by the sermon and chooses to sleep rather than listen. When the Archbishop of Canterbury saw this painting, he warned against "the evil of lengthy sermons and drowsy discourses." In other words, preachers should keep their sermons short and to the point. This painting gives a clear message to preachers that, when preaching to children, they should consider a shorter homily. Listen to the children.

Millais's favorite subjects were his



"My First Sermon," 1863, by John Everett Millais. Oil on canvas; 3 feet by 2 feet, 6 inches.



"My Second Sermon," 1864, by John Everett Millais. Oil on canvas; 3 feet by 2 feet, 6 inches.

In 1863, the artist brought his 5 year-old daughter Effie to her first church service.

children. According to an article in The Reader: A Journal of Literature, Science, and Art cited on The Victorian Web: "Anything that a man undertakes for wife or children is likely to be done con amore; and, when such an artist as Millais paints his children, he throws all his strength into his work. In the face of this child, . . . we are sensible of an almost unique power, possessed by Millais, of seizing that look of inward consciousness, of the soul irradiating the features—only to be seen in its utmost purity in the sweet faces of children."

FILM

Film Reviewer Michael Clark's 2023 Oscar Picks

MICHAEL CLARK

For the past 28 years, I, like every other critic and movie fan, have made predictions about who and what will win on Oscar night. My slugging percentage is around 80 percent, which is good, but it's not due to my being smarter than anyone else; rather, it's having a better understanding that these awards are rarely bestowed for merit. They are bestowed instead for industry politics, and for rewarding studio-fueled, blitzkrieg marketing campaigns.

Once the most-viewed non-sports TV show of any year, the ratings for the Oscars—presented by the Academy (Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences)—have steadily declined. This is due in part to the oversaturation of award shows in general, but it's mostly because of the political soapboxing of frequent host Jimmy Kimmel (returning for the third time in five years) and the winners using their 30-second acceptance speeches to insult half of the viewing audience.

Other reasons for bad ratings: boredom and predictability. With few exceptions, the winners of the six major awards have already done so at other guild events leading up to the Oscars. The chances are that if a performer, director, or a title wins at the British Awards (British Academy Film Awards), Directors Guild (Directors Guild of America), Producers Guild (Producers Guild of America), or SAG (Screen Actors Guild), they'll win Oscars.

That is probably not going to happen this year, which is a great thing for viewers and anyone who appreciates heated competition. For the first time since 1998, the four acting winners at British Awards and SAG were totally different, which makes correctly handicapping the performer Oscar races nearly impossible.

In the 27 years that the Producers Guild, Directors Guild, and SAG have all presented their top honors, only one film has ever won all three but then lost the Best Picture Oscar: "Apollo 13" (1995). Over the last two weeks, "Everything Everywhere All at Once" won the Producers Guild, Directors Guild, and the SAG Best Ensemble (the SAG equivalent of Best Picture).

Here are this year's nominees and my guesses for the probable winners.

Best Actor in a Lead Role

The Nominees: Austin Butler in "Elvis," Colin Farrell in "The Banshees of Inisherin," Brendan Fraser in "The Whale," Paul Mescal in "Aftersun," and Bill Nighy in "Living."

MIA: Micheal Ward in "Empire of Light." The Skinny: This is easily the strongest and most competitive category of the night. If anyone other than Mescal wins, it shouldn't come as much of a surprise. Butler totally owned "Elvis," Farrell shone as the dim everyman in "Banshees," Fraser is a sentimental favorite (albeit, for all the wrong

reasons), and the septuagenarian Nighy will likely never be nominated again.

The Bottom Line: Butler won the British Awards, Fraser the SAG. If the Academy goes for merit, it will be Butler. If they choose to award prosthetics, Fraser.

Best Actress in a Lead Role

The Nominees: Ana de Armas in "Blonde," Cate Blanchett in "TÁR," Andrea Riseborough in "To Leslie," Michelle Williams in "The Fabelmans," and Michelle Yeoh in "Everything Everywhere All at Once."

MIA: Olivia Colman in "Empire of Light." The Skinny: Prior to the SAG, Blanchett won practically every industry and critic group's accolade (and the British Award, yet lost the SAG to Yeoh).

The Bottom Line: Blanchett has now been nominated eight times and has won twice. This is Yeoh's first ever nomination; she is clearly being considered the underdog, and one many voters and audience members will be pulling for. Since the voting blocks for SAG and the Academy are virtually identical, the smart money has to be on Yeoh.

Best Actor in a Supporting Role

The Nominees: Brian Tyree Henry in "Causeway," Judd Hirsch in "The Fabelmans," Ke Huy Quan in "Everything Everywhere All at Once," and Brendan Gleeson and Barry Keoghan in "The Banshees of Inisherin."

MIA: Paul Dano in "The Fabelmans." The Skinny: This year, this category is as close to a sure thing as you can get.

The Bottom Line: Although Keoghan pulled out an upset at the British Awards Quan, a former child actor who retired in 2002 due to lack of work, has won "everything, everywhere" (pun intended). Everyone loves a comeback story and Quan's SAG win essentially freezes out all other nominees.

Best Actress in a Supporting Role

The Nominees: Angela Bassett in "Black Panther: Wakanda Forever," Hong Chau in "The Whale," Kerry Condon in "The Banshees of Inisherin," and Jamie Lee Curtis and Stephanie Hsu in "Everything Everywhere All at Once."

MIA: Hong Chau in "The Menu." The Skinny: Up until two weeks ago, Bassett was the hands-down favorite, but after losing the British Awards and SAG her chances are bleak.

The Bottom Line: Yes, Condon won the British Awards, but the momentum for her film has stalled. The child of two past nominees, SAG winner Curtis has the slightest edge. This category is, year in and year out, always the most volatile and unpredictable; every nominee has a legitimate chance to win.

Best Director

The Nominees: Todd Field for "TÁR," Dan-



The Oscars will interest anyone who appreciates heated competition.

iel Kwan and Daniel Scheinert for "Everything Everywhere All at Once," Martin McDonagh for "The Banshees of Inisherin," Ruben Östlund for "Triangle of Sadness," and Steven Spielberg for "The Fabelmans."

MIA: Sam Mendes for "Empire of Light," Isaiah Washington for "Corsicana," Rian Johnson for "Glass Onion: A Knives Out Mystery."

The Skinny: British Awards winner Edward Berger ("All Quiet on the Western Front") wasn't even nominated. Kwan and Scheinert won the Directors Guild and Producers Guild. Since 1968, only five Directors Guild winners (who were also nominated by the Academy) didn't take home Oscars.

The Bottom Line: Early sentimental favorite Spielberg's film is the second-worst box office performer of his career. (Only his debut, "Sugarland Express," fared worse.) Kwan and Scheinert have all of the momentum right now. It's theirs to lose.

Best Picture

The Nominees: "All Quiet on the Western Front," "Avatar: The Way of Water," "The Banshees of Inisherin," "Elvis," "Everything Everywhere All at Once," "The Fabelmans," "TÁR," "Top Gun: Maverick," "Triangle of Sadness," and "Women Talking."

MIA: "Empire of Light," "Corsicana." The Skinny: For the first time since 2009 when the Academy increased the number of nominees from five to 10, more than two titles have a realistic shot.

The Bottom Line: Current industry darling "Everything Everywhere" is the front-runner, but don't count out the seven British Awards winning entries: "All Quiet," "TÁR," "The Fabelmans," fan favorite "Top Gun," or box office behemoth "Avatar."

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.

Probable Winners in Other Categories

- **Best Adapted Screenplay:** "Women Talking"
- **Best Animated Feature:** "Guillermo del Toro's Pinocchio"
- **Best Cinematography:** "All Quiet on the Western Front"
- **Best Costume Design:** "Black Panther: Wakanda Forever"
- **Best Documentary Feature:** "Navalny"
- **Best Editing:** "Everything Everywhere All at Once"
- **Best International Feature:** "All Quiet on the Western Front"
- **Best Makeup and Hairstyling:** "The Whale"
- **Best Original Screenplay:** "The Banshees of Inisherin"
- **Best Original Song:** "Naatu Naatu" from "RRR"
- **Best Production Design:** "Elvis"
- **Best Original Score:** "Babylon"
- **Best Sound:** "Top Gun: Maverick"
- **Best Visual Effects:** "Avatar: the Way of Water"



Elvis (Austin Butler) performs in a scene from "Elvis." Butler is a favorite in the Best Actor category.



(L–R) Stephanie Hsu, Michelle Yeoh, and Ke Huy Quan in "Everything Everywhere All at Once."



"Top Gun: Maverick" is the favorite for Best Picture.

ALL PHOTOS BY SHUTTERSTOCK UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED



Part of the ancient Gandhara civilization at Amluk-Dara, the famous stupa is located in Swat valley of Pakistan and is believed to have been built in the 3rd century A.D.

SCULPTURE

Ancient Gandhara: Greek Art and Buddhist Statuary

DA YAN

When the ancient devotees of the Buddha Shakyamuni first represented “the enlightened one” in visual form, it was to Greek art that they turned, brought by Alexander the Great to the northwestern corner of the Indian subcontinent. In the region known as Gandhara, a flourishing Buddhist culture, they adopted the naturalism of Greek sculpture but endowed the figure with a divine pathos that Greece had never seen before.

In an extraordinary example preserved at the Tokyo National Museum, the Buddha stands atop a floral base against a large halo. The stylized drapery undulates like a thin veil, while the contour of his body hides subtly beneath, protruding only at the chest, abdomen, and left knee. It might seem that these figurative techniques are but a derivative form of Greek art, which doesn’t compare with

the muscular proportion of an Athenian athlete or the dynamism of a Hellenistic soldier. But for the Gandhara artist, the static and frontal body only served as a foil to the face of the Buddha, which expressed externally the transcendental spirit from within. His features are idealized, his eyes downcast; although devoid of human emotions, he evinces an assured air of peace, compassion, and rectitude that can be found only in an enlightened one, untroubled by his worldly bearing.

Greek Art and Its Way East

When sculpture first reached its maturity in classical Greece (480–323 B.C.), artists had a clear standard for ideal beauty. Influenced by the severe sculptural forms of Egyptian gods and pharaohs, Greek artists brought the art to a new level of naturalism by attending to the subtleties of human anatomy and the figural pose.

Polykleitos, ancient sculptor of the fifth century B.C., established his famous canon of idealized mathematical proportions



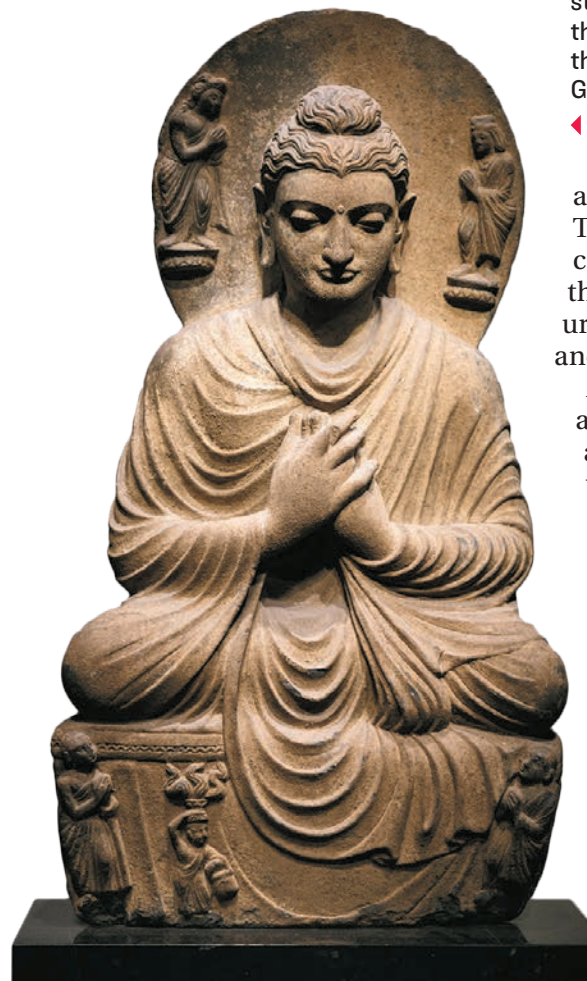
One of the first representations of the Buddha during the Kushan empire (A.D. 30–375) in the historical region of Gandhara, Pakistan.

CROPPED PHOTO BY FOLLOWING HADRIAN/CC BY-SA 2.0



Ancient seated Buddha statue from the second to third century, made during the Kushan empire in Gandhara, Pakistan.

The Alexander Sarcophagus in Istanbul illustrating the Battle of Issus (333 B.C.) with Alexander depicted on the far left atop a rearing horse.



already kneeling in exhausted defeat. The pathos of the battlefield across this continuous scene is expressed not only through the individual faces of the figures but also through the dramatic twists and turns of their enmeshed bodies.

As a result of Alexander’s expeditions across Europe, Africa, and Asia, Greek art began making a global impact, which was felt as far as northern India. But after his premature death, Alexander’s empire immediately crumbled. Kingdoms in Central Asia and the Middle East soon became independent, although they retained much of the ancient Greek influence, including on language, script, and coinage. Thus, when Gandhara Buddhists first sought to represent their spiritual teacher in physical form, it was Hellenistic sculpture that proved readily available for adaptation.

Buddhism in Gandhara

The adaptation of Greek visual idioms for an alternative kind of spirituality nevertheless demanded a new mode of artistic rendering. Despite absorbing the techniques of figuration and drapery, the Gandhara artist moved away from extremes of emotion and dispassion and sought to express the Buddha’s inner spirit through manifest forms, which exude an unparalleled aura of serenity and rectitude.

That inner spirit captured by the sculptor can be understood only in light of the Buddha’s teaching. A prince who lived in northern India (present day Nepal) between the mid-sixth and mid-fourth centuries B.C., Shakyamuni was moved by the human sufferings of illness, old age, and death and determined to forsake all worldly possessions in search of a state beyond the inevitable cycles. Unwavering in the face of desires and tribulations, he achieved enlightenment through meditation and realized that the vicissitudes of human life resulted from one’s own past deeds. He thus began teaching a path for people to transcend suffering by understanding the cycles of reincarnation,

eliminating unvirtuous desires, and cultivating one’s righteous behavior and mind.

Having gained a great number of followers, Shakyamuni became known by the Sanskrit title “Buddha” (“The Awakened One”), and the method of spiritual development he taught has come to be called “Buddhism,” which spread along the Silk Road as far as Iran and Japan. Located in the middle of this vast network of culture and commerce, Gandhara flourished under powerful Buddhist emperors and became a major center of religion and commerce for almost six centuries.

Today, the many statues of the Buddha and bodhisattvas produced by this unique civilization remind us of the cultural and artistic diversity of the Hellenistic East and bear witness to how Buddhist spirituality transformed Greek sculpture into a new kind of divine image—that of great compassion.

Da Yan is a doctoral student of European art history. Raised in Shanghai, he lives and works in the Northeastern United States.

The Gandhara artist moved away from extremes of emotion and dispassion, and sought to express the Buddha’s inner spirit.



The canon of Polykleitos (aesthetic canon of proportion) is best represented in his Doryphoros or “Spear-bearer” from the fifth century B.C., located in the Naples National Archaeological Museum.

BOOK REVIEW

A Biography of One of America’s Greatest Diplomats

DUSTIN BASS

George F. Kennan was one of the most important American diplomats of the 20th century. His famous telegram—tagged the Long Telegram—sent shortly after the end of World War II was the foundational geopolitical text for what would become known as America’s containment policy against the Soviet Union.

Frank Costigliola has written a new biography on the diplomat and historian entitled “Kennan: A Life between Worlds” that focuses on the man as an ambitious diplomat, ousted ambassador, brilliant geopolitical strategist, emotionally and sexually frustrated man, and American citizen whose love of country was rivaled only by his love of pre-Soviet Russia.

Eros and Civilization

Costigliola identifies early in his book a loss that would haunt Kennan throughout the rest of his life. His mother died when he was 2 months old. The loss of his mother, with whom he felt a strong bond despite never knowing her, would result in a life-long search for an emotional opposite-sex

intimacy that he would, possibly unwisely, connect through Freudian psychology.

The author ties this longing to Kennan’s numerous interactions with women along his timeline of diplomatic involvements that are at times unscrupulous, even adulterous. Costigliola makes no assumptions into Kennan’s thinking, as it is the diplomat who consistently berates himself, not only for his extra-marital actions, but also his thoughts. This biography is an intimate look at the diplomat and the man, which the author references as Eros versus Civilization (Kennan’s accepted Freudian view of man’s struggle between the world and his family).

A Global Diplomat

But Costigliola doesn’t get so lost in the intimacies, or lack thereof, of the honest and rather self-deprecating man that he leaves out the most important aspect of Kennan’s life: diplomacy. Kennan’s diplomatic life is

very well presented in the book. He was a hard-working (often to exhaustion), sickly, melancholy, brilliant, and insightful diplomat whose love and understanding of Russia stemmed from influential works about the country from the cousin of his grandfather.

The author takes us through Kennan’s upbringing and eventual graduation from Princeton University in 1925. This includes his rejection by a woman, whose parents viewed him as a man who would accomplish nothing of note in his lifetime. The very opposite would be true.

His career soon began in the State Department, where he would eventually be stationed in the Moscow embassy. In the early months, Soviet bureaucrats regaled the Americans with parties, friendships, and close diplomatic relations. Kennan found himself enthralled by Stalin’s Russia, though not completely deceived by it.

Though he enjoyed the work, his driving

work ethic would lead to his physical collapse exactly one year in. His work, well regarded by the Russian ambassador and the State Department, enabled him to take months of sick leave to recover. Shortly after his return, Kennan would no longer be enthralled, but would rather be appalled, as would the rest of the West’s diplomats and much of the world, when Stalin began his purges of the 1930s.

The author uses historical knowledge and documentation, along with Kennan’s diary, to give the reader a view into how Kennan and others responded and tried to cope with the purges, which included imprisonment, exile, and executions of their colleagues and friends. What resulted was a sort of Soviet isolationism, which left Kennan and other Western diplomats in the cold concerning diplomatic relations. Kennan, identified by the author as “always the Russian nationalist,” was hurt on a deeper level than most because of his affinity for Russia, his extensive knowledge of its history, and most emphatically his love for its people.

His work in Moscow would come to an end, at least for a time, and he was sent to Prague and then Berlin before and during the war. He would also perform as a high-ranking diplomat in Lisbon, where his reputation would rise to the point of attaining personal meetings with President Franklin Roosevelt and Portugal’s president, António de Oliveira Salazar. His differing views from Roosevelt and the Pentagon’s regarding Portugal, which remained neutral during the war, led him to defy, even successfully, both arms of American power.

When it comes to Kennan and Roosevelt, Costigliola tends to take the side of the president rather than playing the Portugal card

of neutrality. Kennan’s criticisms of Roosevelt’s policies on the war and America’s faltering economy during the Depression are often undermined by the author.

The Push for Containment

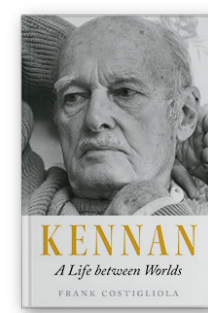
The year after the war concluded in 1946, Kennan sent one of the most consequential diplomatic messages: the Long Telegram. It pinpointed the many dangers Stalin’s Russia posed to the West and recommended a containment policy for the ever-expanding Soviet Union, which “concluded that containment mandated a military buildup.”

This moment, along with Kennan’s Foreign Affairs article with the byline “X,” is used as the crux for understanding Kennan’s diplomatic perspective of the Soviets. Costigliola makes the case by using Kennan’s own words—from his diary to diplomatic letters, interviews, and his BBC Reith Lectures—that Kennan never advocated for military confrontation. When he began to advocate for “disengagement,” the likes of Secretary of State Dean Acheson and other top brass came after him.

Costigliola presents a man who has always been viewed as the creator of the containment policy during the Cold War as someone other. It can be easy to claim the author is using a form of revisionism in this retelling, but I would disagree with that claim. If there is any “revisionism,” it seems to come directly from Kennan, who either truly never “intended,” nor had ever approved, using military force to rein in Moscow’s ambitions” or had a change of perspective against military confrontation and preferred to revise his own history.

Perhaps the answer lies in Kennan statement: “I deplore doctrines.” Undoubtedly, his

Kennan pinpointed the many dangers Stalin’s Russia posed to the West and recommended a containment policy.



containment views resulted in geopolitical doctrine—a rigid and immovable form of diplomacy that left no room for adjustment.

A Lauded, Yet Unheeded Diplomat

The author moves in a chronological order through Kennan’s life, which lasted more than a century. His subject was one of the most accomplished and prescient diplomats the country has ever had. His recommendation for containment proved worthwhile and effective for the most part. His later recommendations for disengagement went unheeded.

After he had fallen from grace in 1952 as the ambassador to the Soviet Union, his stations within the government, which included a stint as ambassador to Yugoslavia during the Kennedy Administration, were few and far between. But his insight was often correct, such as his concerns about post-Cold War fallout that included potential wars in the Balkans, the tension between Russia and Ukraine, the problems with expanding NATO, the futility of trying to lure China into democracy, the repercussions of invading Iraq, and more.

It is no wonder that he was awarded two Pulitzer Prizes, a Bancroft Prize, an Albert Einstein Peace Prize, two National Book Awards, and the Presidential Medal of Freedom. (Also, his posthumously published biography written by John Gaddis won the Pulitzer Prize.)

Ironically, those who needed to listen to him hardly did. Costigliola used a fitting quote summarizing Kennan’s feeling about that: “A strange fate, mine: to move so many compatriots, but never those in power.” In a sense, Kennan’s ignored warnings and recommendations for diplomatic pivoting

is a microcosm of how governments and the intelligence communities prefer doctrine to reevaluation and military engagement to diplomacy.

Analytical and Enjoyable

Costigliola has written an enjoyable and analytical biography of a great thinker. It is a presentation of the man and the diplomat and a combination of the two: an individual torn between duty at home and duty for country, and even those duties suffered dichotomies between family and the world, and America and Russia.

In many ways, these dichotomies, even when disagreeable to the reader, should be understood in their context. There are moments when Kennan seems undemocratic, as his views, especially early on, were. Other times, he comes across as an elitist, which in ways he was (but he viewed himself that way compared to many people—even presidents). Costigliola also pinpoints Kennan’s tendency toward misogyny, but the author at times inserts his own views, and in these cases, takes plain speaking or views of that day from the perspective of the modern era. But even then, Costigliola makes an effort to encourage the reader to not allow a man’s defects (or typical struggles), or even unacceptable or discomfiting views, to overshadow his brilliance, his contributions to society, and his proper place in American history.

Dustin Bass is an author and co-host of The Sons of History podcast.

For more arts and culture articles, visit TheEpochTimes.com



U.S. Ambassador to the Soviet Union George F. Kennan in Heidelberg, Germany after his recall from Moscow in 1952.

FRG/ARCHIVE PHOTOS/GETTY IMAGES

FILM REVIEW

‘People Will Talk’: Focus on a Healthy Spirit as Well as a Healthy Body

RUDOLPH LAMBERT FERNANDEZ

Screenwriter-director Joseph L. Mankiewicz's tongue-in-cheek film has a hard time taking itself seriously, opening as it does with the comically self-conscious line, "This will be part of the story of Noah Praetorius, M.D. That is not his real name, of course ..."

The winsome, if enigmatic, Dr. Praetorius (Cary Grant) uses unconventional techniques to cure. His more conventional, less recognized colleagues envy him. Instead of emulating him, as they should, they seek to discredit him. Led by the devilishly dogged professor Rodney Elwell (Hume Cronyn), they try to turn his friendship with the equally enigmatic Mr. Shunderson (Finlay Currie) against him. Cornered but cocksure, Praetorius doesn't do himself favors by falling in love with a fetching female patient of his, Deborah (Jeanne Crain).

Mankiewicz wrote screenplays for over 15 years before he turned to directing. Here, he indulges that love for writing with a rapier wit and directs an assured cast. With all the rigor of an endoscopy, his droll lines interrogate truisms about love, life, death. And society's wagging tongues.

An aged bed-ridden patient sighs: "It's not much fun when you get to be old."

Praetorius, checking her pulse: "It's less fun if you don't get to be old."

Mankiewicz's jibes about health and sickness are three-pronged. First, through Praetorius's enviable record with patients, he pays serious tribute to doctors who focus as much on a healthy spirit as they do on a healthy body. Second, through Elwell's inimical inquisition into Praetorius's reputation, he takes a comical swipe at quacks preying on gullible folk. Finally, through Praetorius, Mankiewicz wise-cracks about doctors so obsessed with disease and profiting off it that they hurry through treatment without holistic diagnosis, cementing patient dependence

instead of doing the opposite.

Praetorius's former housekeeper, Sarah Pickett, and her aside against conversing behind "closed doors," spoofs those who unjustly accuse the reputable of impropriety. Prime-accuser Elwell's name seems a play on the phrase "ill will," typical of wags who cast aspersions in bad faith. And Praetorius's first name is a play on the biblical "Noah," who was also roundly mocked.

Through the character of Shunderson, the aide shadowing Praetorius, Mankiewicz seems to say that accomplished men, too, need a conscience-keeper to avoid succumbing to mediocrity.

The Imperceptible Human Spirit

Praetorius believes that patients are sick people whose feeding, bathing, and resting routines must be inspired by what's best for their recovery. They're not "inmates" whose routines can be toyed with to suit busybody doctors and nurses. He parrots Deborah's absent-minded epithet for him ("pompous know-it-all") hinting first that, if he's pompous, he isn't a know-it-all, and second, that the latter descriptor fits others in his profession quite snugly.

"The human body is not necessarily the human being," Praetorius tells medical students. Understanding bone, muscle, and tissue from months of cadaver-cutting in classrooms may tell all about the body but little about the person. Personhood is expressed in love, hate, desire, hope, despair, memory. And sensitivity to a patient's personhood is what eludes even revered doctors.

Praetorius is gifted enough to also conduct the university orchestra. One scene has him comically correcting bass-player friend Prof. Barker (Walter Slezak) to play in step with his baton and the rest of the orchestra, rather than merely as soloist. It echoes his earlier allusion to a soul that, like it or not, harmonizes body parts no matter how proficient they are individually.



Praetorius believes that patients must be inspired by what's best for their recovery.

'People Will Talk'

Director:
Joseph L. Mankiewicz

Starring:
Cary Grant, Hume Cronyn,
Finlay Currie, Jeanne Crain

MPAA Rating:
G

Running Time:
1 hour, 50 minutes

Release Date:
Aug. 29, 1951

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

What's Praetorius saying about the world of syringes, serums, and syrups? The imperceptible human spirit holds sway over the obvious body. But doctors who don't appreciate the orchestral analogy with Barker shouldn't be so surprised when they treat body parts in isolation and end up with dysfunctional, if not downright suicidal, humans. Deborah's attempted suicide is more than a plot device. Praetorius smirks, "The nerve of some doctors, giving people up for lost, as though they'd found them in the first place."

The film satirizes willful defamation much like "Meet John Doe" and "Mr. Deeds Goes to Town." The masses shower love on a mysterious, caring figure, and then a mischievous minority abruptly brands him a fraud.

Some of Mankiewicz's meandering scenes (around toy trains, or Deborah's uncle and his farm) come off as camp. But his lines are otherwise sharp, thoughtful, and wry, especially when voiced by the charming, classy Grant, not a cuff out of place, even during a frenzied session conducting Brahms's "Gaudemus igitur."

A nurse, finding Praetorius lost in thought, asks if he's all right. He dismisses it at his "usual twilight sadness" and wonders, poetically, if it ever struck her that days die as people do: battling for every last moment of light before they give up to the dark.

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

Dr. Praetorius (Cary Grant) and his patient, Deborah (Jeanne Crain), in "People Will Talk."

TRUTH and TRADITION

In Our Own Words



“

It finally seemed like there was someone out there listening to me—to my parents—and hearing us.

Teresa You
Manager, Customer Service

The Woman Behind the Hotline (Part 2)

A Ray of Hope

Dear Epoch VIP,

To say that The Epoch Times is a special media to me would be an understatement. It's been there for me ever since I was a little girl in China, and one of the few places where I know I can read the truth, regardless of what the government's media outlets may say or do.

When I was nine, my parents were arrested before my own eyes from our home in Beijing. They weren't criminals: just Falun Gong practitioners.

My mother, a hospital worker, had just been looking for a spiritual practice, a way to live around her many illnesses. My father, a professor and Chinese Communist Party (CCP) member, followed suit after he saw my mother's improvement in health.

When I was younger, my mom would tell me stories about how people would commit suicide during the Cultural Revolution because they were so humiliated. And before that, how the landlords had all of their money taken away, simply because everyone had to be "the same."

My parents used to tell me these stories about other people, but when the Falun Gong persecution began, **it finally happened to them too—even though my dad was a Party member who taught communism, socialism, and Marxism in school.**

In an instant, my parents were handcuffed and taken away from me to a labor camp, to a place I had no idea about. A place that the news never talked about. I had no idea what the authorities would do to my parents and it worried me.

I saw the brutal treatment of Falun Gong practitioners in labor camps for the first time in the Chinese-language edition of The Epoch Times (via a VPN). Though this knowledge made me extremely scared and gave me nightmares, it also brought a sense of security in finally knowing the kind of place my parents were taken to and that people like my parents were not forgotten. They wouldn't just disappear, no matter how much the CCP wanted them to.

Having lived through this experience, I can say there's no platform in China that gives a voice to the human rights victims. **For all the people who are persecuted and their loved ones—it's really a very alienating experience.**

But because there was a media like The Epoch Times, I felt less alone. It finally seemed like there was someone out there listening to me—to my parents—and hearing us.

When I was in high school, my parents (who had returned from labor camp by then) sent me to the United States as an exchange student. They told me to enjoy the freedom in America since by then, we all knew too well what a country without freedom for its people was like.

The American people that I've come across since then have been very nice, friendly, and helpful, and it's had a wonderful effect on me. But at the same time, it's always felt like some of them didn't really know what was going on outside of America.

In China, all of the elites and intellectuals—including those I saw on the news when I was younger—always said that due to differences in ideology, sooner or later there will be armed conflict between China and America. If you watch Chinese state-run news, the narrative (though it fluctuates based on the CCP's diplomatic needs) has always been anti-American.

It's not the Chinese people themselves, of course, that have something against America. But many Chinese people live in this environment where they're being brainwashed, and every day they're being told that America is the enemy. It was so strange to me that Americans, and the American government, didn't seem to have any reaction to this at all.

A media doesn't just keep things that people know about from being forgotten, like with my parents; it also brings into view things that people didn't previously know about, that they should know. That is why I take my job at The Epoch Times very seriously—so that the people I've met in America can have the knowledge they need to protect their freedom, and the people living in fear in China can have the knowledge they need to win it back.

In Truth and Tradition,

Teresa You
The Epoch Times

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